

Preface

Some six years after preparing the book's first edition, publisher Edward Elgar – given the book's success and the topic's continued salience – invited us to prepare a second edition. Since we felt that many of the initial chapters were rich and still relevant, we accepted the invitation, with Paul van Seters reinforcing the editorial team. However, we did not want to provide a mere update. Instead, we selected those contributions whose approach and substance are still topical and invited the authors to keep abreast of recent developments, both in the academic literature and in the 'real world'. Most authors took this invitation to heart and went for a rigorous revision. Consequently, many of the initial chapters have substantially changed. In addition, we selected authors for new contributions to cover topics that had not received enough attention in the first edition or whose importance had grown in the meantime to such an extent that their coverage was warranted. We are happy that many new authors accepted the invitation, leading to six novel, insightful contributions. It took some eighteen months to compile this set of substantially revised chapters and new contributions, the result of which is an edition that still covers the interface of globalisation and national environmental policy but which differs markedly from the original edition.

The genesis of this book lies in a protracted discussion of the policy challenges that national governments encounter when they are being exposed to more global spheres of influence. We felt that the institutional and social settings in which governments develop national policies have changed dramatically, especially over the last decade. Whereas the 'visible hand' used to have a firm grip on its subjects, the government is now itself subjected to a host of international and supranational regulations, the economic power of large business organisations, and public opinion, which is fed by increasingly assertive citizens.

We suspected that these important changes might call for a reconsideration of existing policies: instruments that used to be effective may no longer be tailored to the prevailing circumstances. While the policy challenge, therefore, is huge, we felt that insights into this topic were highly scattered and that adequate policy responses were not readily available. The lack of sufficiently detailed and comprehensive information that

is needed to develop adequate national policies in a globalised arena spurred us to explore the topic in greater depth. We decided to focus on environmental policy for practical reasons, since covering all areas would weaken our effort and we were best acquainted with this field, and because many environmental issues have a regional or global dimension. Our efforts materialised in a joint venture between Globus, the Institute for Globalisation and Sustainable Development at Tilburg University, and the Dutch Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning, and the Environment, culminating in an international conference in Veldhoven, the Netherlands, in 2003, for which we invited renowned experts to prepare a series of written contributions, which went through several rounds of revision and editing.

The aim of the book is to provide the reader with a wide-ranging and in-depth understanding of key aspects of national environmental policy-making in a globalised setting. The book seeks to cross disciplinary boundaries and to bridge theory and practice. The targeted audience is diverse, ranging from newcomers to the field seeking to obtain a comprehensive overview to seasoned experts wishing to acquire specific insights or to broaden their views. The book aims to be relevant to diverging constituencies: academics with an interest in internationalisation, public administration, public-private interactions, or environmental issues; governmental policy-makers involved in environmental and/or social issues; policy-makers in supranational organisations; corporate managers, corporate environmental support staff, and liaison officers of business associations; and policy-makers in non-governmental organisations.

The present book is the result of collective action. We are grateful that the authors were (again) prepared to share their rich expert insights. Furthermore, while we relied on numerous assistants for the first edition, the editorial assistance of the second edition was fully in the capable hands of Dr Gabi Helfert, whose dedication, thoughtfulness, and 'hands-on' approach were invaluable for bringing this Herculean work to a good end. Finally, we are indebted to Alex Pettifer of Edward Elgar for inviting us to prepare a second edition and for offering high-quality support. We sincerely thank all of these persons for their important roles in shaping and improving the present volume. We wish the reader a pleasant and instructive journey throughout this book.

The editors

Rotterdam, Tilburg, and The Hague, March 2011

