Research Articles

Multi-Level Reinforcement: Explaining European Union Leadership in Climate Change Mitigation

*Miranda A. Schreurs and Yves Tiberghien**

Introduction

The European Union has positioned itself as the international agenda setter in relationship to climate change mitigation. At several critical junctures, the EU and its members have adopted policies and programs that have put it at the forefront of international efforts to address climate change. In January 2007, with an eye towards the post-Kyoto First Commitment period, the European Commission under a German presidency published a communiqué calling for limiting mean temperature increases to 2 degrees above pre-industrial times.[1] In March 2007, the European Council confirmed Europe's commitment to this approach announcing that the EU would cut its CO_2 emissions by 20 percent of 1990 levels by 2020, increasing this to 30 percent should other developed countries agree to take action within the framework of an international agreement.[2] Beyond this, the European Union adopted a number of other noteworthy policies. In its spring 2007 summit, the European Council committed to the establishment of a binding target of 20 percent of renewables in the EU's overall total energy consumption and a binding target of 10 percent for biofuels in the total mix of transportation fuel (petrol and diesel) consumption by 2020.[3] After the

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1. European Commission 2007.
2. "Europe to Cut Greenhouse Gases 20 Percent by 2020," *Environment News Service,* 8 March 2007, available at http://www.ens-newswire.com/ens/mar2007/2007-03-08-04.asp; "The Spring European Council: Integrated Climate Protection and Energy Policy, Progress on the Lisbon Strategy," *Press release, Germany 2007—Presidency of the European Council,* 12 March 2007, available at http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/Press_Releases/March/0312AAER.html.
3. Council of the European Union 2007.

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agreement was forged, Tony Blair remarked that Europe now has "a clear leadership position on this crucial issue facing the world."[4] In its effort to find cost effective ways to reduce emissions, the EU has also implemented the world's first international carbon emissions trading system (ETS), modeled on the successful US sulfur dioxide (SO_2) emissions trading system established by the 1990 US Clean Air Act Amendments. The Directive (2003/87/EC) mandated a system covering approximately 12,000 installations representing just under half of European CO_2 emissions. In 2004, a Linking Directive (2004/101/EC) was passed linking the joint implementation and clean development mechanisms of the Kyoto Protocol to the ETS. The ETS began operating in January 2005. While implementation is still a challenge and the EU has yet to prove that it can lead as effectively in policy outcome as in idea formulation, these policies and programs go far beyond anything proposed to date by the United States, Japan, or other major industrialized countries.

The EU and its Member States have been agenda setters at a number of other junctures as well. In the early 1990s, several European countries took the lead in establishing voluntary domestic emission reduction targets. In October 1990, reacting to these national developments, the European Ministers of Energy and the Environment announced that the European Community as a whole would seek to stabilize its joint carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions at 1990 levels by the turn of the century, a goal that the EU was able to achieve. In 1997 in the months leading up to the Kyoto Protocol negotiations, the EU set the tone for the international negotiations with its proposal that industrialized states commit to reducing their greenhouse gas emissions by 15 percent of 1990 levels by 2010. While in the end, the EU committed to a far more modest 8 percent reduction of 1990 greenhouse gas emissions by 2008–2012, the EU put other countries on the defensive, pushing them to go farther than they had said they were willing or able to go.

The most significant instance of EU leadership is arguably its decision to move forward with ratification of the Kyoto Protocol after President George W. Bush made clear on March 28, 2001 that his intention was to withdraw the US from the agreement. The US pull-out left Europe in a conundrum. The US accounted for 36.1 percent of the 1990 CO_2 emissions of industrialized countries. The EU as a whole was responsible for a somewhat smaller 24.2 percent. If the protocol was to survive, the EU would have to convince states representing another 30.8 percent of 1990 industrialized country CO_2 emissions to join it in ratifying the agreement in order to meet the Kyoto Protocol's somewhat arbitrary requirement that 55 percent of industrialized states' 1990 CO_2 emissions be represented by ratifying states in order for the agreement to go into effect. This meant that the EU, at a minimum, would have to convince Japan (respon-

4. "EU Agrees Renewable Energy Target," *BBC News,* 9 March 2007, available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6433503.stm.

sible for 8.5 percent of 1990 industrialized states' emissions) and Russia (responsible for 17.4 percent) to ratify.

Despite these obstacles, the European Council formally agreed to the Kyoto Protocol on 25 April 2002.[5] The 15 Member States of the EU, represented by Jaume Mata Palou, Minister of the Environment of Spain (which held the EU presidency at the time), and the European Commission, represented by Margot Wallström, jointly presented their instruments of ratification to the United Nations on 31 May 2002.[6]

This article addresses a series of questions, but behind them all is the overarching puzzle of why the EU has taken on and sustained such a strong leadership role vis-à-vis climate change in the face of considerable US resistance and at substantial economic cost. Given all that has been said about the weaknesses and failures of EU institutions and the complexity, slowness and indecisiveness of EU decision making, how is it possible that the EU has been able to sustain climate change leadership for so long? For the EU, international negotiations entail not only dealing with external actors, but also supranational and national ones. The EU need for internal coordination makes decision making slow and cumbersome. The different interests and perspectives of Member States can make finding common ground difficult. While the Treaty of the European Community (Maastricht Treaty) expanded European Community competencies related to the global environment, (Article 130r states that community policy on the environment shall contribute to "promoting measures at the international level to deal with regional or world wide environmental problems" and that community policy shall be based on the "precautionary principle and on the principles that preventive action should be taken"), Member States maintain competence on matters of taxation and energy policy.[7] This means that in order to adopt a community-wide carbon tax, for example, all Member States must consent to such a tax. This greatly constrains the European Union's ability to coordinate inter-sectorally on matters that are central to addressing climate change. It also puts great emphasis on the effectiveness of the EU presidency and the Council Secretariat and its Climate Working Group.[8] Given all of these constraints, what has sustained EU leadership on climate change? Why did the EU push so hard for the industrialized world to adopt emission reduction targets during the 1997 Kyoto Protocol negotiations? Why did the EU decide to push for the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol even after the US, the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases, abandoned it? And why now is the EU once again setting the high bar with its commitment to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 20 percent of 1990 levels by 2020?

5. Council Decision 2002/358/EC of 25 April 2002, p. 4. Available at http://www.climnet.org/EUenergy/ratification/EUCOM01579_en.pdf.
6. "EU Unanimously Ratifies Kyoto Protocol to Combat Climate Change," 30 May 2002, *EU @ UN* EC02-108EN, available at http://europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article_1419_en.htm.
7. Bomberg 1998, 38–40.
8. We wish to thank an anonymous reviewer for suggesting this point.

In this article, we argue that EU leadership in climate change is the result of a dynamic process of competitive multi-level reinforcement among the different EU political poles within a context of decentralized governance. EU leadership has depended upon the actions and commitments of a group of pioneering states and the leadership roles played by the European Parliament (EP) and especially, the European Commission. This upward cycle of reinforcing leadership within a quasi-federal system has been triggered by and been dependent upon strong public support and normative commitment.

