



The "business" of compliance

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Abstract

The dissertation aims at understanding and explaining the existence of variation in sustainable compliance with EU legislation in two similarly rule-taking countries. The cases under examination are Hungary and Poland which have experienced a similar historical background, similar environmental problems and have been subject to similar EU conditions and requirements for accession. Nevertheless, the EU Annual Progress Reports and the Tri-Annual Monitoring Reports showed a variation in their compliance with European environmental requirements. The existing literature has explained this divergence by taking a supply-side approach, focusing on those state actors and incumbents who could decide to supply compliance or not. In particular, researchers of compliance and of Europeanisation have focused on differences in capacity limitations or incentives to domestic actors. These supply-side approaches, however, do not seem to fully explain the existing divergence between the performances of Hungary and Poland nor do they sufficiently tackle the issue of "sustainable compliance" in the post-Accession period. In my analysis, I instead explain variation in sustainable compliance by exploring demand-side explanations. To this end, the thesis explores the hypothesis of demand for compliance emerging on the part of stakeholders who recognise its potential for profitability and, thus, influence its sustainability. Its starting point is the Tsebelis' study on stakeholders which describes them solely as "veto players" along the road to compliance; however, this analysis demonstrates that there is also another dimension to the influence they may have. I build my hypothesis around the existence of such factors as market incentives and pre-existing cooperative strategies that make compliance convenient for stakeholders. Moreover, I consider the role played by external assistance and the existence of alliances between external and domestic stakeholders to improve the overall compliance performance of less-regulated countries. The study proves the significance of market incentives and pre-existing cooperative strategies in fostering sustainable compliance while showing how the two strong explanatory variables are interlinked: compliance is not a "business" *per se*. It has a potential to be made a "good deal" via cooperative strategies among diverse stakeholders creating a win-win settlement.



Jury: Frank Schimmelfennig (ETH Zurich), László Bruszt (EUI, Supervisor), Adrienne Héritier (EUI), Wade Jacoby (Brigham Young University, via videolink)

Bio

Benedetta Cotta graduated from International Studies at the Faculty of Political Sciences “Cesare Alfieri” at the University of Florence and obtained the degree of Master in European Studies at the Faculty of Political Sciences “Roberto Ruffilli” at the University of Bologna. Since 2010, Benedetta has been a Ph. D. Candidate in the Department of Political and Social Sciences at the European University Institute under the supervision of Professor László Bruszt. Her research interests focus on the process of application of European public policies at a domestic level and, specifically, implementation of the European Environmental Policy by European Member States of Central and Eastern Europe. Benedetta’ publications include: *La questione dei rifiuti in Europa e in Italia. Un’analisi della direttiva RAEE* [The problem of waste in Europe and Italy. An analysis of the WEEE Directive], Cittalia Fondazione ANCI Ricerche, February 2010 and *Wasted compliance strategies? The policy-making styles in the implementation of European Environmental Directives*, Centro Einaudi, Laboratorio di Politica Comparata e Filosofia Pubblica, Working Paper-LPF n. 3, 2015.