

# How Italian regulatory policy encounters Europe

ALESSANDRO NATALINI\*

*Assistant Professor of Political Science, Parthenope University of Naples, Via E. Acton, 38, 80133, Naples, Italy, Faculty of Law*

Improvement of regulatory quality has become one of the most important items on the European Union's (EU) Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs. In this context, the European Commission has sought to influence the regulatory reform policies of the Member States, focusing on the implementation of better regulation principles and tools. This article explores the interactive nature of Europeanization, viewing domestic institutions as 'users' of European policies according to their strategies. The author performs a within-case study based on a bottom-up research design, analysing the impact of EU better regulation on Italy. The results show that the effects of Europeanization relate more to agenda setting than to implementation – the latter is still, prevalently, determined by domestic factors.

**Keywords:** better regulation; Europeanization; simplification; technocracy; public policy

## Introduction

Cutting red tape and improving the quality of the regulatory environment have been broadly accepted as important levers for the business attractiveness of the economic environment. In fact, 'economic analysis, such as benefit-cost analysis, is becoming more widely used as a tool for informing regulatory decisions in developed and developing countries' (Hahn and Tetlock, 2007: 2; Cecot *et al.*, 2008). To analyse the emergence of better regulation principles and tools on the agenda of the European Union (EU) and its Member States, it is useful to make explicit my research hypotheses. To formulate these hypotheses I began from the Sahlin-Andersson classification, which identifies three types of administrative reform diffusion: national, transnational and international (Sahlin-Andersson, 2003: 44). I then considered two specific characteristics of better regulation policy: (a) adoption and implementation at a domestic level are often a manifestation of political control of bureaucracy (Arnold, 1987); (b) supranational pressure comes essentially from the EU level. Thus, broadly speaking, I started from three rival hypotheses: political control (HP1), transnational (HP2) and Europeanization (HP3).

\* E-mail: [alessandro.natalini@uniparthenope.it](mailto:alessandro.natalini@uniparthenope.it)

*Hypothesis 1: Political control (HP1)*

According to this hypothesis, the introduction of standards and formal requirements regarding the production of norms is an attempt to control administrative structures in the law-making process (Radaelli and De Francesco, 2007b). In particular, McCubbins, Noll and Weingast argue that administrative procedures are mechanisms for exercising political control over regulatory agencies, reducing the principal-agent slack. They 'enable political leaders to assure compliance without specifying or even necessarily knowing what substantive outcome is most in their interest' (McCubbins *et al.*, 1987: 244).

*Hypothesis 2: Transnational (HP2)*

The shaping and implementation of better regulation policy could be the result of isomorphic diffusion via *intergovernmental networks* or via *international organisms*. For instance, the Standard Cost Model Network or the periodical Conference of Directors of Better Regulation or the High Level Group of National Regulatory Experts in the European Commission, established in 2006 and composed of representatives of each Member State, have contributed to the spread of best practices on better regulation developed both at the EU and at the national level (Wegrich, 2009). Another example regard to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), with its recommendations and periodic country reports on regulatory quality (Lodge, 2005). At the domestic level, technocrats are the nodes of these networks, as they can play a fundamental role in defining the content of tools.

*Hypothesis 3: Europeanization (HP3)*

The relatively wide diffusion of better regulation tools may be due to pressure at the European level (European Commission, 2008). Indeed, since 2002 the European Commission has launched a number of programs designed to reduce its *own* bureaucratic burdens and to modify the regulatory environment of single Member States: better regulation has been promoted through soft instruments (such as the open method of cooperation) as well as hard instruments (such as directives). Better regulation policy has become one of the cornerstones of the Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs (Wiener, 2006; Radaelli and De Francesco, 2007b). According to this hypothesis, the impetus provided by the EU has triggered an acceleration of domestic programs. Indeed, the quality of the regulatory framework in European countries seemed to show, on average, a positive trend between 1998 and 2003 (OECD, 2007b). However, other comparative analyses have produced contradictory results: although a high degree of diffusion of better regulation initiatives has been observed, there appears to be much less convergence (Radaelli, 2005; EVIA, 2008; Nilsson *et al.*, 2008).

This article evaluates the relevance of the third hypothesis in competition with the other two, in relation to Italian better regulation policy, considering the time

period from 1996 to the present date. I selected this case and this period for two reasons. First, during this period there was an initial absence of pressure from Europe (specifically regarding better regulation), followed, from 2001 onwards, by a progressive increase in and strategic re-orientation of pressure, thereby enabling comparison of different stages of European intervention. Second, in a European scenario in which some countries were ‘spontaneously’ aligned to EU better regulation policy (the UK and the Netherlands) and others did not have their own distinguishable strategies (Spain, Greece and Portugal), Italy is a case (akin to France and Belgium) of a country that had a significant domestic better regulation policy with its own strong ‘identity’. In fact, in the 1990s there was a considerable reduction and control of administrative burdens (Lonti and Woods, 2008: 111). Moreover, in a longitudinal perspective, this domestic policy presents significant variations, as a consequence of which it is possible to reconstruct whether European pressure and the intensity and shape of domestic policy are causally linked. Italy is therefore a case, which permits the exploration of a specific, though not idiosyncratic, context. An in-depth study conducted in the ambit of exploratory research strategies can elucidate causal mechanisms or generate hypotheses that then need to be confirmed through successive cross-unit analysis (Gerring, 2004: 350).