Although the EU is now a body of 27 states, it is primarily the 15 states that comprised the EU prior to 2004 that are at the center of this study. While the new Member States have also all ratified the Kyoto Protocol, have their own individual targets (except for Malta and Cyprus), and participate in the EU carbon emission trading scheme, they are not part of the EU burden-sharing agreement.

The article begins with a brief overview of theoretical discussions on leadership, particularly as it pertains to the climate change arena. It then proposes a framework of multi-level mutual leadership reinforcement for explaining how and why the EU has been able to sustain leadership for over a decade's time, culminating in the decisions to ratify the Kyoto Protocol and commit to a unilateral 20 percent reduction in CO_2 emissions relative to 1990 levels by 2020. It concludes by looking to the future and whether the EU will be able to be a leader not only in agenda setting, but also in implementation of emissions cuts.

The European Union and Climate Change Leadership

At a stakeholder conference launching the second European Climate Change Programme in October 2005, Stavros Dimas, Commissioner for the Environment, explained that with the launching of this program the European Union was showing its continued commitment to climate change leadership. The programme is focused on promoting stakeholder involvement in furthering greenhouse gas emission reductions in the transportation sector (aviation and vehicles) and through carbon capture and storage, adaptation measures, and the EU emissions trading scheme. Dimas explained:

> This is not just leadership for the sake of leadership, or because we think we can fight climate change on our own—we clearly can't. The EU's commitment and success has been an inspiration to our global partners. Without it, it is certain that the Kyoto Protocol would not have entered into force.[9]

Albert Gore on a recent visit to Europe seemed to back up this perspective, arguing that the EU had an "absolutely critical leadership role to play . . . [in] helping the world make the changes it must."[10]

9. Dimas 2005.
10. Quoted in Stephen Castle, "Gore Calls on EU to Take Critical Role in Cutting Greenhouse Gas Emissions," *The Independent*, 8 March 2007, available at http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/climate_change/article2338373.ece.

European environmental leadership more generally, and climate change leadership more specifically, has attracted considerable scholarly attention.[11] Vogler suggests that a strengthening of EU institutional capacities has made it possible for the EU to take on environmental leadership although he cautions that there are still significant limitations to EU autonomy in this realm.[12] Gupta and Grubb have suggested that EU climate change leadership should be viewed along three dimensions: structural, instrumental, and directional. The EU's ability to wield leadership is in part structural; that is, it derives from Europe's substantial political strength in the global order and international respect in the area of environmental protection. It is also partly instrumental. The EU has effectively used its negotiation skills and the instrumental design of regimes to accommodate the different needs of its Member States and other country actors. Finally, it has exhibited directional leadership, changing the perceptions of others on climate change mitigation.[13]

Building on this theoretical line of reasoning, Gupta and Ringius argue that "[u]ndoubtedly, the EU has been quite successful as an international leader. The Kyoto targets would not have been as ambitious as they are without the EU."[14] They suggest, however, that for the EU to maintain its leadership it will have to enhance its directional leadership (demonstrating through successful implementation efforts that a goal is achievable), instrumental leadership (effectively promoting issue-linkage and coalition building to promote mutually beneficial solutions), and structural leadership (crafting incentives for others to cooperate).

In analyzing European environmental policy, Anthony Zito raises the question of why in some, but not all environmental cases, the EU has been able to introduce substantial policy change.[15] He suggests that while intergovernmental bargaining perspectives would assume least common denominator outcomes, and this is in fact often the case, when "collective entrepreneurship" comes into play, more demanding policies can emerge. He shows how entrepreneurs—either a Member State or States, the parliament, or the Commission—can pursue policy ideas that can lead to a revision of policy goals, in turn causing a redefinition of actor interests. This can make it possible to move beyond the least common denominator. What is important is not simply ideas, institutions, and interests by themselves but entrepreneurial opportunism, alliance formation, and persuasiveness. He concludes, however, that no set patterns exist for determining whether inter-governmental bargaining or collective entrepreneurship will dominate.

The EU has clearly been a leader in the climate change area along a number of fronts. The EU has functioned as a classic norm entrepreneur.[16] It has

11. Jordan 2005; McCormick 2001; Grant, Matthews, Newell 2000; and Weale et al. 2000.
12. Vogler 1999.
13. Gupta and Grubb 2000.
14. Gupta and Ringius 2001, 294.
15. Zito 2000.
16. Ellickson 2001; Hechter and Opp 2001; Lightfoot and Burchell 2005; and Manners 2000; 2002.

been a powerful backer of the precautionary principle in relation to climate change, heeding the warnings of the International Panel on Climate Change that anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases are warming the planet and that this could have serious ecological, health, and climatic impacts.[17] It has embraced the notion embodied in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change that the industrialized states have the responsibility to act first given their historic contributions to anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions. It has defined climate change action as a moral and ethical issue that must transcend narrow economic interests.

Beyond this, the EU has acted as a political entrepreneur,[18] actively setting targets, policies and goals that have become the international standards against which other states have had to react. It has taken the lead in policy innovation, setting examples for others to learn from, and in the politics of persuasion, convincing other states of the importance of joining it in international action.

Zito's focus on "collective entrepreneurship" is an intriguing one to use to explore the case of EU climate change leadership. Whereas Zito is concerned with particular policy decisions, however, here we attempt to explain a sustained pattern of policy innovation. Why has the EU repeatedly reasserted itself on climate change matters since the early 1990s? While there have been a few policy failures, such as the inability to establish an EU-wide carbon tax and the excessive allocation by Member States of carbon permits to their industries in the first phase of the European carbon emissions trading system, on the whole the EU has continued to be the international policy leader. What explains this?

European Institutions and Multi-Level Leadership Reinforcement

The EU can be viewed as both an arena for Member States to negotiate with each other and an actor in its own right in the international climate change negotiations.[19] It can also be considered a dynamic arena in which over time, multiple leaders have contributed ideas that have made it possible for the EU to sustain an agenda setting role internationally.

The open-ended and competitive governance structure of the EU in an issue of shared competence such as the global environment has created multiple and mutually-reinforcing opportunities for leadership. This suggests a kind of logic that is the reverse of that of veto points or veto players. In the model of veto players developed by Tsebelis, the presence of a large number of actors with the capacity to block a decision renders policy change unlikely.[20] In the EU's case, the reverse can occur as well.[21] Institutionally, environmental policy is an issue where the Commission and Member States have joint competence and

17. IPCC 2007.
18. Downs 1957; Kingdon 1984; and Tiberghien 2007.
19. Liberatore 1997; Vogler 1999; and Vogler and Bretherton 2006.
20. Tsebelis 2002.
21. Zito 2000.

one where decisions in the EU Council are taken by qualified majority voting. Under these circumstances, a positive cycle of competing leadership among different poles can take place.

