

Publication

Agreements of Economic Integration and the Choice of National Environmental Policies

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This paper analyzes the question whether and in which respect agreements of (regional) economic integration affect the choice of environmental policies by individual countries. We focus our interdisciplinary analysis on the agreements of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the European Union (EU) and the European Economic Area (EEA). We find that these agreements primarily restrict a country's choice among possible instruments to achieve a certain environmental level or target, but do, in principle, not restrict its choice with regard to the environmental target or level itself. We also show that this type of restriction is likely to benefit the individual countries and the world as a whole because it tends to promote the implementation of more efficient environmental policy instruments. A brief analysis of the case of Switzerland illustrates this point.

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