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Environmental Policy Integration In Hungary: An Overview Of Current Status And Challenges

This paper examines the integration of environmental concerns and priorities into national level sectoral policies of Hungary, focusing on the energy, transport and agricultural sectors. The paper starts with a general discussion of issues in environmental policy integration (EPI), including the origins of the concept, definitional challenges and basic instruments available to policy makers for doing EPI. Next, it examines the importance of environmental issues in sectoral policies in Hungary by taking a closer look at the major policy documents, at the institutional setup and at the fiscal practices in energy, transport and agricultural sectors. The selected sectoral case studies provide illuminating examples of adequate integration of environmental concerns in some policy sub-sectors (for instance the supply side of energy) co-existing with apparent exclusion of environmental issues in others (for instance transport development). The authors attempt to explain the reasons why EPI has proved 'easier' with regard to some issues and hard to achieve in other sectors. Barriers to horizontal policy integration are discussed and the importance of understanding 'sectoring' as an obstacle to the achievement of integrated policy making is emphasised. The paper concludes that while sectoral policy making has yielded some positive results from an environmental perspective in fields such as energy efficiency, there is significant room for improvement when it comes to real integration of environmental concerns into sectoral policies. Finally, some concrete recommendations on how to better integrate environmental concerns in the sectors in the scope of our paper are given.