In the EU climate negotiations, there have been multiple times when different actors have taken up the leadership ball. For example, the Dutch played this kind of leadership role when they held the EU presidency in 1992 and 1997, and the Irish did so when they presided over the ratification deal with Russia. The Germans and the British have quite consistently taken on climate change leadership roles within Europe, and have very visibly done so when they have held the Council presidency (2005 for Britain and 2007 for Germany). These are examples of Member States that have pushed European climate policy forward. They are in particularly powerful positions to do so when they hold the presidency of the European Council.[22]

Other Member States have reacted to the moves of leaders.[23] France, for example, tried to reassert its imprint over EU integration by using the EU Council to advance sustainability legislation. The UK put pressure on Germany to apply more stringent conditions on the allocation of pollution permits to industry under the Emissions Trading System.[24]

In turn, the Commission has seized the ball on a number of occasions and used it to push forward climate-wide action and further EU integration. An example has been the Commission's sponsorship of emissions trading. The EP has also demonstrated its relevance by passing resolutions calling for swift European action. Environmental NGOs have been able to press their concerns both with the Commission and the Parliament.[25]

This baton passing has continued over the years in a very dynamic and mutually reinforcing way. Under these conditions, multi-level governance has created not just multiple veto points, it has created numerous leadership points where competitive leadership has been initiated. While it is certainly the case that there are many points where policy proposals can be blocked, the EU's governance structure has opened numerous avenues by which advocates of climate change action have been able to inject their priorities and concerns into policy debate.

Explaining EU Leadership: Institutions, Interests, and Ideas

It is necessary to consider how institutions, interests, and ideas have come together in such a way as to make it possible for Europe to do what the US could not: effectively champion the Kyoto Protocol. The EU and the US are both ma-

22. Tallberg 2006.
23. A similar phenomenon is noted by Jordan et al. (2003) in their study of the transfer of new environmental policy instruments.
24. Roger Harrabin, "Germany to Spark 'Climate Crisis,'" *BBC News,* 27 June 2006, available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/5121334.stm.
25. McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996; and McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001.

jor economic blocks with entire sectors of the economy that would be heavily affected by mitigation policies. Why was it that in the EU economic interests (workers, firms, industries) or less-environmentally minded and economically developed states did not block the Kyoto Protocol's ratification as their counterparts succeeded in doing in the US? Why were European policy entrepreneurs able to develop winning coalitions for policy change when the arguably even stronger environmental community in the US could not? The stakes were certainly high for European economic interests and they too had numerous ways to express their voice to the EU (through committees of the Commission and lobbying of Members of the EP) and at the national level.[26] Why was industrial opposition to Kyoto not stronger?

EU policy toward climate change often has been couched in terms of an ideational agenda, namely the representation of the EU as a different kind of polity, one more concerned with international law, institution-building, and a normative vision.[27] Through their global policy-making actions the EU elites seek to increase public support for EU integration.

While these normative arguments have some validity, they fail to explain why supporters of Kyoto were able to trump opponents within Europe. More persuasive is the explanatory power that is provided by a focus on institutions, ideas, and interests and the way entrepreneurs were able to come up with creative policy approaches that made it possible to win acceptance of climate change policies and programs from interests that would otherwise most likely have joined veto blocks.[28] In particular, we look at the divide within European industry and the weakening effect this had on potential veto players; the role of public opinion, green parties, and NGOs in promoting a precautionary approach to climate change; the adoption of a burden sharing approach and the possibilities this afforded to win over potential opponents of substantive policy change; the role of national states in shaping community-wide policies; and the influence of the Commission and Parliament on driving community action. Ultimately, a critical structural variable has been the open and multi-level nature of the EU's institutional setup, which enabled a dynamic of competitive leadership reinforcement to take place.

Multi-Level Governance and Mutual Reinforcement

The strengthening of European Community environmental capacities has closely paralleled more fundamental treaty-based efforts to strengthen overall European integration and to expand the role and power of Europe in global affairs.[29] Although the European Community has been engaged in environmental protection since the early 1970s, it was not until the 1986 Single European Act

26. Michaelowa 1998.
27. Manners 2000; Reid 2004; and Rifkin 2004.
28. Zito 2000.
29. Sbragia 2002.

added a Title on the Environment that the Community's competencies were explicitly extended to the environmental realm. The Act called for Community action to "be based on the principles that preventive action should be taken, that environmental damage should be rectified at source, and that the polluter should pay." The 1992 Maastricht Treaty went a step further making the environment an explicit policy responsibility of the Community, giving the Commission greater powers to represent Member States in international organizations and with third parties, and calling upon it to promote measures to deal with regional and worldwide environmental problems.[30] While the subsidiarity principle assures that many environmental decisions remain at the local and national levels, there has been a steady strengthening of the Community's powers with time.

Treaty revisions have gradually enabled new decision-making processes and altered the rights and responsibilities of the Commission, Parliament, and Council.[31] In the past, the Council of Ministers of the Environment had to pass decisions unanimously. The Single European Act introduced qualified majority voting within the Council for matters where the Community has exclusive competence (thus, many environmental issues, but not energy or taxation questions which still function on the unanimity principle). Responding to criticisms of a democratic deficit in European policy-making, the Treaty of Maastricht and the subsequent Treaty of Amsterdam also expanded somewhat the powers of the European Parliament. While the Commission still has the exclusive power to develop proposals and the Council still meets in secret when agreeing on legislation, the Parliament was given codecision authority with the Council in amending Commission proposals and determining whether or not they will become law. As a whole, while still not immune to criticisms that a democratic deficit remains, this structure allows for multiple leadership points. Far from creating deadlock, this decentralized multi-polar structure has allowed for competitive leadership and mutual reinforcement to take place on climate change.

Interests

European Industry

As is the case in the US, European industry is divided in its views on precautionary action related to climate change. Also as in the US, there certainly were industrial voices of opposition to the Kyoto Protocol. The Centre for the New Europe, a free market think tank that was set up in Brussels in 1993, for example, called upon members of the EP to rethink radically the EU's climate change policies beyond 2012. It has argued that curbing greenhouse gas emissions under the Kyoto protocol will dampen economic growth. The European Sound Cli-

30. Hildebrand 2005; Wilkinson 2002; and Axelrod, Vig, and Schreurs 2004.
31. Gualini 2004; and Hooghe and Marks 2001.

mate Policy Coalition, a front organization funded by Exxon Mobil, aimed to coalesce a powerful group of interests against EU support for Kyoto.[32] Industrial lobbies, moreover, managed to gain the support of some key politicians who mainly argued that plans to implement cuts in greenhouse gas emissions pose a severe threat to industry. These included Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi; EU Commissioner for Transport and Energy Loyola de Palacio; EU Commissioner for the Internal Market and Services Charlie McCreevy; and EU Commission Vice President and Commissioner for Enterprises Günter Verheugen.

Yet, far more than has been the case in the US (although there are signs of change in the US in recent years), many European businesses have accepted the Kyoto Protocol framework. Many companies have joined groups like the Business Council for a Sustainable Energy Future, the European Wind Energy Association, and the International Cogeneration Alliance that accepted the need for action. Even many fossil fuel firms started to follow the lead of BP, which in 1997 publicly accepted that precautionary action was necessary.[33] In the lead-up to Kyoto, the oil firm Austrian OMV announced its support for the EU's 15 percent reduction target.[34] During 2000–2002 Royal Dutch Shell Group introduced an internal emissions trading scheme. On the whole, in Europe where corporatist traditions are quite strong, the economic community accepted the need for action as long as it could influence the shape of policies and programs. It worked to do this both at the national and the European levels.

