

# The evolution of lobbying coalitions in the Emissions Trading System: Recognising and understanding their development through the advocacy coalition framework

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## Abstract

This thesis attempts to understand who fought for it within the European Union's policy area of the Emissions Trading System (ETS). Furthermore, the research conducted attempts to unravel how external system events affected the relevant fighters involved. The ETS is a key aspect of the European Union's (EU) climate change policy and is particularly important given the upcoming 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris. It was first established in 2003 with Directive 2003/87/EC and completed its first major revision in 2008 with Directive 2009/29/EC. Between these two key Directives, the interplay between industrial and environmental incentives means that the ETS has created a dynamic venue for divergent interest groups. In order to efficiently and systematically identify the interests mobilised and to account for their development, the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) of Sabatier is utilised. Using position papers, semi-structured interviews, and unpublished documents from the EU institutions, research uncovers an *economy-first* and an *environment-first* lobbying coalition. These coalitions have expanded over time with the *environment-first* coalition incorporating Greenpeace and the *economy-first* coalition expanding even further in both scope and speed. However, the *economy-first* coalition has been susceptible to industry-specific interests. Furthermore, research shows that a hypothesised effect between the ACF's external system events and these lobbying coalitions is inconclusive. While the effect of electricity prices and the 2004 enlargement seem to be of significance for the relative composition of the lobbying coalitions, the thesis identifies that there are certain limitations within the ACF. The findings of this thesis provide a ring-side seat upon how lobbying coalitions within a key EU policy area can form and develop.