Abstract

Despite its very strong economic roots, the European Union has nonetheless become an international leader in environmental protection and sustainable development policy. Environmental concerns have consequently shifted from being a marginal aspect of the European integration process to one that routinely grabs news headlines and, unlike many other EU policy areas, generates relatively strong political support from EU citizens. These policies, which now impinge on most sectors and areas of the economy, have generally proven resilient to recent economic and deregulatory pressures. This chapter documents and explores the reasons behind the relatively rapid transformation in the EU’s governing capabilities in this policy area, explores the main dynamics of policy-making from different analytical perspectives, and identifies future challenges including Brexit.

Keywords: environmental policy, European Union, environmental protection, sustainable development, European integration, environmental action programme, policy-making, Europeanization, internationalization, cross-sectoral policy integration