Many firms appeared cognizant of the strong public support for action as well as the high potential for regulatory action within some Member States. Several states, such as Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands, and Norway had already introduced carbon taxes. Industry also saw the potential to move into new business areas, such as BP's move into solar energy, Royal Dutch Shell Group's development of solar and wind energy, and Austrian OMV's embrace of biofuels. The potential to shape a global carbon ETS also attracted some firms.[35] This does not mean that there were not still intense battles among corporations related to climate mitigation policies. European industry, however, did not work to derail Kyoto in the way that American industry did. To understand why it is useful to consider the strength of public opinion on climate change matters.

Public Opinion and the Media

Public opinion forms an important necessary condition for the process of mutual reinforcement. Opinion data show a trend of strengthening and widening

32. *The Independent*, 8 December 2005, available at http://news.independent.co.uk/environment/article331768.ece and http://relocalize.net/node/1717.
33. "Business Environmental Leadership Council," (no date) *Pew Center on Global Climate Change*, available at http://www.pewclimate.org/companies_leading_the_way_belc/.
34. Kirsty Hamilton, "The Oil Industry and Climate Change," *A Greenpeace Briefing*, August 1998, Amsterdam: Greenpeace International.
35. Markussen and Tinggaard Svendsen 2005.

support toward the environment, climate change, and Kyoto in particular from the early 1990s to the 2000s. As an indicator of the priority put on global environment, 88 percent of Europeans responded that "protecting the environment" should be an "EU priority" in the 2002 Eurobarometer survey (EU 15), just 3 points below the highest priority, fighting global terrorism.[36] This level of support for the environment and expectation of EU action in this area has been sustained since the mid-1990s. Responses to the same question in earlier polls were as follows: 85 percent in 1997, 83 percent in 1999, 86 percent in 2000, and 87 percent in Autumn 2001, in the heat of the ratification battle.[37]

A sampling of dozens of press reports (collected by the US State Department) appearing in European newspapers in the week after Bush's announcement that the US was leaving Kyoto show that the press was highly critical of the US decision. Perhaps not so surprisingly, left-leaning newspapers across Europe condemned the US withdrawal. The left-of-center Belgian Le Soir, for example, called it "a real scandal" and then asked, "Today, the question is not whether the 15 must continue Kyoto without the United States. . . The real question is will the Europeans be smart and courageous enough to do it?" The center-left Danish Politiken lamented that the United States had "in one fell swoop, set back international efforts to address global warming by more than ten years."[38]

What is quite remarkable is that even more conservative European newspapers criticized the move. For example, the conservative-leaning Spanish *La Razon* wrote: "The American president is more concerned with the U.S. citizen's standard of living and their energetic spending, than with the future of the planet." *The Irish Times* concluded: "The rest of the world . . . has reacted with justifiable anger and outrage to the announcement." The conservative, populist *Irish Independent* commented: "[Mr. Bush's] stance will be attributed to breathtaking arrogance or his connections with the energy industry, or a combination of the two." The center-right *Berlingske Tidende* of Denmark opined: "It is regrettable that Bush does not support the Kyoto agreement. It is particularly disappointing because it shows that the United States is in the process of running away from its international responsibilities." And the independent Greek *Kathimerini* wrote: "The White House's presumptuous stance [is] truly unacceptable. . . The fundamental problem lies in the message the White House sends. . . Cynically supporting the interests of specific U.S. industries . . . is an extremely negative paradigm for international behavior."[39]

As suggested by the media responses, European public opinion was strongly behind Kyoto. A Pew Global Attitudes Project poll conducted in August

36. Eurobarometer 58, Autumn 2002, available at http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb58/eb58_en.pdf.
37. See Eurobarometer 48, 52, 54, and 56.
38. Irene Marr, ed., "US State Department Round Up of International Press Stories on US Withdrawal from the Kyoto Protocol," available at http://www.climnet.org/news/bushroundup.html.
39. Ibid.

2001 in the four largest European states and the US found strong disapproval of the Bush administration's foreign policies in general, and especially in relation to the Kyoto Protocol. While 44 percent of US respondents disapproved of Bush's decision to withdraw, almost twice that percentage disapproved in Britain (83 percent), Italy (89 percent), Germany (87 percent), and France (85 percent).[40] Similarly, a WWF UK poll conducted in late May and early June 2001 found strong support for EU leadership in bringing the Kyoto Protocol into force even if the US did not participate. 82 percent of respondents in Belgium said the EU should play a leadership role, 91.3 percent in Spain, 88.7 percent in Italy, and 79.7 percent in the UK. There was also a strong feeling in Belgium, Spain, and the UK (but less so in Italy) that Canada, Japan, and other industrialized states should join the EU in tackling global warming rather than siding with the US and that their own governments should do more.[41] According to a top official at the DG Environment, climate change is an issue that has reached such a level of social and political acceptability across the EU that it enables (indeed, forces) the EU Commission and national leaders to produce all sorts of measures, including taxes.[42]

Nongovernmental Organizations

There is an active environmental NGO community in Europe.[43] Under the right conditions, NGOs can take advantage of windows of opportunity to induce policy change.[44] The Climate Action Network Europe, the leading NGO network working on climate change, has over 100 member organizations. They have been ardent supports of climate action.[45] At the EU level, the so-called Green 9 Group of environmental NGOs (BirdLife International, Climate Action Network Europe, European Environmental Bureau, EPH Environmental Network, the European Federation for Transport and Environment, Friends of the Earth Europe, Greenpeace, International Friends of Nature, WWF European Policy Office) has gained advisory status in EU decision-making and all members (except for Greenpeace) receive funding from the Commission to do this work.

European NGOs often receive financial support from state governments and the Commission and as a result are less dependent on membership contributions. Possibly because of this, they were quicker to take on climate change campaigns that called for changes not only in corporate, but also consumer behavior than their American counterparts. American NGOs have found them-

40. "Bush Unpopular in Europe, Seen as Unilateralist," 15 August 2001, *Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, Pew Global Attitudes Project,* available at http://pewglobal.org/reports/print.php?PageID?39.
41. WWF UK, "British Public Supports the Kyoto Protocol," 12 June 2001, *Press release, WWF UK,* available at http://www.wwf.org.uk/news/n_0000000292.asp.
42. Tiberghien's interview, Brussels, 16 June 2005.
43. Andresen and Gulbrandsen 2004.
44. McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996; and McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001.
45. Climate Action Network Europe website, available at http://www.climnet.org/index.htm.

selves having to increasingly depend on European NGOs to help them lobby the US government. A dozen US environmental groups through the US Climate Action Network made the following appeal to the EU in the period after the US withdrawal from Kyoto:

