The EU as an Actor in International Climate Policy: External Competence, Internal Procedure and Actual Practice

Consensus among many voices

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The ’90s
After Kyoto
Case Study – intl climate negotiations
Conclusions
The ’90s

- “Enabling conditions”: European assertiveness after 1989 coupled with US engagement
- Europeans’ interdependence open to threats to the “commons”
- Favourable… indeed, needing international rulemaking to foster EU-wide standards
- following science… and Germany
The EU till Kyoto

- Top-down targets and timetables
- Top-down (prescriptive) policies and measures
- Already proposing breaking the developed/developing countries dichotomy
- Reticence to emissions trading!?
- Paramount objective: securing the “bubble” approach
Where Member States stood?

- “Lead”* states: Germany (and CION)
- “Support”* states: (NL, DK, BE, AUS…)
- “Swing”* states”: UK; Italy; France
- “Veto”* (reticent) States: “Cohesion” countries (Spain, Portugal, Ireland, Greece)

* Adapted from Manners, Ian (2000), substance and Symbolism: An Anatomy of Cooperation in the New Europe.
EU (15) commitments under Kyoto

Emissions variation between 1990 and 2012 (%)

Fonte Comissão Europeia
After Kyoto: External

- Holding breath to salvage the treaty: real unity at work… (despite Italy…)
- Stand-alone (haphazard) leader absent US
- Internalizing climate policy into EU (& MS) foreign policy
- EU 27: still united… but mixed messages
- Lisbon Treaty & CC
EU ETS: major policy changer
Commission’s lead:
- ETS,
- Registries,
- monitoring mechanism
- Energy-climate package
Realizing the potential for Energy-Climate as EU “forefront” policy
Where Member States stand?

- “Lead”* states: “EU15 – Italy. Nuances:
  - Unprecedented confluence btw big MS (DE, UK, FR, SP)
  - Overall ambitious P&Ms
  - CION more active than ever…

- “Support”* states;
  - Slovenia; Czech republic (in part)

- “Swing”* states”: Italy

- “Veto”* (reticent) States: Other New Member States

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Before Kyoto

- No single MS can do it alone
- “mixed” competence dictates procedure
- Lacking transparency and effectiveness
- Presidency overcharge
  - DE sidetrack with “supplementarity”
  - UK & NL focused on outcomes
  - FR poor handling in The Hague
  - BE driving consensus
- Gradual ad hoc improvement from Kyoto to The Hague and Marrakesh
Complex structure... but necessary
Recent changes...

- Irish Presidency lead
- "Informal formal" arrangement
- Ensuring consistency and effectiveness
- Have EU negotiators faces
- Have permanent back-up teams to support
- Linkages between subjects
Basic structure

- Presidency
  - Coordination and guidance
- Lead negotiators
  - Convey positions and prepare deals
- Issue leaders
  - Back LNes and interact with expert groups (and PRES)
Workflow...

- Periodic Assessments
  - Mid/long Term Strategy
  - Communication Strategy
- Improved Organisation
- Negotiation
- Negotiation Mandate
- Partners
- UNFCCC COPs/SBs
Key success drivers

- Prepared Presidency
  - Clear objectives
  - Capacity to delegate on negotiators
- Supportive Commission
- Appropriate level WPIEI representation and strategic focus
- Sharp lead negotiators
  - More leeway for agreement: senior officials
Conclusions

1. EU climate policy is now both “domestic” and “international” policy
   - +10 years of P&Ms
   - ETS – 50% of emissions: an discernable interest
   - Leaders see opportunity for future EU policies on energy-climate
   - EU projected “soft power” is likely to increase (Lisbon Treaty?)
Conclusions (II)

2. Commission’s assertiveness

- European dimension of challenge
- Power grab in the works?
- Still many areas (transportation, spatial planning) requiring Member State action
3. (Some) Challenges

- Global microcosm? exceedingly hard to reach consensus with 27 MS
- Intellectual leadership: Basic, starting elements of EU global climate vision are there
- Example leadership: Energy-climate package agreement is key
- Economic crisis will influence short term (1-2 years)
4. (Selected) International position challenges:
   - Staying united as EU (no other option…)
   - “Comfort level” for “comparable efforts” for developed countries (i.e. US)
   - Capacity to assertively push developing countries without alienating them
   - Can EU broker US-China or will it be sidelined?
   - Deforestation conundrum
   - Finance & Technology deal making (or breaking…)
Thanks!

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