



Das Institut für europäische Integrationsforschung (EIF)
der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften lädt ein:

VIENNA LECTURE ON THE EUROPEAN UNION

Wednesday 18 May 2011

By Tanja Börzel (Freie Universität Berlin)

EU Environmental Policy: The Challenges of Accession

Accession to the EU is both a blessing and a curse to the transition countries in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). The implementation of EU policies supports their transformation from authoritarian regimes with centralized planned economies into liberal democracies with market economies. However, they face great difficulties in restructuring their institutions in order to meet the conditions for EU membership. This is particularly true for environmental policy, where the need for effective policies is as high as are the financial and administrative burdens to set up new and stricter regulation. The EU provides comprehensive environmental regulation; yet, the adoption of the green acquis runs into serious problems concerning the effectiveness and the legitimacy of EU policies. These problems cannot simply be solved by invoking EU conditionality, since these countries are weak states that often lack the administrative capacity rather than the political willingness to effectively implement EU policies. Therefore, so-called new modes of governance that seek to involve business and civil society in policy were expected to emerge promoting the effective adoption of the acquis. New modes of governance would help provide the accession countries with important resources necessary to make EU policies work.

Yet, we hardly find new modes of governance in CEE countries that joined the EU in 2004 and 2007. Traditional command-and-control approaches tend to prevail, because the state is weaker in post-communist transition countries than in Western industrialized democracies. Unlike in the EU's older member states, the governments of CEE accession countries have not been strong enough to induce industry to cooperate on voluntary self-regulation or public-private co-regulation. Nor could governments always deliver the agreements reached with business and civil society in the implementation of EU policies. The weakness of CEE countries has resulted in a serious paradox- the stronger the need for new modes of governance to compensate weak state capacities in the implementation of EU policies, the less likely they are to emerge and to be effective, precisely because states are weak.

Commentator: Ulrich Brand (University of Vienna)

The lecture will take place at 17h00 in the Sitzungssaal der ÖAW,
Dr. Ignaz Seipel-Platz 2, 1010 Wien

Lecture to be followed by a discussion and a wine & cheese reception
For more information please visit the website of EIF at www.eif.oeaw.ac.at