

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

Comparative Analysis of Changing National Policy Arrangements

Paper for the ECSA Sixth Biennial International Conference
Pittsburgh, June 3-5, 1999

THEO DE BRUIJN

CSTM University of Twente
PO BOX 217, 7500 AE Enschede, the Netherlands
phone +31-53 489 4234 / fax +31-53 489 4850
e-mail: t.j.n.m.debruijn@cstm.utwente.nl

1. INTRODUCTION

The process towards European integration has changed the political setting of national governments in Western Europe. This forces national governments to reconsider and reform the institutional arrangements of national policy making. In 1998 we started up a research project that aims at mapping and explaining changes in national policy arrangements on environmental affairs. We are especially interested in the influence of European involvement on this process. The central research question is formulated as follows: *What influence does the European involvement have on national policy arrangements on environmental affairs?*

The central aim of our research is to determine whether national arrangements on environmental affairs within the European Union are converging and furthermore to explain this process. The project is part of a larger research program called "National Sovereignty and International Dependency" of the University of Twente in the Netherlands. In this program the changes in the political setting of governments in Western Europe are analyzed from institutional approaches that have been developed recently in social sciences, most notably in economics, sociology and political science. The aim is to further clarify the process of change. The program comprehends analyses of four policy areas: Higher education, social security, research and development, and environmental affairs.

In this paper we report on first results of our research¹. We start with elaborating on our research model (section 2). Then we describe recent developments within European environmental policy (section 3). In the section 4 and 5 we illustrate some developments by describing the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. We end with some concluding remarks (section 6).

¹ Since we only started this project last year, we can not present a very elaborate empirical analysis at this moment. During the last year the attention was focused on describing the field of European environmental policy, and developing the research model. This will also be the focus of this paper. Comments and suggestions are highly appreciated.

2. RESEARCH DESIGN

Research questions

The central research question is formulated as follows:

What influence does the European involvement have on national policy arrangements on environmental affairs?

1. *What developments have taken place in the environmental policy of the European Union?*
2. *Have national policy arrangements on environmental affairs changed? If so, has there been a convergence of such arrangements across countries?*
3. *Which factors can explain these changes? What is the role of the European involvement?*

The focus of this project is on analyzing and explaining developments during the last ten years in national policy arrangements on environmental affairs. Policy arrangements are defined as sets of collectively accepted working rules that guide or bind political actors and target groups in the policy arena in setting and implementing environmental policy. Within the field of environmental policy we concentrate on policies that are aiming at industry.

Research expectations

We focus on the changes in the institutions of national policy making on environmental affairs in EU member states and potential factors that may account for these changes. Within the program this project belongs to, two different types of explanatory factors are distinguished: (1) the national governments' *willingness to change* their policy making institutions; and, (2) the national governments' *need to change*. The need to change is determined by the international dependency of a policy field. The larger this dependency, the more national governments will be inclined to adapt their institutions. This may be hindered by vested interests, determined by existing institutions. We expect that for more traditional policy fields, national political institutions will primarily function as constraints and hinder institutional change.

Environmental affairs can be classified as a policy field of high dependency. Environmental problems often have an international nature. The vulnerability of competitiveness of national industries also stimulates countries to cooperate on environmental affairs. A high level of dependency is supposed to lead to convergence. As said, existing interests, visible in the degree of institutionalization at the national level, can hinder this movement. Environmental policy however is a relatively 'new' policy field. In most countries the history of environmental policy only goes back some decades at best. Before 1970 one can hardly speak of a substantively environmental policy. This has presumably lead to less institutionalization. European environmental policy and the movement towards convergence will therefore not be hindered by the degree of institutionalization at the national level, in comparison with other policy fields.

Institutions develop robustness towards changes in their functional and normative environments, as well as towards reform attempts (Olsen, 1997: 161). Even in cases with a high level of international dependency and a low degree of institutionalization some kind of performance crisis is important for changing institutions (March and Simon, 1958). On environmental affairs such a crisis is clearly visible. During the last decades we have seen growing awareness of increasing pollution levels and resource depletion, plus a growing recognition that current institutions are incapable of solving or even limiting the problems. Coleman (1990) argues that in these cases the high level of international dependency creates a demand for controlling rules or norms. In the past decades the European Union has become one of the main institutions in this respect.

In conclusion, the international dependency on environmental affairs is relatively high. Therefore there is a clear need for collaboration. The degree of institutionalization is relatively low. Moreover, there is a main international institution available providing rules. Therefore we expect convergence of national policy arrangements on environmental affairs. For that matter, convergence doesn't mean uniform and all-compassing implementation. National variations will exist due to different traditions, practices and circumstances (Olsen, 1997: 182). The European Commission also acknowledges this when they speak of 'reasonable homogeneous' implementation (CEC, 1995).

Analytical framework

Our aim in this project is in understanding institutional change in policy making in relation to European integration. Although institutions are at the center of attention in much recent research, there are still many different perspectives and meanings of the concept of institution. Scott (1995: 33) gives a broad definition that captures most approaches: "Institutions consist of cognitive, normative, and regulative structures and activities that provide stability and meaning to social behavior. Institutions are transported by various carriers - cultures, structures, and routines - and they operate at multiple levels of jurisdiction". He further distinguishes three divergent conceptions of institutions in what he calls three 'pillars' of institutions (1995: 35-45). The first pillar is the *regulative* pillar. Here the prime focus is on explicit regulative processes, which are rule setting, monitoring and sanctioning activities. The primary mechanism of control he distinguishes here is coercion. The basis of compliance is primarily sought in expedience. Formal and informal rules give structure to social behavior and temper expedience of individual actors.

