

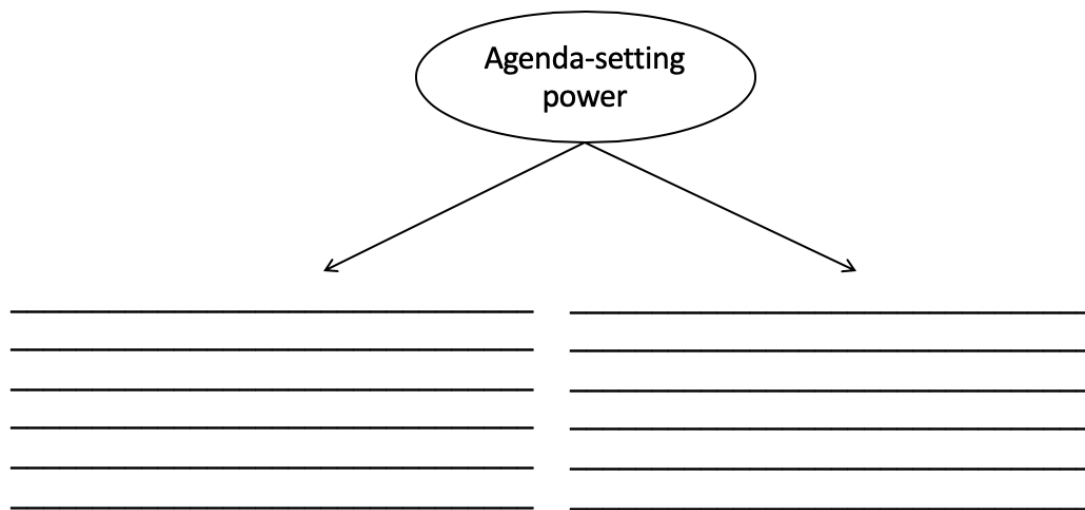
Course: GV251

Class teacher: Kira Gartzou-Katsouyanni

## **LT Week 1: Understanding EU Policy-Making: Actors, Institutions and Agendas**

**PART I) Concepts**

**(a) What is agenda-setting power?**

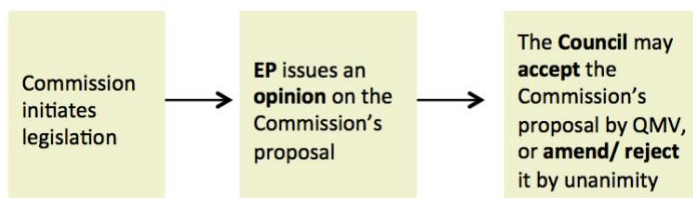


**(b) What is the division of labour between the European Council and the European Commission with regard to policy initiation, according to the EU treaties?**

**PART II) Formal agenda-setting power**

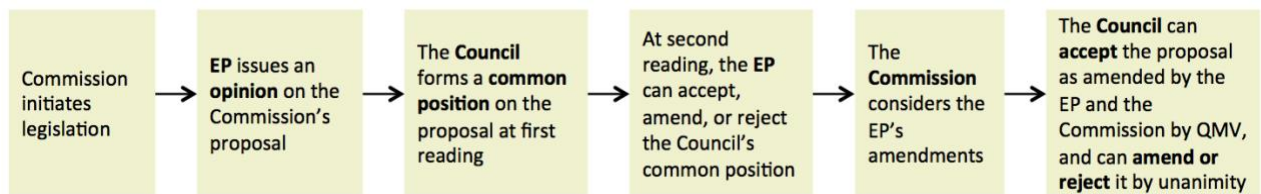
**(c) In each of the following legislative procedures, which institution(s) hold formal agenda-setting power, according to the definition used in Pollack 1997 (which is the same as the definition in Tsebelis & Garrett 2001)?**

**i) Consultation (Rome):** \_\_\_\_\_

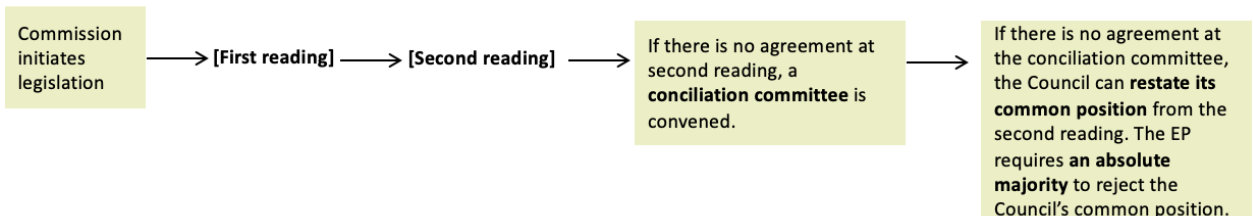


\*NB: Under the Luxembourg compromise, member-states could veto legislative proposals that threatened their vital interests. This effectively meant that the adoption rule in the Council became the same as the amendment/rejection rule.