> [T]he importance of continued and strengthened EU leadership in addressing climate change for the positioning of the United States cannot be overstated. . . The EU's continued leadership will be essential to maintaining and strengthening the Kyoto Protocol. . . . Implementation efforts domestically in the EU provide an important example for U.S. lawmakers and businesses of the feasibility of real action. In addition, EU progress also applies additional pressure on U.S. businesses by highlighting the emissions trading opportunities being missed as well as the loss of market share in reduction technologies and services. The EU's positions and policies have set a tone of urgency while demonstrating feasibility, both of which will continue to be essential for overcoming the significant political barriers for the United States. In fact a concerted effort on the part of the EU and its member countries to reach out to decision makers and constituencies in the U.S. would be quite beneficial in highlighting the reality and feasibility of actions already taken and commitments made.[46]

European Norms of Social Equity and the Application of Burden Sharing

The EU's ability to push through with the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol has been heavily dependent on the adoption of internal burden sharing agreements. Burden sharing in the European context is based on European notions of solidarity, Catholic social teachings, and the social democratic notion of social equity. The EU has as one of its goals the promotion of economic and social equality among its Member States and regions. There are a significant number of institutions and policy instruments, such as the Structural and Cohesion Funds that have been developed in order to transfer wealth from richer to less well-off regions within the European Community. European environmental policy also takes into consideration the different economic status of Member States. Faster implementation of environmental policies may be expected of wealthier states. Member States are allowed to adopt measures which are more stringent than those mandated by the Community, and provisions are made for the establishment of differentiated obligations. The concept of burden sharing has its roots in the 1987 Large Combustion Plant Directive addressing acid rain, which called for a reduction in European Community SO_2 emissions by 42 percent by 1998 and 57 percent by 2003. The largest cuts were expected of Belgium, Germany, France, and the Netherlands. Ireland, Greece and Portugal, in contrast, were allowed to substantially increase their emissions.[47]

46. Comments by Lee Hay Browns, US CAN Coordinator, available at http://circa.europa.eu/Public/irc/env/action_climat/library?l?/uscan_consultation/_EN_1.0_&a?d.
47. von Moltke 1995.

In the period leading up to the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, a number of European countries began to announce greenhouse gas emission reduction targets. In 1989, the Dutch government, for example, issued its First National Environmental Policy Plan (NEPP); it called for stabilization of industrialized countries' CO_2 emissions at 1989/1990 levels by 2000 and "for the moment stabilization of CO_2 emissions on the average level of 1989 and 1990" for the Netherlands.[48] In 1990 the Dutch government went a step further when it announced its intentions to cut CO_2 emissions by 3 to 5 percent of 1989–1990 levels by 2000. The German government quickly followed suit. In June 1990, the West German government agreed to a target of 25 to 30 percent reduction in its CO_2 emissions relative to 1987 levels by 2005.[49] In 1990, the Danish government determined that it would be feasible to reduce CO_2 emissions by 20 percent relative to 1988 levels by 2005; the Austrian government set a goal of 20 percent reduction of CO_2 compared to 1988 levels by 2005.[50]

In October 1990, reacting to these national developments, the European Community Ministers of Energy and the Environment announced that the European Community as a whole would seek to stabilize their joint CO_2 emissions at 1990 levels by the turn of the century. The cohesion countries (Spain, Portugal, Greece), however, demanded that a burden sharing approach be employed. The basis for their argument was that as less developed states within Europe, they could not be expected to make cuts in their greenhouse gas emissions comparable to those being proposed by the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, and Austria.[51] The European Community target was, therefore, based on a rough assessment of what the ministers believed could be achieved based on a no-regrets strategy and the targets that had already been established by individual Member States, Germany's target being the most important in this regard. The European Community stabilization target, moreover, recognized that emissions in Spain, Greece, and Portugal would increase by substantial margins during this time frame and that other Member States, like France, would not be able or willing to reduce their emissions very much.[52]

Burden sharing was also at the basis of the 1997 negotiating strategy of the European Community going into the 1997 Kyoto Conference. The European Commission, and in particular DG XI, played a key role in pushing for an ambitious community-wide target while recognizing the need for differentiation in national targets. The Commission argued that given the national reduction targets established by Germany, Austria, and Denmark, and the expected emission

48. Netherlands Tweede Kamer, 1989–1990. Nationaal Milieubeleisplan, 130. See also van Eijndhoven 2001; and Kanie 2003.
49. Cavendar-Bares, Jäger, and Ell 2001, 69.
50. "Executive Summary of the National Communication of Austria submitted under Articles 4 and 12 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change," FCCC/NC/3 30 June 1995.
51. Ringius 1997, 8.
52. Huber and Liberatore 2001.

reductions to be achieved by the British switch from coal to natural gas, a 10 percent reduction in European emissions could be expected by 2005 regardless of any actions by other Member States. They argued that this therefore set a minimum beyond which the European Community could not go under and be taken seriously internationally. After numerous proposals were introduced and debated, Danish Environment Minister Svend Auken, suggested that internally agreement be established on a burden sharing arrangement that would lead to a 10 percent reduction for the European Community, but that a 15 percent external target be proposed. All involved doubted that the final outcome from Kyoto would require the sharper cut. The Danish proposal was accepted. The burden sharing agreement was renegotiated among Member States after the Kyoto protocol negotiations ended (Table 1).[53] In Kyoto, the EU committed to an 8 percent reduction relative to 1990 emission levels of a basket of greenhouse gases.[54] Significantly, only seven Member States were expected to reduce their emissions: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. Other EU Member States either pledged to stabilize their emissions (Finland and France) or to work to reduce the rate at which they were growing (Spain, Greece, Portugal, Sweden, and Ireland). Sweden has since changed its position from a +4 percent growth to a −4 percent reduction by 2010 and −25 percent reduction by 2030.[55]

In sum, EU leadership was made possible in part because of changing underlying conditions in the three biggest polluter states (Germany, the UK, and Italy) that meant that even under business as usual scenarios there would be significant cuts in their emissions. It would not have been possible, however, without European Community-wide acceptance of the principle of differentiated obligations. The inclusion of a burden sharing approach won over states that would otherwise have vetoed EU climate change policy targets.

The European Commission

At numerous critical points, the Commission and its environmental Directorate General have wielded their agenda-setting power, developing and promoting new policy ideas and blueprints of agreements or reinforcing other actors' demands. The Commission has followed three main goals. At one level, it has sought to respond to public opinion with outcomes thereby showing its relevance. At a second level, the Commission has used climate policy as a means to push EU integration forward and empower the Commission with new regula-

53. The changes in position between the 1997 and the 1998 commitments suggest that several states had to accept sharper relative cuts (e.g. Portugal, Denmark, Germany, the UK) while others came off with lighter, but with still substantial burdens (e.g. Austria, the Netherlands).
54. Significantly, the 1990 baseline was to become a major point of contention between the US and Europe with the US declaring that the 1990 baseline favored European states ability to meet their Kyoto target due to the collapse of the east German economy.
55. Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, available at http://www.internat.naturvardsverket.se/index.php3?main?/documents/issues/climate/climate.htm.