The second pillar Scott distinguishes is the *normative* pillar. An emphasis is laid on values and norms. Actors conform not because "it serves their individual interests, but because it is expected of them" (p. 39). The basis for compliance therefore is social obligation.

Within the third pillar *cognitive* elements of institutions are stressed, especially constitutive rules. The behavior of actors is interpreted within broader cultural systems and social identities. The mechanism of control takes place via mimetic processes.

These three perspectives do not exclude each other, but they can be seen as different perspectives. Studies on institutions and institutional change therefore can focus on one perspective or encompass different ones.

Keman distinguishes three approaches in the study of institutions that differ in terms of the assumptions adopted on the role of institutions, the methodology applied in concrete research and the type of explanation offered (1997: 11). The first approach he distinguishes is the historical-traditional approach in which the focus lays on formal rules within political life in society. This approach is most useful for answering specific questions concerning the working and effects of formal institutions. The second approach is the cultural-organizational approach. Here the prime focus is on the context of actors. Actions by actors are interpreted within a cultural framework of rules, roles and identities. This approach can be of value with regard to analyzing policy making in relation to processes of implementation. The third approach is the political economy - rational choice approach, which focuses on rationality and self-interest of actors as the best way for understanding human behavior in a society.

The divisions by Scott and Keman make clear that many different perspectives exist on institutions and institutional change. The question therefore is what perspective we take. Our field of study encompasses the implementation of rules. Implementing environmental regulations however is also about adjusting roles. The policy approach of the European Union is intended to change the values and norms in environmental affairs. For instance, as laid out in the next section, governments should strive for participation and shared responsibility instead of only technical changes. In our view, the most interesting part of the changes therefore is on roles, styles and identities. Our prime interest goes to the "rules of the game", or in other words to the changes in the working rules, noticeable in the interaction processes, the positions the actors take, their roles, etc. Therefore we will emphasize a cultural-organizational perspective. We will concentrate our analysis on the policy-making process within the different countries (stages, parties involved). Our focus is on changes in cooperation patterns, changes in the position and roles of the parties involved in different stages of this process, and changes in outcomes (targets, instrumentation).

Research model

Our *dependent variables* concern (changes in) national policy arrangements on environmental affairs. We have defined policy arrangements as sets of collectively accepted working rules that guide or bind political actors and target groups in the policy arena in setting and implementing environmental policy. Before we have argued that we take a cultural-organizational perspective on institutional change. Although in this perspective (political) actors are expected to behave rationally (i.e. act as a result of perceptions of alternatives and their consequences), these actions must be regarded within a broader framework of rules, roles and identities (Keman, 1997: 14). Besides analyzing changes in tasks, functions, powers and responsibilities we will emphasize the cultural environment in which these tasks, functions, powers and responsibilities can be placed. Central stands whether we see a trend that environmental policy moves from a compulsory, one-sided attempt by governments to steer companies in the right direction to a voluntary quest to solve environmental problems in partnership with industry, or even to let industries solve the problems themselves (Huitema and Van Snellenberg, 1998).

In line with this notion is the framework that Lowe and Ward (1997: 25) have developed for assessing the overall impact of European integration on British environmental policy. They distinguish three dimensions:

(1) Policy style;

Richardson (1982: 2) defines policy styles as 'systems of decision-making, different procedures for making societal decisions'. He further speaks of 'standard operating procedures' for the government's approach to problem solving and the relationship between the government and other actors in the policy process (1982: 13). Lowe and Ward distinguish the profile of environmental issues (importance on the national agenda), the general policy approach to environmental problems (integrated vs. fragmented) and the implementation style (flexible, administrative style vs. a more formal and explicit approach).

(2) Policy relations;

Lowe and Ward (1997) notice that European integration for British environmental policy has resulted in changing positions of governmental and non-governmental actors. Notably in the process of policy-making there are shifts of power.

(3) Policy substance.

The third dimension relates to the content of national policy arrangements on environmental affairs (standards and instrumentation).

The framework provided by Lowe and Ward fits the center of our interest since it involves changes in the context of policy-making processes. In our analysis we are using the framework, but in a slightly altered way. Our central dependent variable is the policy style on environmental affairs. Following Richardson's definition, it comprises both the general approach to problem solving (e.g. integral vs. fragmented approach) as the relation of government to other actors (including consultation and implementation structures). Furthermore our dependent variables concern policy outcomes. European environmental policy is aiming at the broadening of the set of policy-instruments. We therefore focus upon the instrumentation of environmental policy. Moreover we look more closely at the content of environmental policy by comparing the level of standards as applied.

