

# European Union Public Policy

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## Lecture 2a

**Agenda-Setting 2:  
fragmentation and the absence  
of effective policy co-ordination**

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Four areas of the agenda-setting process in EU Public Policy influenced by the features of E.U. institutions:

1. Fragmentation
2. Absence of effective policy co-ordination;
3. Proto-Federalism;
4. 'Winners and losers'

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### 1. Fragmentation

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

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1. 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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### 2. The absence of effective Public Policy co-ordination

a) lack of political party cohesion;

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

- an 'institutionalisation' problem

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2. The absence of effective Public Policy co-ordination
  - a) A lack of cohesive political party units at EU level;
  - b) The variety of national styles and cultures found in E.U. Commissioners;
  - c) The variety of national styles and cultures found in the Director-Generals;
  - d) The lack of institutionalisation of the EU policy bureaucracy

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### 3. Proto-Federalism

- a divided territorial structure influences pattern of agenda-setting
  - regional government structure developed
- = more territorial institutional EU bodies for individuals and groups to push and argue own public policy agenda

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### 3. Proto-Federalism

- agenda-setting as also about definition of issue (i.e. how issue defined once it makes it on to the agenda)
- public policy issues shaped through complex social and political processes and influences  
(different national policy styles and cultures)



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### 3. Proto-Federalism

- a) Divided territorial structure of E.U. (including Regional govt.) provides multi-access to public policy agenda – fragmentation or diversity?
- b) Variety of ‘national’ public policy styles provide an agenda of range of public policy alternatives

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### 4. ‘Winners and losers’

- EU institutions create ‘winners and losers’ in EU public policy agenda-setting.
- ‘distributive’ policies more easily accepted on to public policy agenda = ‘winners’
- policies that advantage groups, regions or states at expense of others in E.U. are more difficult to get accepted on to public policy agenda = ‘losers’

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### Summary:

1. The fragmentation of E.U. institutions and diverse territorial representation offers many different points of access to the public policy agenda – provides a range of public policy alternatives and issues competing to get on agenda
2. Variation and range of points of access (fragmentation) in E.U. public policy agenda-setting is totally opposite to E.U. public policy implementation process