## Concepts

The present research project utilizes some widely debated concepts. Europeanization, a rather elusive concept (Olsen, 2002), embraces many dimensions and works in two directions (Featherstone and Radaelli, 2003; Graziano and Vink, 2006). On one hand, Europe attempts to exercise an influence at the domestic level. On the other hand, Member States can adapt the regulatory process to various degrees. However, they also have different options: pushing, tackling, orienting or re-orienting the European pressure.

According to a first perspective, Europeanization signals ‘the emergence and development at the European level of distinct structures of governance, that is, of political, legal and social institutions associated with the problem solving that formalize interactions among the actors, and of policy network specializing in the creation of authoritative European rules’ (Green-Cowles *et al.*, 2001: 3). Thus, Europeanization is a form of institution-building for generating decisions with respect to specific policies (Fabbrini, 2003: 5). From this point of view, its impact depends on the *goodness of fit*: in other words, on the degree of compatibility between politics and policy (Green-Cowles *et al.*, 2001: 6).

From a second perspective, which is the one I have adopted in the current research, Europeanization encompasses attributes of a process, characterized by the gradual and diversified diffusion–penetration of values, general norms and specific directives (Morlino, 1999; Morlino and Fargion, 2006: 20). In fact, ‘adaptation reflects variations in European pressure as well as domestic motivations and abilities to adapt European signals are interpreted and modified through

domestic traditions, institutions, identities and resources in ways that limit the degree of convergence and homogenization' (Olsen, 2002: 16). In accordance with this second perspective, Europeanization is a process of (a) construction, (b) diffusion and (c) institutionalization of norms, beliefs, formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, 'ways of doing things', which are first defined and consolidated in the EU processes and then incorporated in the logic of domestic (national and sub-national) discourse, political structures and public policies (Radaelli, 2000). This definition sheds light on the interactive nature of the process and moves beyond the narrow top-down definition according to which Europe simply 'hits' the domestic level.

Europeanization can cause three different degrees of domestic change (Borzel and Risse, 2000: 10). The first is *absorption*, when Member States are able to incorporate European policies without modifying their existing processes. The second is *accommodation*, when Member States try to adapt their processes without changing their essential features. The third is *transformation*, when Member States replace their existing policies or alter their essential features.

The second widely discussed concept is better regulation policy. It is used on different occasions and cases to describe various institutional settings, ranges of problems, tools and decision-making processes. Under this label it is also possible to find a multitude of scarcely correlated goals. According to the European Commission 'the EU's better regulation policy aims to improve regulation, to better design regulation so as to increase the benefits for citizens, and to reinforce the respect and the effectiveness of the rules, and to minimize economic costs – in line with the EU's proportionality and subsidiarity principles' (European Commission, 2005). Some specific tools are characteristic of this policy: regulatory impact assessment (RIA), consultation, simplification of existing legislation, administrative burdens reduction, access to legislation and regulatory transparency, time of delay reduction and codification.

In a very general way, approaches to better regulation can be grouped around two extremes. On one hand, there are policies oriented around de-regulation, reduction of administrative burdens and of time of delay. Actions are finalized with the aim of creating a more competitive environment. The tools are very rudimentary and mainly focus on cutting the red tape of bureaucracy. The results of these actions are easily measurable through quantitative indicators and can be clearly perceived by politicians as well as public opinion.

On the other hand, there are approaches stemming from consideration that *less* regulation is not always *good* (Radaelli, 2007). In many cases, regulation is the product of complex negotiations, a delicate balancing between different interests. Reducing administrative burdens could increase the risks to privacy and to the natural environment. From this point of view, the quality of regulation depends on governance, on the openness and accountability of regulatory decisions and on the right mix of participation and measurement. The available tool-kits are very sophisticated and concentrate on shaping rule-making processes. To evaluate the

results of these interventions, an articulated battery of indicators is necessary. These results, however, are complicated to rather communicate to the public. Between these two extremes are various intermediate positions. Currently, the first approach seems to be dominant both in Europe and in many Member States.

The concept of better regulation policy is intrinsically composite and heterogeneous (Radaelli, 2005; Hahn and Tetlock, 2007). It is characterized by its malleability, its adaptability to different contexts and has the peculiarity of being re-defined across Europe and across time. It is therefore appropriate to define better regulation as a meta-regulation – as a form of regulating the regulatory process (Morgan, 2003; Radaelli, 2007) – which includes different goals and perspectives, leaving space for the analysis of diversity without any normative implications.