- Environmental policy style
 - General approach to problem-solving
 - Consultation and implementation structures
- Policy outcomes
 - Instrumentation
 - Level of Standards

Independent variables

Olsen (1997: 177) notes that national and institutional responses are likely to vary according to the degree of fit. Based on Bulmer (1983), Lowe and Ward note that "each national polity has a particular set of social, economic and institutional conditions that shapes the national interest and policy posi-

tions and gives rise to distinctive national policy styles" (1998: 4). In the context of international comparative research, the use of national policy styles is a well-known explanatory factor (e.g. Vogel, 1986). Although there is obviously no one-on-one relation between a 'national policy style' and certain approaches to different policy fields (Huitema and Van Snellenberg, 1998), we take into account the influence of national policy styles or cultural context.

Furthermore, in the OSF project policy fields are being characterized by two factors: International dependency and the degree of institutionalization. It should be noted that the level and kind of institutionalization varies among the member states of the union (Bennett and Liefferink, 1993). Some countries are at the forefront of environmental policy and stand often at the basis of the unions' environmental policy. Ironically this sometimes leads to problems with the implementation of directives. For instance, the Netherlands has been convicted by the European Court of Justice more times for not implementing a directive than the United Kingdom, whereas the Dutch environmental policy (and subsequently the kind and level of institutionalization) is without any doubt more sophisticated and advanced than the British one (Jans, 1992). In other words: The level and kind of institutionalization is country-specific.

For each member state we are determining the degree of institutionalization by looking into the development of environmental policy during the last decades. Since our interest goes to institutional change we focus upon developments in the institutional context. That means that we focus for instance on the establishment of new institutions (e.g. Ministry of Environmental Affairs), the capacity of these new institutions (e.g. the amount of civil servants and their education/expertise), the position they hold, and the legislative structure that has been built over the years.

Also the level of dependency may vary, for instance because of weather conditions and geographical circumstances. A few examples: Because of prevailing wind directions the UK doesn't 'import' a lot of air pollution, in contrast to the Netherlands. And given the fact that the Netherlands lays at the mouth of some rivers, the cleaning-up of those rivers can only be coordinated internationally. The level of dependency will be operationalized by looking into foreign trade as a percentage of GNP, and by looking into the imports and exports of pollution by a member state.

This opens up the possibility for not only testing the main hypotheses at the level of the European Union as a whole (in comparison with other policy fields), but also to assess it at the level of individual countries. If the explanatory mechanisms hold true at the program level, we expect them to apply also to the situation in individual countries. The following independent variables (and possible indicators) will be included in our analysis:

- National cultural context
- Degree of institutionalization:
 - Date of establishment of ministry of environmental affairs
 - Position of ministry
 - Amount of civil servants
 - Educational / professional experience of civil servants

- Amount of legislation
- Degree of formalization
- International dependency:
 - Foreign trade in relation to GNP
 - Pollution imports from other EU countries

Mechanisms for convergence:

Our main expected mechanism for convergence are the developments in European environmental policy-making during approximately the last three decades, starting with the first Environmental Action Plan in 1973 up till now (see the next section). As is argued in the next section, 1992 marks an important change in the developments. Since then European environmental policy, besides producing technical standards, promotes more participation with industry, multilateral steering, more emphasis on selfregulation, and the broadening of the set of policy-instruments.

Furthermore we are looking into the strategy member states have towards the EU and towards other member states. It is a known fact that nations try to 'export' their own regulatory model to Brussels and to other member states (e.g. Lowe and Ward, 1998: 291). The reason for this is that it eases the continuation of their own approach. The Commission also looks for (successful) national strategies to be transferred to the European level (Pellegrom, 1997). Activities of individual member states therefore can be a second mechanism for convergence as a result of European integration. This we call policy competition.

Furthermore we are paying attention to more or less global trends in environmental policy-making. In the last decade we can see all kinds of 'policy experiments' around the world in order to cope with increasingly tough environmental problems. Data on the developments in other parts of the world (e.g. USA) will be collected in order to compare these developments with the situation found within the EU and its member states. Global trends may lead us to alternative mechanisms for convergence.

Therefore we will look into the working of the following mechanisms for convergence:

- Developments in European environmental policy-making aiming at industry
- Policy competition
- Globalization

In figure 1 our research model is shown.

