



# The EU Open Method of Co-ordination: Risks & Chances for Environmental Policy

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- **What is the Open Method of Co-ordination ?**
- **Analysis of EU environmental policy today**
  - **Three distinct regimes**, & variants (some with 'OMC')
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- **Pros & Cons** of OMC in EU environment policy
- **Some building blocks** for environmental OMC
- **Outlook: 2,5 OMCs & a Job for the Convention**



## Policy Context: Some Cornerstones

- Env. sidelined in **Convention**, can that change?
- **Lisbon Process** sets EC agenda in Eu. Council, shows **aversion to environment** & sustainability
- **Enlargement** may weaken environment policy; Solution?: **OMC and environmental conditions**
- **Renewed interest in EPI**, which results in 2003?
- **WSSD** reinforced SD and SD strategies
- **Council** (Environment) **more vocal** (EPI, Lisbon)
- **OMC** pervades **Community environment policy**



# What is the **Open Method of Co-ordination**?

- Goes back to **Maastricht Treaty** and need to **enforce criteria** for economic and fiscal stability
  - Based on „**common concern**“ + limited EU role
  - **Broad Economic Policy Guidelines** (new Bible)
  - **Multilateral Surveillance**, MS assessed annually
  - Commission/Council **can shame MS**
  - **Heavy fines** for failing Maastricht Criteria
- Process is taken very **seriously** at high level
- „**Maastricht Treaty Process**“ grew into **OMC**



# What is the **Open Method of Co-ordination**?

- **Lisbon European Council (March 2000)**  
**Established ,new open method of coordination‘**
  - by improving the **existing processes**,
  - introducing a **new OMC** at all levels, coupled with a
  - stronger **guiding & coordinating role** for Eu. Council
  - to ensure more **coherent strategic direction** and
  - **effective monitoring of progress**
- **[respecting economic and fiscal **orthodoxy**]**
- **Has spread to other areas (economic & social)**



# What is the **Open Method of Co-ordination**?

- **Experience has been thoroughly positive:**
  - useful, efficient, and flexible (de Búrca & Zeitlin, no date)
  - encourages **convergence** of objectives, performance and policy
  - **advancing common concerns** and interests of the MS
    - while respecting their **autonomy and diversity**.
  - genuinely **joint and multi-level** in its operation.
  - committing MS to **share information, compare, reassess policy**
  - **deliberative problem-solving** and **crossnational learning**
  - **good for complex sensitive areas** where
    - **diversity** precludes harmonisation
    - **inaction** is politically unacceptable
    - widespread **strategic uncertainty** recommends mutual learning



# What can OMC do for Environment Policy?

- **Internal Market Regime:** nothing
- **Environment Policy Regime:** OMC-type now:
  - **Combined with EC policy & law**, e.g. ESF, WFD, IPPC
  - **In Technical Committees** in many much legislation
  - **Networks** such as IMPEL, EPRG, 'Water Directors'
  - **Structures** like Topic Centres, Concerted Actions
- **Sustainability Policy Regime:**
  - **Cardiff EPI Process** resembles OMC (ECCP, TERM)
  - **NSSD-and-EU-SDS** may be helped by OMC?

# Pros & Cons of the OMC in Environment

- OMC very flexible; ,OMC-type' <-> ,real' OMC \$
- Law basis needed for ,real' OMC, not OMC-type
- Stimulation of MSs' policies; not a sedative
  - In economic OMC stimulation prevailed;  
any sedation due to Maastricht Criteria, not OMC
- Synergies from OMC & binding laws
- Regime competition is good for environment
- Networking: initiation, continuity, innovation
- Enlargement: OMC flexibility & ,phase-in' help





# Building Blocks for OMC in Environment

- **Build case for Green OMC contribution to EU !**
  - Can you **convince Amato** ? Look at **Eurobarometer** !
  - Develop OMC for global challenges (**multilateralism**)
- Needs **Environment Policy Guidelines**, and
- **Build Sustainability Policy Guidelines**
  - Build on **existing commitments** (EC law; MEAs etc.)
  - **Emulate country (credit) ratings**; **OECD env. reviews**
  - **Many possible fields of application**

# Functions for OMC in Environment

- **Correspond** with economic and social OMCs
- **Feed into European Council** spring meetings
- **Give benefits to environment**, nature, resources
- **Push information routine**; **performance reviews**
- **Policy learning**, „**harvesting of policy lessons**“
  - **Reward innovators**; shame **dragging**
- **Strengthen Networks**; help manage pol. agenda
- **‘Green’** the **Broad Economic Policy Guidelines**



# Make Full Use of OMC

- Create fully-fledged „**Environment Policy OMC**“ to mirror **economic and social OMCs**
  - Ministries of **Environment**, EU Institutions
- Create fully-fledged, „**Cardiff OMC**“ for EPI
  - Ministries of **Environment** & **Heads of Government**
- Check options for „**WSSD OMC**“ for SD & SDS
  - Ministries of **Environment**, **Development**, **Foreign ?**
  - Keep open to Non-Member States
- **Convention should prepare legal bases !**



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