

Alexander Moutchnik:

**Running at least twice as fast as possible. Politicization of Environmental Management Standards.**

“Well, in *our* country”, said Alice, still panting a little, “you’d generally get to somewhere else – if you run very fast for a long time as we’ve been doing.”

“A slow sort of country!” said the Queen. “Now, *here*, you see, it takes all the running *you* can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that”

Lewis Carroll, Trough the Looking-Glass, 1872

The last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed rapid growth in the adoption of EMStandards within enterprises of all types and sizes all over the world. Such factors as the improvement of environmental awareness in the society, technical and technological innovations, increasing of quality und environmental requirements, political and economic integration of different countries have combined to produce this trend and have made the ISO-approach popular. Today is the ISO 14001 an essential part of the management in the most of the transnational corporations and their numerous suppliers, as well as in some small and medium sized companies primary with an adverse environmental impact. The diffusion of EMStandards is taking place now mainly in the public administrations, municipal authorities and other political institutions. The standards are therefore widely accepted not only by business, but also by politics.

This paper focuses on the role of EMStandards in the interaction and interdependency of business and politics. It examines the diffusion processes of standardized environmental management practices and points out the political factors, that transform a voluntary environmental initiative of enterprises into a mandatory one. Empirical case study will allow to analyze the politicization of EMStandards as a new research field of the environmental studies and it will show the ways for companies to keep the run in a continual improvement of their overall environmental performance “at least twice as fast as possible”, that is afforded nowadays – just like in the case of the Carroll’s Queen – by the state authorities.