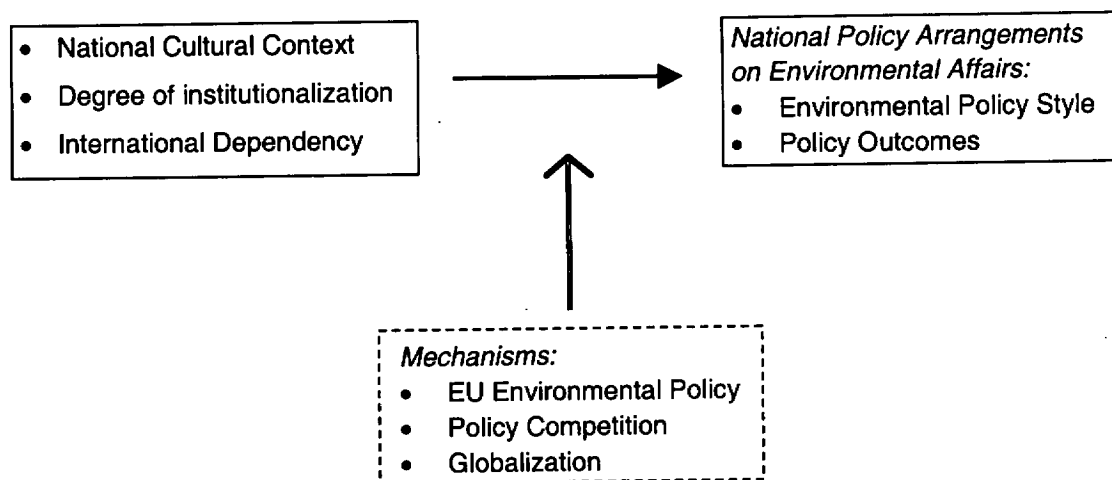


Figure 1: Research Model

Empirically our model is used and tested in two subsequent steps. First, the developments in fifteen member states are described in short, following the list of variables (research question 2). Countries like Norway and Switzerland are also included. These countries more or less resemble member states, except for the membership of the EU. The comparison between those countries and the member states can help in finding explanatory factors. During step two, in-depth case studies of approximately four countries will be carried out. The focus of the analysis here is on explaining the developments (research question 3). The final selection of cases will be made based on the results of the overview. The selection will be based on 'most different cases' in terms of intervening variables (Yin, 1984).

3. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

The European Union has become one of the most important actors that shape the industrial production function in our society. Unlike many international agreements that are hardly lived up to or at least very slowly, a lot of the EU regulation is either directly binding for the member states or has to be translated mandatory into national regulation. Also in international negotiations and agreements (for instance in Kyoto) the EU often acts as one partner in the process. The past 25 years of European environmental policy have resulted in a comprehensive system of regulations and directives. During the last decade the focus has shifted from merely producing technical standards to an emphasis on changing current patterns of development in a more integrative approach. Throughout Europe one can witness a movement that blurs the lines between governments and private actors. The involvement of partners such as companies, NGOs, consumers and governments is seen as crucial. One of the key principles of European environmental policy has become the notion of shared responsibility. It was born out of a notion that none of the partners involved (governments, industry, NGOs, general public)

has the capacity on its own to bring about the changes necessary. Collaboration is therefore seen as one of the paths towards sustainability.

The early years

The European Union was set up as an economical entity by the Rome Treaty in 1957 (The Treaty for the foundation of the European Economic Union). The participating countries didn't provide for a common environmental policy. It was not until 1973 that the first Environmental Action Program was published. Since then we can speak of an environmental policy of the Union. European Union environmental legislation has developed over the last 30 years and comprises today some 300 legal acts, including directives, regulations, decisions and recommendations (CEC, 1997).

Since the Rome Treaty didn't mention the environment as a basis for common policy, during the first years the competence for environmental policy was based on some broadly formulated articles of the treaty. Firstly Article 100 on the harmonization of regulations was being referred to. Since environmental policy can disturb the market circumstances and competitiveness for industries this argument could be used. Secondly the general aims of the Union (as stated in Article 2) were interpreted in a broad sense. These aims spoke of a 'harmonically economical development' and a 'continual and balanced expansion'. The words 'harmonically' and 'balanced' sometimes served to justify the development of environmental policy. This situation of course made (and makes) the economical dimension of environmental policy very important in the EU.

The situation changed quite drastically in 1987 with the signing of the Single European Act. This act gave the European Union explicit competence for environmental policy. The Single European Act opened up the option of regulation, for instance in harmonizing regulations, with direct reference to the environment. In the new Article 130R environmental goals were formulated: The preservation, protection and improvement of the quality of the environment, protection of human health, and cautious and rational use of material.

In European environmental policy 1992 marks an important change in the developments. From 1973 to 1992 three features characterize European environmental policy (Lévêque, 1996: 12-13). Firstly, the starting-point for environmental policy was the European economic policy. The building of a single market and the removal of barriers to trade were often the motivation for environmental measures. The absence of a reference to the environment in the Rome Treaty made this type of motivation a necessity until 1987. Secondly, European policy-making often followed initiatives on the level of the member-states, the national level, partly due to the requirement of unanimity. Thirdly, an emphasis was put on technical standards, product as well as process standards. In this the strive for harmonization of regulations and creating equal opportunities for companies throughout the Union can be recognized.

Towards sustainability

In 1992 the concept of sustainable development was added to the main aims of the Union by the

Treaty on European Union (the Maastricht Treaty). In Article 2, the Treaty states that *"the community shall have as its task to promote sustainable and non-inflationary growth respecting the environment"*. Furthermore the use of qualified majority voting on most areas of environmental legislation was introduced. Therefore the Treaty on European Union has enhanced the involvement of the European Union in environmental affairs and has changed the way in which environmental policy-making is taking place.

Furthermore the use of qualified majority voting on most areas of environmental legislation was introduced. In theory this increases the scope for European environmental policy enormously. The Treaty makes it easier to justify policy-making and eases the policy-making process itself, due to the removal of the unanimity requirement. The initiative lies more and more at the level of the Union instead of the member-states. An important principle that is reflected in the Treaty however is that of subsidiarity. Article 3 states that *"the Community will take action only if and insofar as the objectives of the proposed action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States and can therefore, by reason of the scale or effects of proposed action, be better achieved by the Community"*.

The Treaty requires the Union's policy to aim 'at a high level of protection', at rectifying environmental damage at source, and to be based on taking preventive action and making the polluter pay. Therefore the Treaty on European Union has enhanced the involvement of the European Union in environmental affairs and has changed the way in which environmental policy-making is taking place.

