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Environmental Policy Integration through Diagonal Policy-Processes – the European Dimension of the Greening of German Transport Policy

The European Union has become an essential factor in national policy-processes. Either decision-making is located on European level or national decisions are corresponding with existing European law: Supranational actors and the need of negotiations between member states are influencing policies, institutions and political conflicts in different ways. Even though, European integration research hardly asks, to which degree policies are connected between levels as well as between sectors. In this context, the paper describes, how environmental policy on European level influences policy-innovations in national (German) transport policy. It looks at two-dimensional decision processes and addresses the problem of “diagonal policy-making“ to environmental policy integration in the transport sector. The label “diagonal process” is a useful concept, as policy-processes proceeding through different levels and sectors cover vertical as well as horizontal interrelations.

These complex, diagonal processes will be explained by two case studies: One case is the Commissions proposal of a Regulation concerning the liberalisation of regional public passenger transport markets (COM 2002/107). The other example is the implementation of a Directive on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (2001/42/EC). On the basis of these case studies, two general pathways of diagonal processes will be outlined: In the first case the environmental and the transport sector are connected on European level and multi-level governance takes place in the transport arena. In contrast to that, the second case is an European environmental regulation establishing links to transport policy mainly on national level. The paper will consider and illustrate, which differences between these two pathways exist. Finally, the paper addresses the question how change of national Transport Policy in terms of an adoption of environmental objectives takes place and how far this leads to environmental policy integration in institutions and in the value systems of political actors.