PREFACE

The initial idea for this book arose from the discussions at a conference held at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth. This conference brought together scholars of European integration, international relations and foreign policy analysis in order to exchange views on the ways in which the European Union's evolving role in global politics could be conceptualised. The ensuing debates and discussions demonstrated not only that across disciplines and approaches different conceptualisations of the EU's foreign policy existed, but also that a dialogue across these boundaries proved useful in furthering our understanding of the nature of this particular beast. We decided that the next logical step would be a book project that brought these different perspectives together and contributed the particular insights from the study of EU foreign policy to the wider debate about different approaches to European integration.

We have been fortunate that our enthusiasm in launching this venture was shared not only by the contributors to the volume, but also by others without whom this book would not have been published. The Department of International Relations facilitated the initial conference by awarding us a grant, and Steve Smith, then Head of the Department, was instrumental in helping us to get this project off the ground. Many colleagues in the Department contributed to the conference and helped to make it a success, but we would like to acknowledge in particular the organisational work done by Elaine Lowe. We are grateful for the support and encouragement which we received from Emil Kirchner, Series Co-Editor of *Europe in Change*, and Tony Mason, Commissioning Editor at Manchester University Press, from the moment the idea for the book was born until its publication. Efficient editorial assistance was provided by Susanne Kempe at the Department of International Relations in Aberystwyth.

Above all we would like to thank the contributors to this volume who endured the usual suffering of chapter authors – first impossible deadlines, then unreasonable requests for revisions and finally a seemingly endless wait for the actual publication – without any complaints. We are grateful for their cooperation throughout this process, and we hope they – and the reader – share out satisfaction with the finished 'product'.

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