Also, in 1992 the fifth Environmental Action Program was published. Environmental Action Programs are important milestones in European policy-making. They provide the framework for further policy-making and establish important principles. The 5th Environmental Action Program (5EAP) is called *"Towards Sustainability"* (CEC, 1992). It covers the period between 1992-2000. The program sets longer-term objectives in a more integrated approach and focuses on a more global level than previous programs.

One of the key orientations of the new approach is the strengthening of the dialogue and consultation with concerned parties (Lévêque, 1996: 17). In this respect 5EAP speaks of shared responsibilities between governments, business and the general public. The action program also seeks to integrate environmental considerations into other policy areas. To achieve this the set of policy instruments needs to be expanded beyond direct regulation. Besides an emphasis on the use of environmental taxes, special attention is paid to the concept of voluntary agreements. While in the first twenty years most attention was paid to the regulatory framework the Commission acknowledged that legislative practices alone will not bring about the substantial changes in current trends and practices needed for sustainable development.

Based on their environmental impact five key sectors are chosen to focus upon in 5EAP: Industry, energy sector, transport, agriculture, and tourism. Industry is one of the most important sectors, responsible for more than 25% of the generation of wealth in the EU. A lot of the causes of environmental problems are in one way or the other connected to industrial production. One of the key

messages of 5EAP is that industry is not only part of the problem, but also part of the solution through the development of new processes, technologies and products. Also companies are most likely to have the knowledge to realize the solutions. Industry will therefore be one of the most important partners for governments. Given this special position we have chosen industry as the sector to focus on.

For environmental policy aiming at industry 5EAP resulted in a policy framework that rests on the following principles:

- + Intensifying the dialogue with industry;
- + The use of covenants and other forms of self-regulation;
- + The improvement of the management and control of production processes by means of strengthening the connection between environmental permits and forms of self-regulation;
- + Environmental disclosure.

Implementation by the member states of the principles underlying 5EAP will lead to changes both in terms of policy-making processes (with more participation from non-governmental parties) as in policy-content and -outcomes (the use of other policy-instruments).

In short: Since 1992 European environmental policy is aiming at changing the process of policy-making, with more involvement of target-groups. This asks for different roles, different policy-styles of (national) governments and different policy instruments that are being employed. Our project is intended to answer the question whether the new approach that is promoted by the EU is visible within the Member States.

As an illustration of the developments at the level of member states, we give a description of environmental policy in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom in the next sections.

4. THE NETHERLANDS: A PREDECESSOR IN CONSENSUS BUILDING

The Netherlands is a very densely populated country. It has a comparatively large amount of industry and intensive farming and a fast growing infrastructure. For these reasons there is a considerable degree of environmental pollution. The Netherlands furthermore scores high on international dependency. Traditionally it is a country of traders, with high import and export quota. And quite a few environmental problems originate abroad (e.g. the river Rhine problems). The Netherlands furthermore may be described as a highly consensus-based community with a planning tradition covering a wide range of social aspects. A Dutch characteristic is the long tradition of governmental consultation with various groups in society (VROM, 1997). Current practice in the environmental field continues and reinforces this custom of cooperation and shared responsibility. The same believe in cooperation between governments and industry, negotiations per sector of industry, reasonableness, covenants (instead of only command-and-control) is a key factor in the greening of industry in the Netherlands.

Dutch environmental policy is being created through a process of close cooperation between government, the business community, NGOs, and other actors. To reach for especially SMEs an indirect,

consensual steering model is often used in which policy networks play an important role (De Bruijn and Lulofs, 1999). Within this policy network intermediary organizations (for instance trade associations) are partners in policy shaping and refining, and in policy implementation.

Of course, direct regulation also plays an important part in Dutch environmental policy. But even here, consultation with all the relevant parties is important. Often however voluntary agreements are also concluded with the business community. Instead of simply imposing legislation, the Dutch government often concludes agreements with, for example, environmentally important sectors of industry regarding the implementation of environmental objectives. In practice this leads to a policy mix in which distinct companies are treated in a different way.

The early years of Dutch environmental policy

The basis for environmental policy in the Netherlands was laid in the early seventies. In 1972 the Ministry of the Environment was installed. With some urgency environmental laws were formulated. The policy during the seventies had two important characteristics:

- Fragmented approach;

Environmental problems were seen as mainly hygienic problems within separated compartments. Each environmental compartment (water, air, soil, waste, etc.) was seen as a different and separated problem area. Different laws and policies were formulated for each compartment.

- Use of permits.

The central instrument in Dutch environmental policy was the ban on performing any environmentally harmful activities without a permit. Permits were therefore the most often used policy-instrument. Lower authorities (mainly municipalities) were responsible for the employment of the instrument.

Through the years a lot of research was done to explore and explain the rather disappointing results of environmental policy. Although a permit system appears to be airtight on paper, its effectiveness in practice is often negligible. This led to the conclusion that a higher level of aspirations was unrealistic with only direct regulation. At the same time it became clear that the goals of the environmental policy were not ambitious enough. Sustainability became the central concept. This called for another strategy than the authoritarian style that accompanied the use of direct regulation. The new strategy should be aimed more specifically at eliciting private initiatives and thus shared responsibility. This approach is not only aimed at achieving more broadly based support for government policy, but also recognizes that the know-how necessary to reduce environmental pollution can be largely found at the polluters themselves (Brand et.al., 1998). Below we discuss some characteristics of this new strategy.