Table 1
The EU Burden-Sharing Agreement before and after Kyoto: Change in Emission Reduction Targets of Individual EU Member States Going into the 1997 Kyoto Negotiations and After the Kyoto Protocol was Agreed Upon[56]

Member State	*1997 Targets*	*1998 Targets*
Austria	−25%	−13%
Belgium	−10%	−7.5%
Denmark	−25%	−21%
Finland	0%	0%
France	0%	0%
Germany	−25%	−21%
Greece	+30%	+25%
Ireland	+15%	+13%
Italy	−7%	−6.5%
Luxembourg	−30%	−28%
Netherlands	−10%	−6%
Portugal	+40%	+27%
Spain	+17%	+15%
Sweden	+5%	+4%
United Kingdom	−10%	−12.5%

tory tools and monitoring powers. Finally, the Commission has used climate change to build the EU's foreign identity, especially relative to the US. As a top official of Directorate General Environment put it, the environment is a great unifying issue for EU integration (an issue of predilection), one where everyone expects that the EU must act and must lead.[57] Within the reinforcement model, it is also noteworthy that the Commission is often pushed into a reactive mode by national leaders in key countries or the EP. Thus, the Commission must propose ambitious blueprints in order to retain its agenda-setting role.

At the EU Council in Gothenburg, on 15–16 June 2001, the heads of state of member governments called on the Commission to prepare by the end of the year a proposal for the rapid ratification of the Kyoto Protocol by the European Community with the goal of having Kyoto enter into force in 2002. The proposal was issued on October 23, 2001 and noted that greenhouse gas emissions in the EU had declined by 4 percent between 1990 and 1999 but were rising in the transport sector. The conclusion of the proposal was that "the EU on the whole is firmly on the road to meeting its targets for 2008–2012."[58] The pro-

56. Ringius 1997, 7 and 32.
57. Tiberghien's interview at the EU Commission, 16 June 2005.
58. Commission of the European Communities, "Proposal for a Council Decision: Concerning the Conclusion, on Behalf of the European Community, of the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Joint Fulfillment of Commitments Thereunder," Brussels, 23.10.2001, COM(2001)579.

posal did note, however, that meeting the targets would require not only new measures in the sectors of transport, energy, housing, agriculture, households, and research, but also the adoption of an emissions trading system. The Commission thus took the initiative to also prepare a separate proposal for greenhouse gas emissions trading.[59] This represented a major shift in European attitudes towards emissions trading. When the Kyoto Protocol initially was negotiated, the Clinton Administration had been pushing for maximum flexibility in how states reached their Kyoto Protocol targets, including use of joint implementation and emissions trading. The EU had strongly opposed this idea arguing that emissions reductions should primarily be done through domestic policies and measures. Europeans had little real understanding of how emissions trading worked; they were more used to regulatory than market-based approaches to pollution control and they viewed US calls to permit emissions trading with much skepticism.[60] The idea that a price could be put on pollution was not an idea that was well accepted in social democratic Europe.

Over the course of several years, however, interest in emissions trading began to build in Europe. The UK introduced the world's first nation-wide carbon emissions trading scheme in 2002. Following these UK policy developments, the Commission began to study the possibility of an emissions trading system at the EU level. A March 2000 Commission Green Paper on greenhouse gas emissions trading in the EU helped to initiate greater debate on the potential benefits of an emissions trading system. The October 2001 Commission proposal for Europe to adopt an emissions trading system may have been as much an attempt by Europe to try to win the US back into the negotiation process as it was a recognition of the potential cost effectiveness of an emissions trading system for reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

The European Parliament

The European Parliament has provided another channel for green interests to influence policy outcome. On July 5, 2001 the European Parliament passed a resolution calling on the COP-6 Bonn Conference "to maintain the central place of the Kyoto Protocol as the driving force in the fight to concentrate attention on, and find ways of combating, climate change" and reiterating "its criticism of the unilateral US decision to reject the Kyoto Protocol as a way forward." It stressed "that, after nine years of international negotiations, the Kyoto Protocol remains the only effective instrument for combating global warming," expressed its "hopes that the current US policy review will lead to a reassess-

59. Commission of the European Communities, "Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council Establishing a Scheme for Greenhouse Gas Emission Allowance Trading Within the Community and Amending Council Directive 96/61/EC, 23.10.2001, COM(2001)581 final. Available at http://www.ghgprotocol.org/DocRoot/tiDTB03cD5tqlLZ5a0iX/European.Emissions.Trading.pdf.
60. Damro and Méndez 2003; and Jordan et al. 2003.

ment by the US administration of its position," and called "for further strenuous efforts by all parties to bring it back into the Kyoto Protocol." Finally, the resolution urged "the European Union to take the lead in careful discussions with the other members of the umbrella group, the developing countries and other parties, in order to devise an appropriate strategy for further progress in the absence of a renewed US commitment of the Kyoto Protocol and in order to ensure sufficient participation to meet the thresholds for entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol before the Rio +10 Conference in 2002."[61]

The EP played a key role in January 2005 when it passed a resolution translating the goal of limiting mean global temperature increases to 2 degrees Celsius into concrete targets for industrialized countries. The EU Council adopted these goals in March 2005, responding positively to the EP's leadership.[62]

The EP's proactive role is not surprising given the growing representation of green parties.[63] After the 1999 EP election, the European Green Parties-European Free Alliance held 36 seats and after the 2002 elections 42, making it the fourth largest political grouping in the EP. The EP has picked climate change as a strategic issue through which it can gain more legitimacy and power relative to the Council and the Commission.

National Interests and Lead States

The study of interests as a driver of EU climate policy also requires a focus on national interests. In the EU context, countries are in many ways like sub-state actors in a federal system. Many climate change initiatives have been pioneered by individual states.

Germany: No other country has been as important to establishing and achieving the EU burden sharing goal as Germany. The vast majority of the Community's emission reduction target is dependent on Germany.[64] Germany has been a leader in other ways as well. It offered to host the secretariat to the UNFCCC in Bonn and organized the first and second Conferences of the Parties (COP) to the convention. Germany again played a crucial role in the establishment of the Berlin Mandate of 1995, calling upon Annex 1 parties to formulate a protocol outlining how they would go about reducing their greenhouse gas emissions beyond the 2000 period.[65]

61. European Parliament, "Bonn Conference on Climate Change," B5-0473/2001 "European Parliament resolution on the European Union's strategy for the Bonn Conference on Climate Change (COP-6, part 2), Official Journal of the European Communities, March 14, 2002, pp. C 65/E/380-2, http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2002/ce065/ce06520020314en03800382.pdf.
62. Hassi 2005.
63. Schreurs and Papadakis 2007.
64. Ringius 1997, 37.
65. *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*, "Ad Hoc Group on the Berlin Mandate," ENB 12:28, available at http://www.iisd.ca./vol12/1228003e.html.

