

Call for Papers for International Conference:
Environmental Protection in the Global Twentieth Century:
International Organizations, Networks and
Diffusion of Ideas and Policies

Research College (Kolleg-Forschergruppe, KFG) "The Transformative Power of Europe",

Free University of Berlin

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Issues of pollution, excessive use of natural resources, nature protection and climate change transcend national boundaries. They tend to be of a regional or even global scope. In historical perspective, the European Union was relatively slow to take up environmental protection (beyond health and safety related issues) in the 1970s, followed by the formal introduction of this policy field into the EC treaty with the Single European Act only in 1986-7. In fact, other International Organizations (IOs) had addressed environmental issues much earlier starting with the League of Nations in inter-war Europe. After World War II the United Nations and its Economic Commission for Europe, the Council of Europe and the Organization for European Economic Co-operation and Development, the present-day OECD, addressed environmental issues such as water and air pollution by pooling scientific expertise, collecting comparative data, propagating and funding international scientific programmes and inducing greater media attention to the cross-border dimension of environmental protection. These IOs became norm entrepreneurs in environmental protection and crucial sites for the diffusion of ideas and policies to other IOs, to states and governments and probably, across world regions and regional integration organizations.

In a long-term perspective covering what might be called the global twentieth century, the UN Conference Man and the Environment in 1972 appears to be a turning point. From then onwards, environmental protection increasingly became the focus of policy-making at the transnational and international level, in the context of IOs, and was no longer confined to bilateral treaties, for example concerning river pollution. This is also when the European Communities developed their first Environmental Action Programmes and began to become involved in issues such as bird and habitat protection. The conference will take the event of 1972 as a point of departure for analyzing the origins of the role of IOs in environmental protection prior to this event and for exploring how it evolved until the early 1990s, with a perspective to the present-day.

Academically, the conference has two main objectives. The first objective is to explore the structural environment for IO activities and agenda-setting in environmental protection, especially their linkages with scientific institutions and experts and any network-type relationships with societal NGO actors as well as member states and governments, which were pioneering new environmental policies nationally. The second aim is to study how the IOs helped to diffuse, or transfer, ideas and policy concepts – by uploading them from societal or state actors at national or regional level or by downloading and re-contextualizing ideas and policy concepts developed within and among IOs to national and regional policy-makers or even, businesses. We assume, and hope to explore in greater detail, that despite the absence in most cases of formal decision-making powers, IOs have been able to play a key role in the diffusion of ideas and policy concepts drawing upon crucial competences such as information gathering and diffusion and translating ideas and concepts across institutional and cultural divides, for example.

Strategically, the proposed conference has three main objectives. The first objective is to de-center the EU as a transformative power by embedding the analysis of its role in environmental protection within a broader study of the transnationalization of this policy field which includes other IOs (including those operating globally and in other world regions) and the EU's relations with them. The second aim is to connect historical research, which so far has mainly focused on the history of the environment rather than of environmental protection, with social science research on regional and global environmental policy and politics. The third objective is to broaden the study of IOs and environmental protection in Europe to a comparative regional and global analysis which begins to address the question to what

extent "Europe" and its regional integration institutions have been the recipients of ideas and policy concepts downloaded from global organizations like the UN or other non-European national or regional actors like the US, and to what extent more recently, "Europe" and the EU have also increasingly acted as norm entrepreneurs and exporters in this policy field.

Historical research on Europe and other world regions in the twentieth-century is currently beginning to develop an interest in the multiple roles of IOs including those with limited policy-making powers, but manifold other functions. At a global level this type of research appears to be even less developed. The initial purpose of the conference is, therefore, to identify and mobilize researchers, research projects and avenues of further enquiry regarding IOs and environmental protection, and bringing these researchers in dialogue with social scientists who work in the field.

We invite paper proposals on any topic or period, which address the role of IOs, experts and networks in the diffusion of ideas and policies of environmental protection. All papers must be based in original research drawing upon archival sources, interviews, media reporting etc. Paper proposals must include the name of the paper-giver, a short CV and a paper abstract of no more than 250 words. The deadline for the submission of paper proposals is **15 January 2012**. Paper proposals have to be sent simultaneously to Wolfram.Kaiser@port.ac.uk and jhmeyer@gmx.de.

Successful applicants will be informed on or shortly after **31 January 2012**. The KFG "The Transformative Power of Europe" will cover their overnight accommodation in Berlin and reasonable travel costs.

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