Towards an integrated policy-approach

The cornerstone of current Dutch environmental policy is the National Environmental Policy Plan (NEPP, published every four years, first one in 1989). This plan aims at radical changes in order to make environmental problems manageable within the next 25 years. This means for instance that emissions of the most heavily polluting substances must fall by 80-90%. This can not be achieved with conventional policy-instruments only. This is one of the reasons for the Dutch government to broaden

the mix of policy instruments in order to reach for shared responsibility.

The fragmented, sector approach was left behind and replaced in the NEPP by a thematic one:

- Climate change
- Acidification
- Spread of manure
- Diffusion
- Disposal (of waste)
- Disturbance
- Dehydration
- Dissipation

For each theme the objectives for the next 25 years are set. Furthermore relevant target-groups are identified that contribute to the problems described within the themes. Industry, agriculture, transport sector, and consumers, are some important target groups. Wherever possible, negotiated agreements are being concluded with target groups. These agreements specify their contribution to the solution of the problem.

The voluntary approach is however part of a policy mix. In this mix there is also room for other forms of steering, such as direct regulation. The policy mix as a whole is expected to be most effective. The policy mix that is being employed towards industry consists of three main paths: (1) target-group policy, (2) stimulation policy on environmental management and (3) intensification of the permit system.

(1) Target-group policy

A fundamental principle underlying the NEPP is that the responsibility for reaching the environmental targets lies primarily with the target group itself (Suurland, 1994). The setting of targets at the state-level remains the exclusive responsibility of the government (as employed in the NEPP). After the targets have been laid down, the target groups have a strong say in all further stages of the policy process. In the so-called target-group policy several sectors of industry participate in a communicative consultation with the authorities. During this process all of the relevant goals from the NEPP are translated into sector-specific goals. These goals reflect the contribution of the sector to the solution of the problems. After this a Declaration of Intent is formulated. In this document (a covenant between the parties involved) some agreements are made concerning the specific targets for the sector involved.

In homogeneous sectors of industry the sector goals are then directly translated into an implementation plan. The idea is that companies resemble each other so much that the measures needed can be generalized at the level of the sector. An example of a homogenous sector in the Netherlands is the printing industry. In heterogeneous sectors the targets need translation and specification on the company-level. Companies here have to draw up an Environmental Company Plan.

The trade association is an important actor during and after the negotiations. Often the trade association acts as the representative of a sector. The promotion of the terms of the agreements among companies within the sector is also a responsibility for the trade association.

(2) Stimulation of environmental management

The second path is the stimulation of environmental management. The central concept underlying environmental management is to stimulate the companies' own responsibility and activity. In addition to satisfying (government) regulations, we may expect environmental management to contribute to preventive goals.

In 1989, the Ministry of the Environment in the Netherlands took a position with the Memorandum on Environmental Management (VROM, 1989). The objective set by this Memorandum was that companies in the Netherlands should have a functioning environmental management system by 1995.

To achieve this aim, the Memorandum presented a program of activities. This program was based mainly on the acquisition, through research and stimulation and sample projects, of specific knowledge, which would then be disseminated among companies through guidance and education. Intermediary organizations were asked to play a special role in this. They were responsible for keeping in touch with the individual companies. By supplying information, attempts were made to stimulate the actual introduction of environmental management into the companies. The underlying idea was that by offering support, the uncertainty and therefore the cost to the individual companies can be reduced to such an extent that they will actually proceed to introduce the system.

A second objective of the policy program was to form a network on environmental management. The main role in the network was foreseen for trade associations. They had to convince their members (and possibly the remaining companies within their sector), help them actively for instance by providing handbooks and courses, and use their position of authority and power to press them into environmental management. Municipalities were expected to support these activities for the companies within their borders. A second important category was the Industrial Environmental Agencies. These organizations were especially set up for the introduction of environmental management in SMEs. They had a regional perspective and were mainly supposed to motivate and support companies. Labor Unions were expected to inform their members and thus creating support on the shopfloor. Consulting agencies could be valuable in assisting companies with the implementation process of environmental management. Finally the central government only saw a motivating task for itself. And of course they co-financed some of the activities of the other network organizations.

Research has shown that this approach was rather successful (De Bruijn and Lulofs, 1996).

(3) Direct regulation

Both former approaches are stimulating ones. Both approaches expect initiative and the taking of responsibility by the companies themselves. For companies that won't cooperate the command-and-control approach is used more severely. Local authorities have to take the Declaration of Intent (one of the outcomes of the target-group policy) into account when issuing a new permit. This way 'free-riding' can be forced back. Companies that have neglected the chance to translate the demands as laid down in the declaration in their own way (by taking into account company specific circumstances) are forced in the end by means of the permit system. Laggard companies can also expect more and more

profound inspections. The Ministry of Environmental Affairs has announced that in environmental law an article will be added that opens up the possibility to impose some special requirements concerning mandatory analysis of the environmental performance of a company (by external parties).

