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The role of the European Union in global politics has been of growing interest over the past decade. The EU is a key player in global institutions such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and NATO. It continues to construct an emerging identity and project its values and interests throughout contemporary international relations. The capacity of the EU to both formulate and realise its goals, however, remains contested. Some scholars claim the EU's 'soft power' attitude rivals that of the USA's 'hard power' approach to international relations. Others view the EU as insufficiently able to produce a co-ordinated position to project upon global politics. Regardless of the position taken within this debate, the EU's relationship with its external partners has an increasingly important impact upon economic, political and security concerns on an international level. Trade negotiations, military interventions, democracy promotion, international development and responses to the global economic crisis have all witnessed the EU playing a central role. This has seen the EU become both a major force in contemporary institutions of global governance and a template for supranational governance that might influence other attempts to construct regional and global institutions.

This volume brings together a collection of leading EU scholars to provide a state-of-the-art overview covering these and other debates relating to the EU's role in contemporary global governance. The Handbook is divided into four main sections:

Part I: European studies and global governance - provides an overview and critical assessment of the leading theoretical approaches through which the EU's role in global governance has been addressed within the literature.

Part II: Institutions - examines the role played by the key EU institutions in pursuing a role for the EU in contemporary international relations.

Part III: Policy and issue areas - explores developments within particular policy sectors, assessing the different impact that the EU has had in different issue areas, including foreign and security

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policy, environmental policy, common commercial policy, the Common Agricultural Policy, development policy, accession policy, the Neighbourhood Policy and conflict transformation.

Part IV: The global multilevel governance complex and the EU - focuses on the relationship between the EU and the institutions, regions and countries with which it forms a global multilevel governance complex, including chapters on the EU's relationship with the WTO, United Nations, East Asia, Africa and the USA.

The editors are Jens-Uwe Wunderlich (Aston University) and David J. Bailey (University of Birmingham). Jens-Uwe Wunderlich's research and teaching focuses on international relations theory, European integration and globalization and on comparative regionalism; he has recently published *Regionalism, Globalisation and International Order-Europe and Southeast Asia* (Ashgate) and *A Dictionary of Globalization* (Routledge, 2007). David Bailey has published on trends in European governance in the *Journal of European Public Policy*, *Comparative European Politics*, and *Journal of European Social Policy*.