Particularly significant was the role played by Bündnis 90/ Die Grünen after the 1998 election when the Social Democratic Party invited the Greens to join them in a Red-Green coalition. The Greens used their position to push through ecological tax reform (reducing the tax burden on workers, while increasing it on energy consumption), a nuclear phase-out plan, active promotion of renewable energies through special feed-in tariffs, and an aggressive climate change policy.[66]

Nevertheless, even under conservative (Christian Democratic Union/ Christian Socialist Union) administrations, there has been strong support for German and EU leadership. The biggest difference in the positions of German administrations on climate change has been on how to meet emissions reduction targets, not whether or not to establish or fulfill them. It was under Helmut Kohl's leadership (and his Environment Minister Klaus Töpfer (1987–1994)) that Germany first formulated its national emissions target. The current Chancellor, Angela Merkel, was Helmut Kohl's environment minister from 1994–1998 and helped negotiate the Berlin Mandate and the Kyoto Protocol. She visited Japan in 1997 to persuade its leaders to agree to bold measures.[67] And despite Merkel's statements regarding the need to improve ties with the US left shaky by Gerhard Schroeder, she has indicated her strong commitment to Kyoto. She indicated her intentions to accept the environment and energy legislation introduced by the SDP/Green Party coalition that came into power in 1998.[68] And in the lead up to the G8 Summit she forcefully called for the US to accept that any post-2012 agreement should be conducted through the United Nations and that nations should agree to a plan to limit the warming of the planet to 2 degrees Celsius. Germany's ability to be a leader is also in part a result of its domestic economic situation. Unification in 1990 strongly affected Germany's, and by extension, the EU's possibilities. While the heavy costs that Germany has had to pay for the environmental clean-up of the former German Democratic Republic are frequently overlooked, the shut-down of many heavily polluting industries strengthened Germany's chances of achieving major emissions cuts.

Moreover, despite the windfall, Germany recognizes the need for further additional cuts. The Red-Green coalition announced a goal of reducing CO_2 emissions by 40 percent relative to 1990 levels by 2020 if other EU Member States agree to a 30 percent reduction of European emissions over the same time frame.[69] The Grand Coalition under Angela Merkel has not rescinded this goal.

The United Kingdom: For domestic political and economic reasons, the UK went from being relatively skeptical about reducing its emissions in the early

66. European Greens, National Elections, available at http://www.europeangreens.org/info/archive/results.nat.archive.html.
67. Schreurs' attendance at meeting with Angela Merkel, German Embassy in Japan, 1997.
68. Schreurs 2002.
69. Federal Ministry for the Environment 2005.

1990s to being a strong supporter of action. The UK initially presented a rather modest proposal in June 1990 to stabilize CO_2 emissions at 1990 levels by 2005.[70] In subsequent years, however, as the country continued with its transition away from coal to natural gas, it ratcheted up its goal. In 1992, it changed its national goal to stabilization of 1990 CO_2 levels by 2000, and in 1997 to 8 percent below 1990 levels during the same time frame.[71] When Tony Blair was elected prime minister in May 1997 he campaigned on a pledge to reduce CO_2 levels by 20 percent of 1990 levels by 2010, a commitment that was written into the country's climate change program in February 2000.[72] He designated responsibility for the subject to Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott. In a February 25, 2003 joint letter, Tony Blair and Goran Persson called on their European Council counterparts to agree to take the lead in becoming a low-carbon economy by reducing carbon emissions by 60 percent by 2050. They also supported establishment of an EU-wide target for renewable energy of 12 percent of total energy production by 2010.[73]

What are the origins of the UK's strong leadership in climate change? Several interests stand out: rising public concerns about global warming; the sharp drop in emissions from the switch to natural gas for electricity; and in more recent years, the UK leadership's concern about being seen as being too closely tied to the US given the UK's central role as a member of the "coalition of the willing" in Iraq. It was important for Blair to show policy leadership in an area where he could prove his independence from the US and gain a degree of leadership in EU decision-making. To Tony Blair personally, climate change policy was also a tool to regain legitimacy within his own Labor party. Finally, the UK position may reflect the historical role played by the British state as protector of the people from high danger (in this case, climate change).[74]

Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Sweden: As medium to small-sized states within the EU, the political and economic influence of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Sweden is limited on an individual basis. Combined their greenhouse gas emissions in 1990 were less than two-thirds those of Germany. In the area of climate change, however, these states have often formed coalitions in support of aggressive action. While space constraints limit our discussion of these countries, their role in internal negotiations has been crucial. The Netherlands, for example, has been a particularly strong advocate. It was perhaps fortunate coincidence that the Dutch held the presidency of the Council both at the time of the UNCED negotiations in 1992 and the EU burden sharing negotiations in 1997. Luxembourg was EU president both at the time of the Kyoto Con-

70. Churchill 1991.
71. Secretaries of State for the Environment and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office 1997.
72. Gummer and Moreland 2000, 22.
73. Blair and Persson 2003.
74. Valantin 2005, 76–78.

ference and the Kyoto Protocol's ratification. Denmark, a pioneer in the development of renewable energies, took on some of the most aggressive emission reduction targets within the Burden Sharing Agreement. Austria, which has a strong environmental movement, has been a strong supporter as well. And Sweden has been recognized as the state that has done most to protect the climate according to a new Germanwatch Climate Change Performance Index.[75]

France: France is a relatively small emitter compared to its economic size; it emits less than half the CO_2 levels of Germany. This is largely a consequence of decisions made in the 1970s to become less dependent on energy imports. Fifty-nine nuclear reactors produce 78 percent of the country's electricity and account for the bulk of the 50 percent energy autonomy boasted by France.[76] Another 12 percent of electricity is produced in hydroelectric plants. Owing to this situation and to a less active environmental community,[77] France played a limited role in the international negotiations up to 2005. France has a strong bureaucratic focus on economic competitiveness and close links between organized business groups and elite bureaucrats and politicians (both on the right and left). Economically, France has powerful oil, chemical, public works, and automobile sectors, which have been able to thwart major initiatives. The rapid ratification of Kyoto in 2000 was based on the assumption of a massive investment in wind power (15,000 additional MW). Yet, energy lobbies quickly killed the plan.[78]

At the same time, France has been undergoing some major transformations in its national interests that have helped make possible greater leadership in recent years. First, the bureaucracy has realized that Kyoto can serve to buttress the role of technocratic elites, playing up to their strengths in the nuclear and automobile sectors. Second, under the influence of adviser Nicolas Hulot and with the aim to create a new political image, President Chirac seized upon climate change as a major entrepreneurial issue.[79] In 2005, he forced his reluctant conservative parliamentary majority to vote for a constitutional amendment that enshrined the precautionary principle and fundamental environmental rights at the pinnacle of the French legal system. In 2007, he made the environment his key priority and called for the establishment of a UN Environmental Organization. Third, public opinion became more supportive in 2006–2007 in the wake of erratic climate occurrences. This was demonstrated by the sudden rise to prominence of Nicolas Hulot, a TV presenter and environmental activist who proposed an ecological pact to all presidential candidates and threatened to become a candidate himself if they did not accept the pact.[80] Leadership on climate change has also come from parliament, where Jean-Yves Le

75. Burck et al. 2006.
76. International Atomic Energy Agency, Energy and Environment Data Reference Bank, available at http://www.iaea.org/inis/aws/eedrb/data/FR-npsh.html.
77. Valantin 2005, 139.
78. Tiberghien's interview with key Member of French Parliament, August 2005.
79. Tiberghien's interview with presidential adviser on environmental issues, June 2005.
80. Hulot 2006.