In conclusion, the policy style in Dutch environmental policy has changed considerably since the late eighties. The authoritarian policy style with a distant, negative attitude towards target groups has changed into a new approach designed to encourage self-regulation (Bressers and Plettenburg, 1997: 116). The emphasis nowadays lays on consultation and shared responsibility. Although direct regulation has long been the backbone of Dutch environmental policy, the range of policy instruments has been broadened and includes all kinds of voluntary approaches. The influence of European integration however is questionable, since most of the current developments preceded European developments. In fact, Dutch experiences seem to have inspired European developments.

5. THE UNITED KINGDOM: THE 'DIRTY MAN OF EUROPE'?

The UK became a member of the European Union in 1973, coincidentally the same year in which the first Environmental Action Program was published. The UK was one of the first countries to experience the industrial revolution as well as its negative environmental impacts. Some policies on nature conservation and pollution regulation were developed relatively early. Before 1973 the UK could be seen as a frontrunner on environmental affairs. Unlike some member states, the UK already had a considerable environmental infrastructure, legislation and institutions. This created difficulties in adapting to European requirements (Lowe and Ward, 1998: 16).

In 1970 the environment ministry (Department of Environment) was established as a combination of sections of the bureaucracy that had previously existed in different departments. Since 1996 the primary operational responsibility for environmental protection rests with the Environment Agency. This comprises a board of eight to fifteen members appointed by the government to implement policy (Weale, 1997: 94).

The UK holds a special position within the EU. Not only did it develop environmental policies relatively early, but the score on international dependency is relatively low. Being an island, they have no imports of pollution via rivers. Prevailing winds also make the UK a net exporter of air pollution. During the eighties the UK was depicted more and more as a source of transnational pollution problems. Examples are acid rain in Scandinavia and the radio-active contamination of the Irish Sea. This led to a notion of the UK as an environmental laggard (Lowe and Ward, 1998: 20). The Thatcher government also didn't avoid conflicts with other member states, including conflicts over environmental matters. Since Major came into power we have seen more convergence to the European agenda (idem: 23).

Traditionally the UK applied a fragmented approach to environmental problems. Separate policies were developed for air and water pollution, waste, etc. Already in 1976 however the need for a multi-media approach (in which environmental problems in different environmental compartments are seen in an in-

tegrated way) was recognized. It took until 1990 before the Environmental Protection Act was passed, which introduced Integrated Pollution Control IPC. The main objective of IPC is to prevent, minimize and render harmless emissions of substances which are actually or potentially harmful (prescribed) from larger or more environmentally significant processes (prescribed) (Gouldson and Murphy, 1998: 75). The main instrument in IPC is direct regulation (Weale, 1997: 91). Implementation however involves quite some interpretation and therefore has led to extensive consultations (and consensus) between inspectors and industry (Gouldson and Murphy, 1998: 79). This consultation however is mostly taking place only during policy implementation.

Overall, European integration has changed environmental policy in the UK quite drastically. First the policy style has been changed from a more flexible, administrative style to a more formal and explicit approach. The policy style traditionally was more cooperative than aiming at confrontation (Weale, 1997: 93). This strategy also fitted best with the neo-liberal political strategy of 1979-1997 with the Conservative Party in power. Others call it the "free market doctrine" (Gouldson and Murphy, 1998: 98). There was (implicit) support for deregulation and voluntary action. Voluntary schemes such as EMAS (and the British Standard 7750 for environmental management) were received favorably in the UK.

Second, as mentioned earlier, the position of actors has been changed. Especially environmental groups have benefited (Lowe and Ward, 1998: 26). Since the policy making process has become more transparent as a result of European integration, participation has become easier. Especially local authorities seem to have lost autonomy. The de-centralized organization of the environmental administration had to be adjusted since it is the central government that is formally responsible for EU negotiations and is held responsible for compliance (Haigh, 1986).

Finally, it is argued that European integration has led to the introduction of higher standards in the UK, despite the bargaining process in Brussels (Osborn, 1992).

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The European Union has become one of the main institutions in regulating the environment. In 1987 the EU got explicit competence for doing so. Since 1992 the concept of sustainability has even been added to the main aims of the Union. From an institution merely producing technical standards the EU nowadays has become a promoter of a comprehensive and integrated approach on environmental affairs. Key principle in this new approach is shared responsibility. This principle is aiming to change the identity of governments involved, from "prime actor" who evokes or coerces changes to "one of the partners" in a transformation process. Taking a cultural-organizational perspective on institutional change, our research is intended to answer the question whether the new approach of the EU is taken over by the member states, and thereby leading to converging national policy arrangements. Due to the fact that the international dependency on environmental affairs is high, and it is a relatively new policy field, we expect to see convergence.

At least at a superficial level this expectation makes sense. Besides looking at the developments in the

Netherlands and the United Kingdom we can give some examples that involve all member states. For instance, we have seen an increased use of voluntary approaches throughout the Union during the last years. A recent study listed more than 300 voluntary agreements that are in place throughout the EU at the national level (see figure 2).

