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From Montreal to Bali: The 2005-2007 European Union Strategy for Reengaging the United States in UNFCCC Negotiations

By Stavros Afionis

Research Institute for Law, Politics and Justice, Keele University

Following Russia's 2004 ratification of the Kyoto Protocol,¹ the EU concentrated its efforts on exploring avenues that could eventually facilitate the reengagement of the US in climate change negotiations. Faced with immense worldwide pressure and on the edge of universal isolation, the Bush administration did eventually alter its stance and – while maintaining its vehement rejection of the Protocol – decided to join a number of EU initiated climate change-related Dialogues (e.g. the Gleneagles and UNFCCC Dialogues). Despite the fact that these Dialogues were criticized at the time as being uneventful and lacking momentum, the 2007 Bali COP/MOP did see the US accepting the strengthening of this process by expressing its willingness to participate in the AWGLCA. Even so, the world community has so far markedly failed in its objective to convince the US to ratify Kyoto.

...During his address to European Parliament's Environment Committee, Stavros Dimas, the EU Environment Commissioner, drew attention to the willingness of the US to discuss international carbon trading. 'For the first time,' he noted, 'the US will come into a dialogue [on this]. It's a great change and a very important step towards our position' (ENDS, 2006a). The Dialogue is intended to build 'on existing bilateral and multilateral initiatives' and further advance implementation of the G-8 Gleneagles Dialogue (EU-US Summit, 2006). Finally, the two transatlantic partners decided that the Dialogue, to initially meet in fall 2006 in Helsinki, would be guided by the ultimate objective of the UNFCCC. (p.6)

A few days later, however, the UK managed, in yet another display of leadership, to attract world attention when Tony Blair and Californian Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger announced that they would explore the possibility of linking the European ETS to a proposed Californian one (Jones, 2006). **Analysts have often argued that a promising policy alternative for the EU would be**

to take advantage of developments occurring below the federal level within the United States (Kogan & Pachovski, 2005: 9-10).

Of course, it is rather difficult to know with any degree of certainty what exactly goes on behind the scenes, but supporting and funding sub-federal actors in the US, such as states and lobby groups, could increase pressure at the domestic level. New York and New Jersey have already voluntarily accepted climate targets, while many others, like the New England States, are taking other forms of climate action, such as imposing curbs on carbon emissions from power plants, and setting up emissions trading systems with Canada's eastern provinces (Economist, 2004: 58). **In June 2007, for example, the UK agreed with seven US states, including New York, to work closely in developing the latter's regional emissions trading scheme - called RGGI (Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative) (Miliband, 2007). It is interesting to note that according to Kogan & Pachovski (2005: 9), this RGGI was devised with the help of experts from EU national governments and the EU Commission.** One cannot stress enough, therefore, how critical it will be to ensure the success of the ETS.⁸ It is imperative for the EU to demonstrate that climate change policies and ruining the economy are not the two sides of the same coin.

(p. 7)

Kogan, Lawrence A. and Slavi Pachovski (2005), 'RGGI is Europe's "Back-Door-Man": How Europe Relies on the Northeast Greenhouse Gas Initiative to Influence U.S. Climate Change Policy', *Institute for Trade, Standards, and Sustainable Development*, November, available at: http://www.itssd.org/White%20Papers/RGGI_Europe_White%20Paper.pdf [Accessed 14 June 2007], pp. 1-15.

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