Recent decades have seen a rise in the significance of governance layers beyond the nation state and even Europe. Nonetheless, few efforts have been made thus far to systematically examine the EU’s interaction with global policy regimes. This book maps the relative importance of EU policies in the multi-level global governance system, in comparison with national and global activities. It provides a unique comparative analysis of the EU’s capacity for projecting its policies outward. Focusing on trade policy, agriculture, food safety, competition, social rights, environmental policy, transport, migration, nuclear non-proliferation, or financial regulation, each chapter contributes to a better understanding of the EU’s role in shaping global policies, the mechanisms it uses and the conditions leading to success or failure.

The contributors’ comparative research highlights that policy export is a demanding phenomenon that faces severe limitations and frequently comes with drawbacks. Still, EU policy export played a key role in shaping the rules of the global trade regime and influenced global policy outcomes – at least to a minor extent or in technical aspects – in the majority of the covered policy areas. Overall however, this book reveals that the EU not only aims to export its policies, but interacts with its global environment in a number of distinct ways, including policy import and policy protection, to shield it from global pressures.

Concluding with a comparison of all policies on the meta-level and relevant policy recommendations, this book will be of interest to students, scholars and practitioners of European politics, European public policy, global governance and international relations.


The Institute for European Integration Research (EIF) is dedicated to research in the field of European integration. Methods and theories from various disciplines are combined to maximize insight. Most central to our interdisciplinary approach are political, legal, social, and historical perspectives. Researchers continually engage in cooperation of a multi- and trans-disciplinary nature.

EIF’s research programme focuses on theory-driven empirical analysis and comparison of EU policy areas. This includes the direct and indirect effects of EU policy on both the national and global levels. The existence of significant differences between individual policies is an integral characteristic of European integration. Systematic in-depth as well as cross-comparative analysis of various activities of the EU therefore allow for a better understanding of the European multi-level system, and support further development of theories of political steering and problem-solving in multi-level systems.

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