Country	Number of environmental agreements
Austria	20
Belgium	6
Denmark	16
Finland	2
France	8
Germany	93
Greece	72
Ireland	1
Italy	11
Luxembourg	5
Netherlands	107
Portugal	10
Spain	6
Sweden	11
United Kingdom	9
Total	305

Figure 2: Number of environmental agreements in European countries (source: EEA, 1997: 24)

Voluntary agreements are found in each member state, but the Netherlands lead the way. Not only are the most agreements concluded there, but also is the instrument most broadly used in various aspects and themes of environmental policy. There are indications that environmental agreements are used more often in countries where environmental policies have matured and where there is a tradition of decentralization, consensus-building and negotiation in decision-making processes (EEA, 1997: 11). Voluntary agreements are used to cover all themes of environmental policy. They are however used especially in industry and waste management.

At first glance (given this example and the two brief country reports in the preceding sections) we can say that we see a convergence in the sense that countries in different starting positions are moving in the same direction. Whether the role perception and policy styles have changed accordingly needs to be seen. In the next two years we will map these and other developments, and try to identify explanatory factors.

References

- Brand, E.M.L., H.Th.A. Bressers and J.J. Ligteringen, *Policy science approach and Dutch aspects of negotiated agreements*, CSTM nr. 99, 1998.
- Bennett, G. and J.D. Liefferink, *Het milieubeleid van de Europese Gemeenschap: Theorie en praktijk*, in: G. Spaargaren, J.D. Liefferink, A.P.J. Mol, W. Brüssaard en W.J. Kakebeeke, *Internationaal milieubeleid*, Den Haag, 1993.
- Bressers, H. Th. A, and L.A. Plettenburg, *The Netherlands*, in: Martin Jänicke and Helmut Weidner, *National environmental policies; A comparative study of capacity-building*, Berlin, 1997: 109-131.

- Bruijn, T.J.N.M. de and K.R.D. Lulofs, *Bevordering van milieumanagement in organisaties* (Stimulation of environmental management in organizations), Twente University Press, 1996.
- Bruijn, T.J.N.M. de and .R.D. Lulofs, Driving SMEs towards Environmental Management: Policy implementation in networks, in: Ruth Hillary (ed.), *Small and Medium-sized Enterprises and the Environment*, Greenleaf publishing, 1999 (forthcoming).
- Bulmer, S., Domestic politics and European Community policy making, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 1983, 21/3: 49-63.
- CEC, *Towards Sustainability: A European Community Programme of Policy and Action in relation to the Environment and Sustainable Development*, COM(92) 23, 1992.
- CEC, 1995.
- CEC, *Guide to the Approximation of European Union Environmental Legislation*, (97) 1608.
- Coleman, J.R., *Foundations of Social Theory*, Cambridge, 1990.
- Environmental Environment Agency, *Environmental Agreements: Environmental effectiveness*, Copenhagen, 1997.
- Gouldson, A. and J. Murphy, *Regulatory Realities; The Implementation and Impact of Industrial Environmental Regulation*, London, 1998.
- Haigh, N., Devolved responsibility and centralisation: The effects of EEC environmental policy, *Public Administration*, 1986, 64: 197-207.
- Huitema, D. and A.H.L.M. van Snellenberg, Policy in style, in: *Environmental Politics*,
- Keman, H., Approaches to the Ananalysis of Institutions, in: B. Steunenberg and F.A. van Vught (eds.), *Political Institutions and Public Policy; Perspectives on European Decision Making*, Dordrecht, 1997: 1-27.
- Lévêque, F., *Environmental Policy in Europe; Industry, Competition and the Policy Process*, Brookfield, 1996.
- Lowe, P., and S. Ward, *British Environmental Policy and Europe; Politics and Policy in Transition*, London, 1998.
- March, J.G. and H.A. Simon, *Organizations*, New York, 1958.
- Olsen, J.P., European Challenges to the Nation State, in: B. Steunenberg and F.A. van Vught (eds.), *Political Institutions and Public Policy; Perspectives on European Decision Making*, Dordrecht, 1997: 157-188.
- Osbron, D., The impact of EC environmental policies on UK public administration, *Environmental Policy and Practice*, 1992, 2: 199-209.
- Pellegrom, S., The constraints of daily work in Brussels: How relevant is the input from the national capitals?, in: J.D. Liefferink and M.S. Andersen (eds.), *The innovation of EU Environmental Policy*, Copenhagen, 1996.
- Richardson, J. (ed.), *Policy styles in western Europe*, London, 1982.
- Scott, W.R., *Institutions and Organizations*, Thousand Oaks, 1995.
- Suurland, J., Voluntary agreements with industry: The case of Dutch covenants, *European Environment*, vol. 4 (4), 1994: 3-7.
- Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, *Bedrijfsinterne milieuzorg (Environmental Management)*, vergaderjaar 1988-1989, 20633, no. 3.
- Vogel, D. (1986), *National Styles of Regulation: Environmental Policy in Great Britain and the United States*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- VROM (Ministry of Environment), *Environmental Management; A general view*, The Hague, 1997.
- Waarden, F. van (1992), 'The Historical Institutionalization of Typical National Patterns in Policy Networks between State and Industry', *European Journal of Political Research*, No.21, pp.131-162.
- Weale, A., United Kingdom, in: Martin Jänicke and Helmut Weidner, *National environmental policies; A comparative study of capacity-building*, Berlin, 1997: 89-108.
- Yin, R.K., *Case study research; Design and methods*, Beverly Hills, 1984.