

## PREFACE

The ratification of the Treaty on European Union, commonly known as the Maastricht Treaty, has unexpectedly been a long and difficult process. When the Danish citizens in a first referendum in June 1992 voted ‘*nej*’, it was even questionable whether the Treaty would ever enter into force.

This study gives an overview of the ratification process in the twelve Member States. Not only are the procedures outlined, but also the processes in terms of content are followed as they took quite different courses in each of the Member States. The debate in the various countries focused on different issues and the citizens expressed different concerns.

The study consists of three parts. For those who do not follow developments closely in the European Community, the first part of the book provides an introductory chapter on the major events in the EC and on the international scene, which to a larger or lesser extent influenced the national debates. This overview is followed by a chapter outlining the main amendments introduced by the Treaty on European Union.

The second part gives an overview of the ratification process in the twelve Member States. Most chapters start with a description of the legal requirements for ratification. Further issues examined are the positions of the different political parties, the debate in the national parliaments as well as public opinion. Public opinion on European integration and on the Maastricht Treaty in particular is further reflected in a separate section representing a selection of graphs taken from *Eurobarometer*.

Since the European Parliament, which is formally not entitled to ratify the Treaty, dedicated a special session to evaluating the outcome of the Intergovernmental Conferences (IGCs), a separate chapter on the debate in Strasbourg has been included.

All country chapters have been written by EIPA – or former EIPA staff and, with only one exception, by nationals of the countries concerned. The articles are based on official documents, records of parliamentary debates,

interviews with national officials, opinion polls and newspaper clippings.

The final part of the book tries to explain why in at least four of the twelve Member States the Treaty encountered strong opposition and identifies the major challenges which will be facing the European Union in the coming years and which should be on the agenda of the next IGC in 1996.

The annexes contain the conclusions of the different European Council meetings taking place in the period 1992-93 as well as some of the most important national documents related to the ratification process.

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