Deaut (Socialist) and Nathalie Kosciusko-Morize (Conservative) have used the environment committee to spearhead major new initiatives.

Policy Entrepreneurs and Multi-Level Reinforcement

Why did the European Union feel so strongly about preserving Kyoto? What were the factors motivating the Europeans to be so disapproving of the Bush administration's actions? The US pull out could have provided Europe with an easy way out of a treaty that few states in Europe would find easy to fulfill. As of 2000, many states were already far off their Kyoto targets. Why then was European reaction so strongly opposed to Bush's abandonment of the agreement?

EU leadership has been driven by a combination of factors. While public opinion and the presence of green parties were certainly important to creating a milieu supportive of action, EU leadership resulted from a process of mutual leadership reinforcement by different actors involved in the EU's process of multi-level governance. The leadership roles played by several Member States (especially Germany, the UK, the Netherlands, and Denmark but also Austria, Finland, Luxembourg, and Sweden) were important. This leadership often played out in particularly strong ways at times when Member States held the presidency of the European Council. Perhaps recognizing the importance of this responsibility, Member States at times also showed a willingness to strategically pass the leadership baton off to the next player. As UK Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett said during a speech in Berlin just prior to Germany assuming the dual responsibility of the presidency of the European Union and of the G8: "We are willing to work with you on a concrete proposal [for climate change] to come out of your twin presidencies. . . [W]e will support you. But you must lead. . . The baton has passed to Germany. Please don't drop it."[81]

The Commission has also played a central role. In many ways, for the Commission, climate change is seen as one of the European Union's most important and defining issues, and the Kyoto Protocol a crucial show case of the EU's willingness and ability to lead on foreign policy matters. As a result, the Commission has taken very seriously research that showed that many Member States were "way off" their EU-burden sharing targets (Table 2) even though emissions at the end of 2004 were 0.9 percent below 1990 levels. The Commission is well aware that a failure to fulfill Kyoto Protocol obligations could hurt European credibility in any future global environmental negotiations and raise legitimate questions regarding Europe's ability to lead.[82] To remedy the emerging gap between the Kyoto target and reality, a first batch of implementation measures was introduced by the Commission under the European Climate Change Program adopted in June 2001. Since then, the Commission has pushed several new directives dealing with the promotion of renewables, higher

81. Beckett 2006.
82. On this point, see Skodvin and Andresen 2006.

Table 2
Gap to 2010 Target (percentage points relative to base-year emissions) for the EU 15 based on data from end 2004[83]

Member State	*Kyoto Target*	*Projected Gap to target with existing measures*	*Gap to target with additional measures*	*Gap to target with additional measures, Kyoto mechanisms, and carbon sinks*
Austria	−13.0%	+27.8	+16.3	+6.5
Belgium	−7.5%	+8.7	+6.8	+0.9
Denmark	−21.0%	+25.2	N/A	+18.0
Finland	0%	+9.9	−1.9	−4.0
France	0%	+6.4	+0.5	0.0
Germany	−21.0%	+1.2	0.0	0.0
Greece	+25.0%	+9.7	−0.1	−0.1
Ireland	+13.0%	+16.6	N/A	+6.4
Italy	−6.5%	+20.4	+10.6	+0.7
Luxembourg	−28.0%	+5.6	N/A	−18.0
Netherlands	−6.0%	+9.6	+6.7	−2.8
Portugal	+27.0%	+19.7	+15.7	+3.1
Spain	+15.0%	+36.3	N/A	+27.4
Sweden	+4.0%	−5.0	N/A	−7.9
UK	−12.5%	−6.3	−10.7	−11.3
EU-15 TTL	−8.0%	+7.4	+3.4	0.0

efficiency in heat and power generation, the energy performance of buildings, and emissions trading, among others.[84]

The EP has also been a frequent champion of EU leadership, supported by green parties and environmental NGOs. In many ways, its role has been reinforcing of the leadership exhibited by key member states and the Commission.

EU leadership on climate change may also have been partly self-serving. It became a wedge issue for the EU, a way for the EU to build coalitional strength with other nations and in the process enhance its strength vis-à-vis the United States.[85] It can also be argued that not only has the EU successfully promoted Member State and international cooperation in the obtainment of a collective good, despite at times high individual costs, but also enhanced its own institution building goals in the process.[86]

The EU institutional setting permitted a process of competitive multi-level

83. European Environmental Agency 2006, 22.
84. European Environmental Agency 2006, 34–35.
85. Rifkin 2004.
86. Frohlich, Oppenheimer, and Young 1971.

entrepreneurship. This has resulted in the EU repeatedly stepping into the lead internationally. Without the role played by various EU institutions and leading nations, it is doubtful that the Community as a whole could have reached an EU-wide stabilization target at 1990 levels by 2000, formulated a 15 percent emissions reduction target going into Kyoto, worked out an EU Burden Sharing Agreement of -8 percent, or pushed through ratification. EU institutions were crucial moreover to the adoption of a fundamental idea that has shaped European action on climate change: the precautionary principle. Yet, as Zito warns,

> the large number of access points to the EU system favors the position of entrepreneurs in bringing new ideas to the EU agenda. . . , the very existence of these access points, makes entrepreneurial efforts later in the policy process that much more difficult. Fertile access points become formidable veto points when opposing status quo interests scramble to challenge a new proposal.[87]

In many ways, the EU's ability to maintain its climate change leadership role in the future will become more difficult given that in the post-2012 period, all EU Member States will be expected to participate in any EU-wide climate change agreement. The EU-27 is far more diverse not only in economic terms, but also in terms of environmental capacity and interests. This could make the baton passing more difficult. Moreover, the kind of windfall greenhouse gas reduction benefits experienced by Germany due to the collapse of the eastern German economy and the UK due to the transition from coal to natural gas that so greatly facilitated the formation of the EU burden sharing agreement cannot be expected to reoccur. This suggests that leadership will be harder, but certainly not impossible for Europe to sustain in the future should it choose to do so.

Conclusion

If the EU succeeds in meeting its burden sharing target, then the EU will have achieved something of a moral victory vis-à-vis the US. If the EU fails, then cynics are likely to charge that while Europe is good at setting lofty goals, it is poor at actually implementing them. On the other hand, it could be argued that even if the EU fails to fulfill its goals completely, it will still have influenced policy change and innovation both at home and internationally through the power of example in the areas of energy efficiency improvements, renewable energy development, carbon emissions trading, energy taxes, and joint implementation. The EU, moreover, will have made a strong case for international cooperation in addressing a serious threat to the planet. The signing and ratification of the Kyoto Protocol has helped to put a variety of new policies and measures in motion. It has also helped to initiate joint projects among developed and transition countries.

87. Zito 2000b, 172.

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