



The EU Open Method of Co-ordination: Risks & Chances for Environmental Policy

R. Andreas Kraemer
Director - Ecologic

Content

- Comments on **policy context** for the debate
- What is the **Open Method of Co-ordination** ?
- **Analysis of EU environmental policy today**
 - **Three distinct regimes**, & variants (some with 'OMC')
 - **How much room** is there for OMC (or similar) ?
- **Pros & Cons** of OMC in EU environment policy
- **Some building blocks** for environmental OMC
- **Outlook: 2,5 OMCs & a Job for the Convention**

Policy Context: Some Cornerstones

- Env. sidelined in **Convention**, can that change?
- **Lisbon Process** sets EC agenda in Eu. Council, shows **aversion to environment** & sustainability
- **Enlargement** may weaken environment policy; Solution?: **OMC and environmental conditions**
- **Renewed interest in EPI**, which results in 2003?
- **WSSD** reinforced SD and SD strategies
- **Council** (Environment) **more vocal** (EPI, Lisbon)
- **OMC** pervades **Community environment policy**

What is the **Open Method of Co-ordination**?

- Goes back to **Maastricht Treaty** and need to **enforce criteria** for economic and fiscal stability
 - Based on „**common concern**“ + limited EU role
 - **Broad Economic Policy Guidelines** (new Bible)
 - **Multilateral Surveillance**, MS assessed annually
 - Commission/Council **can shame MS**
 - **Heavy fines** for failing Maastricht Criteria
- Process is taken very **seriously** at high level
- „**Maastricht Treaty Process**“ grew into OMC

What is the **Open Method of Co-ordination**?

- **Lisbon European Council (March 2000)**
Established ,new open method of coordination‘
 - by improving the **existing processes**,
 - introducing a **new OMC** at all levels, coupled with a
 - stronger **guiding & coordinating role** for Eu. Council
 - to ensure more **coherent strategic direction** and
 - **effective monitoring of progress**
- **[respecting economic and fiscal **orthodoxy**]**
- **Has spread to other areas (economic & social)**

What is the **Open Method of Co-ordination**?

- **Experience has been thoroughly positive:**
 - useful, efficient, and flexible (de Búrca & Zeitlin, no date)
 - encourages **convergence** of objectives, performance and policy
 - **advancing common concerns** and interests of the MS
 - while respecting their **autonomy and diversity**.
 - genuinely **joint and multi-level** in its operation.
 - committing MS to **share information, compare, reassess policy**
 - **deliberative problem-solving** and **crossnational learning**
 - **good for complex sensitive areas** where
 - **diversity** precludes harmonisation
 - **inaction** is politically unacceptable
 - widespread **strategic uncertainty** recommends mutual learning

What can OMC do for Environment Policy?

- **Internal Market Regime:** nothing
- **Environment Policy Regime:** OMC-type now:
 - Combined with EC policy & law, e.g. ESF, WFD, IPPC
 - In Technical Committees in many much legislation
 - Networks such as IMPEL, EPRG, 'Water Directors'
 - Structures like Topic Centres, Concerted Actions
- **Sustainability Policy Regime:**
 - Cardiff EPI Process resembles OMC (ECCP, TERM)
 - NSSD-and-EU-SDS may be helped by OMC?

Pros & Cons of the OMC in Environment

- OMC very **flexible**; ,**OMC-type**' <-> ,real' **OMC \$**
- **Law basis needed for ,real' OMC, not OMC-type**
- **Stimulation** of MSs' policies; **not a sedative**
 - In economic OMC stimulation prevailed;
any sedation due to Maastricht Criteria, not OMC
- **Synergies** from OMC & binding laws
- Regime **competition is good** for environment
- **Networking**: initiation, continuity, innovation
- **Enlargement**: OMC **flexibility** & ,**phase-in**' help

Building Blocks for OMC in Environment

- Build case for Green **OMC contribution to EU !**
 - Can you **convince Amato** ? Look at **Eurobarometer !**
 - Develop OMC for global challenges (**multilateralism**)
- Needs **Environment Policy Guidelines**, and
- Build **Sustainability Policy Guidelines**
 - Build on **existing commitments** (EC law; MEAs etc.)
 - **Emulate country (credit) ratings**; **OECD env. reviews**
 - Many possible fields of application

Functions for OMC in Environment

- **Correspond** with economic and social OMCs
- **Feed into European Council** spring meetings
- Give **benefits to environment**, nature, resources
- Push **information routine**; **performance reviews**
- Policy learning, „**harvesting of policy lessons**“
 - Reward **innovators**; shame **dragging**
- **Strengthen Networks**; help manage pol. agenda
- **‘Green’** the **Broad Economic Policy Guidelines**

Make Full Use of OMC

- Create fully-fledged „**Environment Policy OMC**“ to mirror **economic and social OMCs**
 - Ministries of **Environment**, EU Institutions
- Create fully-fledged, „**Cardiff OMC**“ for EPI
 - Ministries of **Environment** & **Heads of Government**
- Check options for „**WSSD OMC**“ for SD & SDS
 - Ministries of **Environment**, **Development**, **Foreign ?**
 - Keep open to Non-Member States
- **Convention should prepare legal bases !**



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