

EPIGOV conference 15-16 February 2007, Brussels

Summary of proceedings

The first of three conferences foreseen under the EPIGOV project on Environmental Policy Integration (EPI) and Governance took place on 15-16 February 2007 in Brussels. The conference, which was organised by the Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP), offered an opportunity for the project members to present some early project findings to the public and the policy community (day 1), as well as to discuss the link between EPI and different modes of governance within the project team (day 2).

Day 1: Better Integration: Mainstreaming Environmental Concerns in European Governance

The first day of the conference, which attracted over 80 participants (including from academia, NGOs, and the European Commission), discussed EPI under the theme: 'Better Integration: Mainstreaming Environmental Concerns in European Governance'. The first session of the day brought in perspectives on EPI from three sectors of EU policy: energy, transport, and development cooperation, presented by Nele Dhont, De Brauw Blackstone Westbroek, The Hague; Jos Dings, Transport and Environment, Brussels; and Rhiannon Williams, IES-VUB, Brussels. The presentations illustrated the interplay between different environmental and non-environmental objectives and pointed to the opportunities for EPI when those coincide. However, when there are several competing objectives it was found that EPI objectives often tend to be weakened or ignored.

The remainder of the day saw presentations of the first results of research carried out under the EPIGOV project. Michela Catenacci, FEEM, Milan, presented the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) as an example of successful EPI, illustrating the need for a mixture of policy instruments and strong leadership by the Commission. Klaus Jacob, FFU, Berlin, who had studied the quality of Impact Assessments (IAs), emphasised the significance of a country's institutional and political context for the effectiveness of IAs. Turning the attention to the strategic processes at the EU level, Ingmar von Homeyer, Ecologic, Berlin, discussed EPI opportunities under the Thematic Strategies on air pollution and the marine environment. He concluded that although in theory the strategies have some characteristics which should favour EPI, their targets are probably too weak to have a significant influence. Marc Pallemmaerts, IEEP, Brussels, sought to answer the question to what extent the EU SDS of 2001 led to EPI. He found that EPI relevant EU measures after 2001 have showed little reference to the SDS; they have rather had other drivers such as the 6th Environmental Action Programme, and the Lisbon Agenda. The four papers were commented upon by discussants and subsequently discussed with the audience.

In his concluding remarks, Robin Miège, DG Environment, European Commission, outlined a number of drivers of success for EPI, including correspondence between environmental and more general concerns in sectors, interest from the public, top-level commitment, the existence of processes and tools (eg IAs), and interdepartmental coordination. He concluded by saying that EPI needs to be a two-way process, i.e. environmental policy must not only be integrated into other sectoral policy, but must also take into account economic and social aspects.

Day 2: Environmental Policy Integration and Modes of Governance

The second day of the conference was held in a smaller workshop setting and dedicated to discussing the link between EPI and different modes of governance within the project team which is comprised of representatives from 17 partner organisations. Several external speakers were also invited to bring in new perspectives to the project. One of them was Holger Bähr, Institute for Advanced Studies, Vienna, who presented some of his findings under the parallel 6FP (6th Framework Programme) project NEWGOV. This included a framework of how to distinguish different modes of governance which was found very useful by many project members.

Four EPIGOV research papers which studied different ways to achieve EPI were presented and provoked some extensive and fruitful discussions. Mainly focusing her presentation on policy instruments, Andrea Lenschow, University of Osnabrück, concluded that EPI requires a mix of policy modes and in particular some hierarchical forms of governance. William Lafferty, ProSus, Oslo, took a procedural approach to EPI and saw it as an integral part of SD. He thereby emphasised that EPI means taking into account environmental concerns but not necessarily always prioritising them over other concerns. Måns Nilsson, SEI, Stockholm, presented a case study of policy formulation in the Swedish climate committee with focus on learning processes. He identified positive EPI effects of social learning, a process which he also described as highly political. Adriaan Schout, EIPA, Maastricht, discussed coordination capacities in the EU for promoting EPI. While Commission structures are changing in a way that would favour EPI, the European Parliament, on the other hand, experiences problems managing horizontal integration.

The final session of the day contributed to broadening the participants' perspectives on EPI by bringing in case studies from two non-environmental policy areas which also seek to achieve integration with other policies: gender mainstreaming and policy coherence for development (PCD). Two lessons which emerged from gender mainstreaming, as presented by Irmgard Schultz, Institute for Social-Ecological Research, Frankfurt, was that reporting and data collection is central to integration of sectors, and that certain aspects need to be regulated to have effect. In relation to PCD, Louise van Schaik presented research carried out at the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), which illustrated *inter alia* the degree of fragmentation of decision making in the Council and the problem it causes for integration of particular interests. The audience found it very useful to gain insights from outside the environmental policy community and it was felt that it would be valuable to continue bringing in non-environmental perspectives throughout the project.