

Abstracts

The Priorities of the Presidency: When the EU Agenda Becomes a National Ambition

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To what degree can national Presidencies influence the agenda of the EU? This article challenges existing understandings of national interests in the research on Presidencies and on the EU more generally. The article analyses the process of developing the Danish Presidency's Programme from the beginning in Spring 2010 to the official launch in January of 2012. Building on participant observation, the article argues that the agenda-setting role of national Presidencies is relatively limited. This is not only due to the Treaty of Lisbon, which transfers parts of the responsibility for the Presidency to the permanent EU institutions, but also because the Presidency role today is focused on turning the smooth-running of the EU's legislative process into a national prestigious duty. Thus, the national Presidency Programme is a striking example of how the promotion of the EU's agenda becomes an everyday ambition for the member states. This challenges traditional assumptions about national interests in an EU context.

A small but smart Presidency? The Danish EU-Presidency in the field of the Danish Ministry for Business and Growth

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Small states as »smart states« has gained increasing attention in the literature on small states. Several strategies have been developed, but only few tests have been carried out to validate the recommendations of the theory. In a most-likely case study of the Danish Ministry for Business and Growth's handling of the EU Presidency, the recommendations regarding smart state behavior in the EU are tested. The article concludes that it pays off to be smart, but that the success of a small state running a Presidency depends on two variables beyond its control: the existing European agenda and the general political and economic developments. Hence, the smart state theory must be evaluated in relation to these two variables; a small state can be smart, but outcomes depend on factors beyond the control of the state.

The Organization of the Danish EU Presidency in 2012

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This article examines how officials from the government have organized the Danish EU Presidency, which was held in the first half of 2012. For this purpose, an analytical framework from is distilled from organization theory which focuses on three main dimensions: structure, process and culture. Empirically, the article is based on numerous interviews conducted from early 2010 and onwards with key actors within and surrounding the Danish EU Presidency and a number of documents. The article demonstrates that the Danish EU Presidency in 2012 is characterized by: 1) a flexible decentralized structure, with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and especially the Danish EU representation as the main hub, 2) a process that is highly organized according to standard operating procedures, designed to provide continuity and predictability, and 3) a culture that facilitates norms such as impartiality, professionalism and loyalty, although there is disagreement about the weighting of the individual elements.

New Standards during the Danish EU Presidency

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The success of an EU presidency often depends on how well the Presidency acts as an honest broker, and on what and how many dossiers the Presidency reaches a political

agreement during the holding of the Presidency office. The Presidency's handling of the presidency tasks as the Council's representative in negotiations with the European Parliament and the Commission is of vital importance for the proceedings of the negotiations and for the final result. This article analyses the negotiations of the Standardisation Regulation during the Danish EU Presidency in 2012. The article presents the regulation of the European standardisation system, and analyzes the proceedings of the negotiations within the Council working party and Coreper, as well as the informal triologue with the European Parliament and the Commission. Finally, the article discusses what roles the different actors have played and evaluates the EU Presidency as a political institution.

Press coverage of the Danish EU presidency

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The European Union is, according to international research, not prominently covered in Europe's news media. All though some studies suggest an increase in the coverages over time, many studies highlight, how the news coverage seems to vary from a low day to day coverage to are more intense coverage of specific European events, such as elections. Another event that has been shown to have an effect on the news coverage is the EU-presidency. This article shows how the Danish EU-presidency help to increase the visibility of the European Union in Danish news media. However, the increase of news coverage comes at a price. The coverage is highly domesticated, focusing on the Danish presidency, not the European challenges at hand. Also the dominance of national, gover-

nment sources in the news stories leave little room for critical and independent journalism on the Presidency

The new »leaderless« Presidency

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This article argues that the EU Presidency has become more of an administrative than political task after the Lisbon Treaty reforms. The reforms removed several of the leadership tools available to Presidencies, including chairmanship of the European Council. This does not necessarily mean a less effective legislative process in the Council, but effectiveness does require that the country holding the Presidency mobilizes all of the administrative and political resources necessary to provide leadership in the Council. However, given that heads of state and government lack a role in the »new« Presidency, can we really expect member states to mobilize all of the necessary resources?

The curious process of government formation

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In connection with the latest formation of a Danish cabinet the media wrote that the incoming PM Helle Thorning-Schmidt was a »royal investigator« (in Danish: Kongelig undersøger). The term has also been used by Danish historians and other scholars. But the questions are: Does this concept at all exist in official statements? And what does »royal investigator« mean? All royal mandates given since 1953 as well as the relevant judicial, historical, and political science literature have been examined. No use of the concept »royal investigator« was found in the official mandates. It is only a popular term with no exact meaning. It therefore creates confusion and obscurity about the formation of a Danish government. It is recommended that the term »royal investigator« and other terms, which have not been in official use, in the future should be abandoned by scholars, including historians and political scientists.