

Abstract

Integration in the European Union (EU) in terms of the legal as well as economic spheres has grown in depth, scope and speed since its establishment. The EU has significantly affected various fields of policies within its member states, including the environment. This is understood as the 'Europeanisation process'. The Netherlands, considered one of the pioneering countries to establish environmental measures, has approximately 80% of its legislation in the environmental field derived from European legislation. The thesis seeks to answer how Dutch environmental policy has been affected by the EU over the past twenty years. The implementation process of three environmental directives is analysed concerning water, biodiversity and air, to understand this process. The concept of Europeanisation and the related theory of goodness of fit is applied to argue that the implementation process of European environmental directives in the Netherlands is effective if there are no major adjustments necessary in the national setting, i.e. there is no policy or institutional misfit between domestic and European legislation, and no veto players impede the process. On the other hand, the implementation process is significantly more complicated if the directive needs extensive transformations. It is concluded that the EU has shaped the structure of the Dutch environmental policy, however, the ease of the implementation process of the selected directives is not only affected by the 'goodness of fit' or the presence veto players, but there are other factors affecting how smooth the process is.