

# European Union Public Policy

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## Lecture 2

**Agenda-Setting : Role and purpose, EU political process, and the nature of agendas**

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### Additional Sources:

Princen, S. (2007) ‘Agenda-setting in the E.U.: a theoretical exploration and agenda for research’, *Journal of European Public Policy*, 14:1, pp.21-38.

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Warleigh-Lack, A. and Drachenberg, R. (2011) ‘Spillover in a soft policy era? Evidence from the Open Method of Coordination in education and training’, in the *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol.18, no.7, pp.999-1015

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1. The place of agenda-setting in the policy process – its role and purpose
2. Agenda-setting as a political process – its distinctive aspect in the EU policy process
3. The nature of agendas – the social construction of policy issues
4. Fragmentation
5. Absence of effective policy co-ordination;
6. Proto-Federalism

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### 1. The place of agenda-setting in the policy process

- key difference between EU and individual states
- link between agenda-setting and the EU integration process

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### 2. Agenda-setting as a political process

a) the identification, determination and clarification of the issue

b) the social and political construction of the issue

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### 3. The nature of agendas

- differing interpretations of issues, agendas and policies
- danger of different forms of policy outcomes
- negative agenda-setting

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### 3. The nature of agendas

- The pre-agenda process
  - contending ideas
  - advocacy
  - learning, and knowledge of -  
information
  - political debate
  - political difference and/or agreement

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### 3. The nature of agendas

- first stage of agenda-setting –  
social construction of the issue
- additional agenda ‘spillover’
- avoiding conflict between  
national interests and EU  
interests in agenda-setting



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### 4. Fragmentation

- a) the ‘barrier’ (the EU Commission)
- b) opportunities – many ‘avenues’ and ‘ways in’ to the agenda-setting process

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4. Fragmentation of EU Public Policy agenda-setting – due to:
- a) the role, ambitions and interests of EU Commissioners;
  - b) the role, ambitions and interests of Director-Generals;
  - c) the blurred boundaries and responsibilities of Director-Generals;
  - d) the interests of the Member States in the Council of Ministers;
  - e) The European Parliament ‘shadow committees’
  - f) The E.U. court system.

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### 5. The absence of effective Public Policy co-ordination

a) lack of political party cohesion

(720 MEPs, 8 officially recognised political groupings)

b) the influence of national policy styles and 'policy' cultures

(i.e. Commissioners and Directorate-Generals)

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### 6. Proto-Federalism

- a divided territorial structure influences pattern of agenda-setting
- regional government structure developed = more territorial divided institutional EU bodies for individuals and groups to push and argue own public policy agenda -provides multi-access to public policy agenda – fragmentation or diversity? – good or bad?