

**Press release****Schwedischer Forschungsrat - The Swedish Research Council****Maria Erlandsson**

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<http://idw-online.de/en/news316333>Research results  
Politics, Social studies  
transregional, national**New regulatory opportunities for the EU: Rules for how rules are to be followed**

**The European Union readily brings to mind rules and regulations regarding everything from the shape of a cucumber to the generation of statistics. The EU's formal regulations consist of more than 300,000 legal documents. However, a new dissertation in business studies at Stockholm University in Sweden shows that, in practice, the regulation of the EU is much more comprehensive than that.**

On June 7 there will be an election for the EU Parliament, and on July 1 Sweden will assume the presidency of the EU for half a year. This provides Sweden with a chance to influence the direction in which the EU develops, and a great deal of this development consists of new or altered regulations for its member countries. A perennial issue involves the possible inclusion of new EU members, and in the context of expansion the EU's regulations play an important role. In her dissertation at the Stockholm University School of Business, Jenny Svensson has studied how new member countries learn to follow EU regulations.

A precondition for a country to become a member of the EU is that it must have the capacity to follow EU regulations. But there are many regulations, varying in nature and often involving matters of principle rather than concrete practices, which makes it difficult to follow the rules.

"If we look at the so-called VAT directive, it states what should be taxed and who should be taxed, but not how the practical collection of VAT is to be organized. This, instead, is up to each member country to determine," says Jenny Svensson.

One problem for new member countries from East and Central Europe has been that many EU rules involve areas that were previously unregulated in those countries. Another problem has been that the countries' state administrations have been weak, undeveloped, and often undermanned. To facilitate the understanding and organizing of compliance with the regulations, the EU has created the support instrument Twinning. Twinning is being developed in close collaboration between authorities and ministries in old and new member states, and the aim is to help the new member countries comply with the rules in the proper manner.

"You can see it as the old members teaching the new ones what the rules entail and how they should be observed. Another way of describing it is that the new member countries are imitating the old ones, and that Twinning is therefore about regulatory compliance/rule-following by imitation," says Jenny Svensson.

From the point of view of regulation, Twinning is interesting in that it can be said to regulate rule compliance/rule-following. Formal EU regulations are about what should be done, while Twinning is about how to do it, and in this way the EU actually has a better chance of exerting influence. The dissertation shows that Twinning - which is presented as a means to facilitate regulatory compliance among new member countries - in practice introduces further regulation in the form of rules of conduct for how a country should follow the EU's formal regulations. Thereby

the dissertation also shows that regulation and compliance with regulation/rule-following at the EU level involve complex and dynamic processes rather than simple requirements and compliance relationships.

Title of dissertation: The Regulation of Rule-Following. Imitation and Soft Regulation in the European Union.

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Jenny Svensson will publicly defend her dissertation on Friday, June 5, at 10:00 a.m. in Hall MB 503, Södertörn University, Alfred Nobels Allé 7.