European Union Public Policy

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Lecture 2

Agenda-Setting 1: Role and purpose, EU political process, and the nature of agendas

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1. The place of agenda-setting in the policy process – its role and purpose

2. Agenda-setting as a political process – its distinctive aspect in the EU policy process

3. The nature of agendas – the social construction of policy issues

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1. <u>The place of agenda-setting in the policy process</u>

   - a key difference between EU and individual states

   - the link between agenda-setting and the EU integration process

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2. <u>Agenda-setting as a political process</u>

   a) the identification, determination and clarification of the issue

   - what needs to be addressed and what policy formulated?

   b) the social and political construction of the issue

   - how the issue will be processed

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3. The nature of agendas

- differing interpretations of issues, agendas and policies

- the danger of different forms of policy outcomes

- negative agenda-setting

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3. <u>The nature of agendas</u>

- problems of alternative issue interpretation and prioritisation with 25 Member states

- accepted common policy agenda areas

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3. <u>The nature of agendas</u>

   - The pre-agenda process

      - contending ideas

      - advocacy

      - learning, and knowledge of - information

      - political debate

      - political difference and/or agreement

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3. The nature of agendas

- the first stage of agenda-setting – just what is the issue really?

- additional agenda 'spillover'

- avoiding conflict between national interests and EU interests in agenda-setting

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Summary:

1. <u>The place of agenda-setting in the policy process</u>

a) No policy outcomes can be reached without firstly the issue being placed on the EU policy agenda

b) Issues reach the policy agenda usually as a result of substantial political mobilisation

c) Particular to EU is link between agenda-setting and integration process

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Summary:

1. <u>Agenda-setting as a political process</u>

a) Identification, clarification, definition of an issue is open to political self-interest

b) Definition of issue will determine which institution and organisation deals with it

c) Issues reach EU policy agenda from long-term processes and short-term crisis processes

d) EU Commission has initiated large 'bundles' of issues for EU policy agenda

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Summary:

1. <u>The nature of agendas</u>

a) Issues are open to differing interpretations among 25 Member states

b) Negative as well as positive agenda-setting

c) Complex pre-agenda process

d) Control of 'social construction' of issue is key to satisfactory outcome

e) Avoiding national interest/EU interest conflict assists speedy issue acceptance on to policy agenda