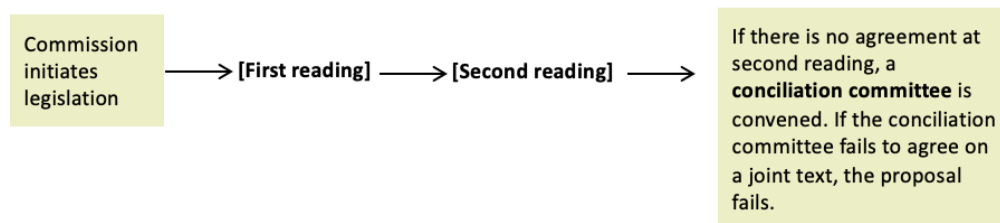
ii) Cooperation (Single European Act): \_\_\_\_\_



iii) Co-decision I (Maastricht): \_\_\_\_\_



iv) Co-decision II/ ordinary legislative procedure (Amsterdam/ Lisbon): \_\_\_\_\_



(d) In the absence of formal agenda-setting power in the sense of the term used by Pollack, does the right of legislative initiative confer any real power to the European Commission?

*Please answer the question from the perspective of (i) rationalist theoretical approaches and (ii) constructivist theoretical approaches.*

### **PART III) Informal agenda-setting power**

#### **(e) What strategies can different actors use to place an issue on the substantive policy agenda of the EU?**

*In providing your answer, please consider the four strategies mentioned in the Princen 2011 article, and match each example to one of those strategies.*

##### **Strategy 1:** \_\_\_\_\_

i) "Vertical venue shopping (...) also occurs between the EU and other international organizations. For prospective agenda-setters, making the detour via other international venues may be an effective way of eventually securing access to the EU agenda. Jörg Dostal (2004) has shown how the OECD played a crucial role in defining the key issues and approaches in welfare reform and labour market policy, which were subsequently 'imported' into the EU agenda." [Princen 2011]

##### **Strategy 2:** \_\_\_\_\_

ii) The following is an extract from an article in a German newspaper about some remarks that the President of the Eurogroup made in 2017, which were widely interpreted to be about Southern European profligacy before the crisis: *"I can't spend all my money on alcohol and women and then ask for help."* This metaphor by President of the Eurogroup Dijsselbloem aroused anger in Southern European countries. But yet he's right! (...) In fact, other metaphors are available too. Thinking about it soberly, one could praise Dijsselbloem for explaining a socio-economic theorem using an understandable language. I'm talking about the Rotten Kid Theorem of the American Nobel-prize winner Gary Becker, who described in 34 typewritten pages already in 1974 what happens when a well-intended head of family gives gifts to his children. (...). Of course, neither the Greeks and the Spaniards nor the Portuguese are actually spoiled brats. But this is how it goes with metaphors."

[Excerpt from an article by journalist Corinna Budras, published in the German newspaper Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung on 26/3/17, available at <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/wirtschaft/eurokrise/kritik-fuer-gleichnis-von-dijsselbloem-14942246.html>.]

##### **Strategy 3:** \_\_\_\_\_

iii) "As discussed throughout, the key institution in the supply of access to non-state interests is the Commission, which has an incentive to grant private interest groups with access in exchange for specialized information and expertise. Given the size and complexity of the task of regulating a single market of over 450 million people and 25 national regulatory systems, the Commission is an extremely small bureaucracy. Not surprisingly, officials often lack the necessary detailed expertise and knowledge of sectoral practices and problems." [Hix and Hoyland 2011, pp. 227-228, see MT W11]

##### **Strategy 4:** \_\_\_\_\_

iii) The following is an extract from Marina Cino-Pagliarello's paper about the creation of the EU's first student exchange programme in 1985, which was called Comett (it's something similar to Erasmus). The EU doesn't have a legal competence in education, and before 1985, the EU's activities in education policy were extremely limited. In explaining why the member-states agreed to create this first EU-level student exchange programme in 1985, Cino-Pagliarello ascribes an important role to the framing by Commissioner Peter Sutherland of the Comett programme as something that would boost the EU's competitiveness, and that as a result as something that *was* the EU's business: "In his short mandate as Commissioner for DG Social Affairs, Peter Sutherland emerged as the problem entrepreneur who played a key role in the emergence of the problem definition of education as an economic issue. During his term of office as Commissioner for DG Social Affairs, he held and advocated clear ideas about education as a factor for economic growth, which constituted a roadmap for his initiatives, such as the Comett programme." [Cino-Pagliarello 2018, working paper]

- (f) Under what conditions is the Commission's informal agenda-setting power highest, compared to the informal agenda-setting power of the Council?

