



Institute for European
Environmental Policy

The rise of climate policy in the EU

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Outline of presentation



- Development of EU environmental policy – Legal basis in the Treaties
- Development of EU climate change policy and its current status
- Links with energy policy

Origins of EU environmental policy



- Early measures relating to environment adopted for common market purposes
- First **Environmental Action Programme issued in 1973**
- Prompted adoption of first pieces of environmental legislation
- By 1987, some 200 pieces of environmental legislation agreed
- Lacked a clear legal base

Environment in the Treaties



- **1987 Single European Act** included new ‘**Environment Title**’
 - Broad objectives to protect environment, human health, rational use of natural resources
- **1992 Maastricht Treaty**
 - Strengthened environmental provisions and requirement for integration
 - Strengthened role of European Parliament (co-decision)
- **1997 Amsterdam Treaty**
 - Sustainable development explicit objective of European Community
 - Strengthened requirement to integrate environment in other policies
 - Co-decision became normal process for agreeing environment policy

Scope of EU environmental policy



- **Articles 174-176** provide the Community with legal competence to act in all areas of environmental policy
- Competence shared with Member States
- Community intervention limited by:
 - Principle of **subsidiarity**
 - Requirement for **unanimity** in the Council for action in ‘sensitive’ areas (fiscal measures, aspects of energy policy)

Implications of the Lisbon Treaty



- No changes to substance of Environment Title
- Environment objectives include promoting measures at the international level to deal with regional / global environmental problems, in particular **combating climate change**
- New '**Energy Title**' and objectives of EU **energy policy**:
 - ensure the functioning of the energy market;
 - ensure security of energy supply in the EU;
 - promote **energy efficiency**, energy saving and development of new and **renewable forms of energy**; and
 - promote the interconnection of energy networks
- Significant institutional and decision-making changes

Development of EU climate policy



- **European Parliament** first EU institution to recognise the need for EU policy on climate change – Resolution adopted in 1986
- In 1988 the Commission issued its **first Communication** on the subject
- In June 1990, European Council called for targets and strategies to limit GHG emissions
- Precipitated by Second World Conference on Climate Change in Nov 1990
- **Political agreement to stabilise CO2 emissions in the EU by 2000** at 1990 levels
- This early political commitment influenced negotiations on the UNFCCC and put the EU in a leading position

Initial EU climate strategy



- Proposals to take forward political commitment outlined in 1992 **Community Strategy to limit CO2 emissions and improve energy efficiency:**
 - Framework Directive on energy efficiency
 - Decision on promotion of renewables
 - Directive on combined carbon and energy tax
 - Decision on monitoring mechanism for CO2 and other GHGs
- **Carbon/energy tax proposal** was opposed by a number of Member States. Failure to reach agreement on this proposal was one of the key reasons for the emergence of emissions trading as the main instrument of EU climate policy



- 1995 Commission working paper set out **future options for the Community's climate strategy**:
 - Completing the internal market
 - Removing barriers to energy efficiency and renewables
 - Measures in the transport sector
 - Fiscal instruments
 - New technologies and R&D
- EU played key role in difficult discussions on **Kyoto Protocol**, applying pressure on the US and Japan. EU collectively committed to 8% reduction target, shared internally among Member States
- 1998/1999 presented strategy documents on how to meet the target

The ECCP and Emissions Trading



- **European Climate Change Programme (ECCP):**
 - Launched in 2000
 - Commission programme to develop proposals on policies and measures to address climate change
 - Stakeholders, national officials, NGOs, independent experts
 - First report (2001) identified cost-effective measures to address climate change
 - Second report (2003) assessed progress and new challenges
 - New round of ECCP launched in 2005
- **Emissions Trading**
 - Proposal for EU Emissions Trading Scheme presented in 2000
 - Directive adopted in 2003
 - System commenced operation in January 2005

A vision for 2020



- In 2005 the Commission presented a Communication on “**Winning the battle against global climate change**” which recommended elements to be included in the EU’s future climate change strategy
- In January 2007, the Commission presented a follow up Communication on “**Limiting Global Climate Change to 2° Celsius: The way ahead for 2020 and beyond**”
 - Proposed targets on emissions reductions and renewables
 - Targets approved by European Council in March 2007
- In January 2008, Commission presented **legislative proposals** to achieve these targets:
 - Climate Action and Renewable Energy Package
 - Agreement reached in December 2008

Adaptation to climate change



- **Green Paper on adaptation** (June 2007) sets priority areas:
 - Early action to develop adaptation strategies
 - Integrating global adaptation needs in EU's external relations
 - Filling knowledge gaps
 - European Advisory Group on Adaptation
- **White Paper on adaptation** (April 2009) outlines two-phase framework to increase the EU's resilience to climate change:
 - 2009-2012: Further research and analysis
 - 2013 onwards: Implementation of comprehensive adaptation strategy based on national and regional adaptation strategies



- Community has **limited competence on energy issues**, requirement for unanimity in Council has limited action in past
- Increased policy attention to climate change has **expanded the ambitions of Community energy policy**
 - ECCP initiated range of energy-related measures
 - Energy Efficiency Action Plan and 20% savings target
 - Energy Policy for Europe (2007)
 - Discussions on transition to eco-efficient economy
 - Increase action under Lisbon Treaty...



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Thank you

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