Preface

In recent years, the European Union (EU) has faced several overlapping crises. These have ranged from a financial crisis with concomitant social problems, including thousands of unemployed young people, to a humanitarian crisis stemming from the drastically increased number of refugees fleeing destabilized regions in the Middle East and Africa, to security threats aggravated by Russia's aggression against Ukraine and several terrorist attacks in European cities. While the EU has increasingly taken on the role of Europe's foremost crisis manager, its ability to handle these crises has simultaneously received negative attention. It remains debated what can be expected of the EU in this regard, and how the EU and its Member States should respond to the increased insecurity emanating from these crises. Yet it is clear that a growing awareness of crises and security threats has permeated the worldview of European politicians and citizens alike.

Against the backdrop of these protracted crises, which put cohesion and solidarity within the Union to the test, the question of what European politicians can and should do to confront the challenge of multiple security threats has become increasingly acute. While the crises in the Eurozone and in Ukraine have been ongoing for several years, and the threats from terrorism and radicalism have manifested themselves on several previous occasions, events taking place since the autumn of 2015 have fuelled a drastically increased awareness of the security threats that Europe is facing. At the time of writing, governments across Europe are working to find solutions to these crises and the security threats associated with them, and to respond to their concrete consequences. It seems safe to assume that threats and crises in Europe and its geographical proximity will continue to be a central theme in national as well as European politics. The EU is facing an existential challenge in casting itself as an actor capable of devising common solutions, uniting its Member States around them and supporting national measures to implement them. It is imperative that European cooperation can respond to crises and threats, and that it is not in itself viewed as a security challenge.

How can the EU strengthen the solidarity among its Member States in their responses to various crises? How can European and national

authorities improve their cooperation regarding security and crisis management? Crucially, how can the EU exercise political leadership in a way that does not antagonize the Member States, but instead promotes improved accord and coordination? This book contributes to our understanding of the inherent complexity in responding to crises and perceived or concrete threats in the political multilevel system that the contemporary EU comprises, and addresses a broad array of current security challenges to the EU.

This book is the fruit of a collective effort by scholars from the disciplines of political science, economics and law to address the multifaceted challenges that the Union is facing.

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