

European Union Public Policy

Professor John Wilton

Lecture 2

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



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Additional Sources:

Princen, S. (2007) ‘Agenda-setting in the E.U.: a theoretical exploration and agenda for research’, *Journal of European Public Policy*, 14:1, pp.21-38.

Princen, S. (2011) ‘Agenda-setting strategies in E.U. policy processes’, in the *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol.18, no.7, pp.927-943.

Warleigh-Lack, A. and Drachenberg, R. (2011) ‘Spillover in a soft policy era? Evidence from the Open Method of Coordination in education and training’, in the *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol.18, no.7, pp.999-1015



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Structure versus Agency
(institutions) (individuals)

----- Agenda Setting-----
-----Policy Formulation-----
-----Policy Decision-making-----
----Policy Implementation----



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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
4. Fragmentation
5. Absence of effective policy co-ordination;
6. Proto-Federalism



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1. The place of agenda-setting in the policy process

- key difference between EU and individual states
- link between agenda-setting and the EU integration process



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2. Agenda-setting as a political process

- a) the identification, determination and clarification of the issue
- b) the social and political construction of the issue



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3. The nature of agendas

- differing interpretations of issues, agendas and policies
- danger of different forms of policy outcomes
- negative agenda-setting



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3. The nature of agendas

- 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

- first stage of agenda-setting –
social construction of the issue
- additional agenda ‘spillover’
- avoiding conflict between
national interests and EU
interests in agenda-setting



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4. Fragmentation

- a) the ‘barrier’ (the EU Commission)
- b) opportunities – many ‘avenues’ and ‘ways in’ to the agenda-setting process



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4. Fragmentation of EU Public Policy agenda-setting – due to:
- a) the role, ambitions and interests of EU Commissioners;
 - b) the role, ambitions and interests of Director-Generals;
 - c) the blurred boundaries and responsibilities of Director-Generals;
 - d) the interests of the Member States in the Council of Ministers;
 - e) The European Parliament ‘shadow committees’
 - f) The E.U. court system.



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5. The absence of effective Public Policy co-ordination

a) lack of political party cohesion

(705 MEPs, 8 official political groupings)

b) the influence of national policy styles and ‘policy’ cultures



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6. Proto-Federalism

- a divided territorial structure influences pattern of agenda-setting
- regional government structure developed = more territorial divided institutional EU bodies for individuals and groups to push and argue own public policy agenda -provides multi-access to public policy agenda – fragmentation or diversity? – good or bad?