*In providing your answer, you can draw inspiration from the articles by Bocquillon and Dobbels as well as Pollack.*

**PART IV) An empirical example: Some attempts by the Juncker Commission to increase its agenda-setting power in migration policy**

**(g) The Agenda on Migration**

In May 2015, the newly formed Juncker Commission adopted the Agenda on Migration, a Communication which set out the legislative proposals that the Juncker Commission intended to put forward during its five-year term. Please look at the video that the Commission created on the occasion of the publication of the Agenda on Migration and consider the following questions:

- i. **What kinds of arguments does Juncker use in order to convince viewers that the Commission is right to propose policies to redistribute refugees across member-states (relocation programme), and to increase the legal pathways for economic migration in the EU?**
- ii. **Do those kinds of arguments conform to a division of labour whereby political priorities are set in the Council, while the Commission merely implements them? What does this tell us about the extent of the Commission's informal agenda-setting power?**
- iii. **In your view, how will the politicisation of the Commission that would result if the *Spitzenkandidaten* system persists alter the balance of power between the Commission and the Council in the domain of policy initiation?**

### Text of the video:

- Text: Why is migration a priority?
- Juncker: It is true that since a couple of years there is an acute migratory pressure, we observe a doubling of the number of those who would like to - and who have to - arrive in Europe. They come from everywhere, from Afghanistan, from Kosovo, from Ukraine, from Ethiopia, a bit from everywhere. Our citizens see an increasing number of refugees who want to and will move to Europe, and as a consequence, this is a problem that merits all our attention.
- Juncker: There are small countries that have received a large number of refugees per capita, and big countries that have received fewer. And then there are the member-states like Sweden, like Germany which have received a larger number of refugees in absolute terms. We have to show more solidarity among us.
- Text: What are the solutions proposed by the Commission?
- Juncker: We are going to put in place a system of quotas that will allow us to better redistribute, in a more equitable and solidary fashion, the refugees, the asylum-seekers, those who benefit from international protection, among all the member-states of the EU.  
(...)
- Text: Why propose a new policy on legal migration?
- Juncker: The countries of Europe will face a period that will be very difficult in terms of the labour market. The working-age population of Europe will decrease, it will reach very low levels, and as a result Europe needs legal migration. It will be necessary to put in place a more balanced and organised system.
- Text: What will come next?
- Juncker: As the Commission, we proposed a quota system, a relocation system, a better approach for legal migration. All this will be done during the coming months. We can't leave alone the more concerned countries, Italy, Malta, Greece. It's a duty of solidarity that is shared among the member-states. Those who are reticent and in the wrong should be inspired by the virtuous action of those who are more generous and more ambitious. We have to show more solidarity to each other.

The video can be found at this link: <https://ec.europa.eu/avservices/video/player.cfm?sitelang=en&ref=1100777>

### **(h) The Western Balkans Leaders' Meeting**

On 25 October 2015, at the height of the EU's migration crisis, when the European media were still dominated by images of thousands of migrants crossing the long route from Greece to Germany on foot, Juncker took the unprecedented decision to bring together the heads of state of the countries along the so-called Western Balkans route in a meeting. The aim was to discuss ways to restore order in the migration process along the Western Balkans. What was extraordinary about this decision was that a mini-summit was convened by the President of the Commission, rather than the President of the European Council, and was conducted in the Berlaymont, the Commission's building, rather than in the Council's building. The Meeting ended with the adoption of a Leaders' Statement, which set out a set of policies that the countries represented in the meeting undertook to implement. In the Leaders' Statement, the Commission was invited to monitor the implementation of the agreed policy measures.

- iv. In your opinion, why did Juncker convene the Western Balkans Leaders' Meeting?**
- v. Do you think that this attempt by the Commission to seize agenda-setting and implementation powers in the realm of migration policy was in the Commission's long-term institutional interest?**