

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: A CONSTRAINED ENVIRONMENTAL LEADER?



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ABSTRACT | The European Parliament (EP) established a reputation as an environmental champion, via its amendments to legislation and through reinforcing the global environmental leadership efforts of the European Commission. The Parliament has been beneficiary of Treaty amendments that have increased its power, most recently in the Lisbon Treaty, which extended the EP's rights as a co-legislator to a wider range of policies and offered the EP a veto on international environmental agreements. Yet there have been a series of challenges to the EP's scope to exercise leadership. The EU has become more heterogeneous as its membership has extended; a new far right grouping has been established in the EP; and policy-makers have had to deal with a "conglomerate of crises" (Falkner 2016) and Brexit. More generally the EU's wider policy ambition appears to be in retreat. These conditions may act as a constraint upon the Parliament and beg the following questions: Is the EP still an environmental leader? If so what kind? How might we measure such leadership? Does it matter?

CHARLOTTE BURNS | joined Sheffield as a Professorial Fellow in September 2017. She studied a BA in Philosophy and Politics at the University of York, and an MA in EU studies at the University of Newcastle. She then worked for two years in Brussels as a research assistant for the Chair of the European Parliament Environment Committee before commencing a PhD in Politics at the University of Sheffield. She held an ESRC post-doctoral fellowship at Sheffield, a lectureship in EU politics at the University of Aberystwyth, an RCUK fellowship in democracy and governance at the University of Leeds before joining the Environment Department at the University of York, where she was made Senior Lecturer in 2015. Charlie is on the editorial board of the journal *Environmental Politics* for which she is also currently book reviews editor. She is the departmental link on the Faculty Equality and Diversity Committee. She is currently an External Examiner for the University of Exeter's Department of Politics.