

David Coombes is Professor Emeritus of the University of Limerick in Ireland, where he founded the Chair of European Studies in 1982, building on his experience as a pioneer of European Studies as an inter-disciplinary subject in England. He had previously been among the first scholars in the UK to recognise the political significance of the then nascent European Economic Community, and wrote a book about the European Commission that remained a classic (*Politics and Bureaucracy in the European Community, 1970*). However, Coombes also sustained an earlier academic interest in representative government and public policy and administration, publishing extensively on these themes both as they relate to European integration, and comparatively. Having become increasingly active during the 1990s in consultancy in post-communist Central and Eastern Europe, in 2001 Coombes began to work full-time on the task of institution-building in new states of Central Asia and the West Balkans, mainly as Chief Technical Adviser on Democratic Governance for the UNDP in Kyrgyzstan and later in Serbia and Montenegro. A native of Cornwall, Professor Coombes now lives in the Languedoc region of France. In 2006 he was made an Honorary Visiting Fellow at the University of Bristol's Governance Research Centre, and is currently working on a book, designed to draw on his large academic and practical experience both in European integration and in post-communist transition, under the provisional title: *Federal Solutions for State Failure*.