

position of the large states must be better after the Nice Treaty. The small states stood their ground in the negotiations leading to the Treaty and at the Summit itself. They may have failed to form a coherent coalition to protect their interests in the negotiation process⁷ but, at present, there is nothing that indicates that the small states are in a worse position to influence decisions within the EU after the Treaty. For instance, Wessels argues that EU policy formation will continue (to remain and) evolve according to the present decision-making processes of the EU. Decision-making in the Union will continue to be consensus-oriented. More actors than ever before are involved in the decision-making process and member states avoid creating a situation that would lead to fundamental cleavages. The Treaty of Nice succeeded to provide a framework where consensus is the decision-making norm.⁸ Nonetheless, it remains uncertain as to what extent this decision-making procedure can function in a Union of 25 states. Some member states might be tempted to establish permanent blocking minorities or permanent coalitions based on regional or socio-economic interests.⁹

The EU is now a Union of (mostly) small states. Table 1 demonstrates that a state is considered small or large, depending on whether its population is below 17 million or 38 million and above, according to its territorial size, Gross Domestic Product (GDP), military expenditure and the number of people working in its foreign service, with only few exceptions.

It is particularly useful to consider the administrative capacity of member states since national administrations most often represent states within EU institutions particularly in the day-to-day policy making of the Union. In order to be more specific on the capacity of national administrations to work within EU decision-making processes, information on the number of people working in each member state's foreign service has been gathered. The fourth row in the table shows the number of employees in each member state's foreign service, excluding personnel employed locally by missions abroad.

7 *Gray/Stubb*, Keynote Article, *Ibid.*, p. 19.

8 *Wessels*, Nice Results: The Millennium IGC in the EU's Evolution'. In: *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 2, 2001, p. 214–15.

9 *Ibid.*, p. 206.