Book Review

Nigel Haigh

EU Environmental Policy – Its Journey to Central Stage, Earthscan from Routledge
2016, p. 214.

Nigel Haigh has provided a great contribution in developing and explaining EU environmental policy with his long career as member and leader of the IEEP and as member of the Board of the European Environmental Agency and of the Environmental Agency (England and Wales). All environmental law and policy experts have read his work. His book, *‘EEC Environmental Policy & Britain – An Essay and A Handbook’*, from 1984 was one of the first books I read for my dissertation (Lorenzo Squintani, *‘Gold-Plating of EU Environmental Law’*, 2013). Covering the general topic of gold-plating, I was looking for a better insight of the background of EU environmental law and policy, to integrate the general knowledge provided by the standard works of Jans and Vedder, *‘European Environmental Law’*, and Krämer, *‘EU Environmental Law’*. Haigh’s book offered me exactly that.

This new book provides once again a comprehensive overview of EU environmental law and policy. It collects, updating them, various contributions written by Haigh over his long career touching about a broad range of EU environmental topics: Cooperation with third countries (Chapter 2), sustainable development (Chapter 3), air quality (Chapter 4), water management (Chapter 5) chemicals (Chapter 7), integration pollution control (Chapter 8), climate change (Chapter 9), science and policy (Chapter 10), subsidiarity (Chapter 12), precaution (Chapter 13) and better regulation (Chapter 14).

The light narrative style combined with the insights of an expert who worked at the core of environmental policy making at both EU and national level makes Haigh’s new book an important starting point for post graduate students who are looking to enrich their general understanding of EU environmental policy and law.

In this regard, the fact that old contributions are reproduced in this volume offers an unique opportunity to read details about important policy-development moments the memory of which risks getting lost. Chapter 1, for example, is like a time machine that brings the reader back to the very beginning of EU environmental policy, when Jacques Delors challenged Carlo Ripa di Meana to transform a patchwork of regulatory acts into a proper policy.

It is Haigh's mastery of the dialogue taking place among the EU and national policy makers that makes this book a valuable addition to any academic library. It is only after having understood the past that we can understand the present and forecast the future.

Besides, when reading the various chapters of this book, the EU motto 'United in Diversity' shows its plurality of meanings. Clearly, it does not only mean that EU environmental law establishes common minimum standards, while allowing Member States to retain or introduce standards deviating from the EU ones, as long as they comply with the EU minimum. As also underlined by Squintani and Vedder with Reese and Vanheusden in the first EELF book, '*Sustainable Energy United in Diversity*', from 2014, this motto means much more. Haigh's new book confirms that 'United in Diversity' also means that the strength and quality of environmental law and policy in Europe benefits from the dialectic process established by the dialogue among Member States' representatives and EU officials.

This confirmation assumes a tragi-comic taste at time of Brexit, as also revealed by Haigh's opinion in the previous JEEPL issue of this year.

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