So far I have analysed the first dimension of better regulation, regarding strategies and tools. There is, however, a second dimension to this concept, which deals with governance. In fact, better regulation policy implies the introduction of forms of coordination within ministries and between different levels of government as well (OECD, 2006). Better regulation policy is supposed to have an effect on the institutional setting as it is based on a whole-of-government approach. In fact, one of the pillars of better regulation is keeping together an overall strategy aimed at utilizing a variety of instruments (for instance, RIA or Standard Cost Model) with regard to a number of public intervention sectors. Thus, it is necessary to ‘create effective and credible co-ordination mechanisms, foster coherence across major policy objectives, clarify responsibilities for assuring regulatory quality, and ensure capacity to respond to a changing, fast-paced environment’ (OECD, 2005: 3). The OECD also strongly recommends introducing forms of multilevel coordination (OECD, 2006).

The organizational dimension is particularly pertinent within institutional systems in which regulative competencies are spread over many authorities. The efficacy of regulatory quality interventions thus depends on political leadership, as well as on the introduction of task forces, on the implementation of general action plans or on the adoption of agreements between different levels of government. Most of these capacity-building initiatives are independent from the specific better regulation strategy adopted. Consequently, it is preferable to analyse these two dimensions separately.

The third concept regard to technocratic drift. Technocrats may be defined as a number of university professors and members of the judiciary (State Council and Court of Accounts) who play a strategic role in the Cabinet or as chiefs of legislative offices or as members of technical commissions or mission units and sometimes as non-elected ministers. Mostly, they are experts who, operating in the shadow of formal political and administrative structures, gain a pivotal position within the government (Radaelli, 1999: 519). Sometimes they are part of ‘a network of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within

that domain or issue-area' (Haas, 1992: 3). The influence of technocrats on reform processes can be sorted into three typologies (Williams, 2002). The first is rule- and procedure-changing behaviours, which alter policy-making rules or procedures to reformers' advantage. The second consists of instrument-creating behaviours, by which technocratic appointees build new bureaucratic entities expressly designed to plan and implement particular policy initiatives. The third mode of innovation is strategizing behaviours, whereby policy makers maximize the efficiency of resource expenditures required to secure procedural changes or create effective new policy instruments.

### Research design

The research design is based on the bottom-up approach proposed by Radaelli and Pasquier (2006). So, instead of moving from European policy as an independent variable and then tracking down the consequences in domestic politics and policies, my empirical observation started with and finished at the domestic actors' level. I analysed if, when and how the EU level (conceived as an exogenous variable) provides a change in any of the main components of the domestic system. The problem I tackled, therefore, was not the level of domestic adaptation to Europe, but the strategic and cognitive variation within the domestic political system. The focus was on the circumstances in which domestic actors encountered Europe. These encounters could have been perceived in terms of an adaptive pressure or as an occasion for re-orienting or re-defining their political action (Radaelli and Pasquier, 2006). In fact, 'the EU-level policies may well produce adaptation requirements . . . , but it can also operate as a resource, a learning opportunity, a new venue for leadership, discourse and policy action. And of course, the encounter may well be a marginal episode that does not alter what is at stake in domestic political and policy arena' (Quaglia and Radaelli, 2007: 926).

To reconstruct interactions between domestic and European levels, I adopted process tracing, performing a within-case analysis with regard to different periods in which it is possible to articulate the overall temporal horizon examined.

The analysis was operatively conducted in two steps. The first (top-down) was dedicated to the European better regulation policy in order to identify the key points in which it varied in intensity or in direction. In this manner I segmented the overall time period examined into sub-periods divided by these critical junctures. For each period I evaluated, using qualitative indicators, the degree of intensity and the shape of the European-level policy.

Turning to the second step (bottom-up), I sub-divided the policy into phases referring to domestic critical junctures, as they are locally determined. Thus, top-down and bottom-up analyses can be characterized by different periodizations. I then analysed the degree of implementation and the shape of national policy separately for the two dimensions of better regulation policy. The purpose was to reconstruct whether Europe has encountered the domestic policy and the

impact produced. The indicators used to measure this impact are qualitative and relate to each of the two dimensions of the concept of better regulation policy as specified in the previous paragraph. The analysis essentially relies on official documents, as well as on several unstructured interviews with top officials in the Italian Department of Public Administration and members of the Simplification Unit.

### Top-down analysis: EU better regulation

During the 1990s faint signals of the existence of a better regulation policy could be discerned at the European level, but the proposals and ideas remained at an embryonic stage. Despite some noticeable pioneering initiatives, it is hard to distinguish a complex set of actions that could be defined as a European better regulation policy. Throughout the same decade pressure to improve the quality of Community regulation from both member countries and the OECD had been increasing.

In 2001 there was a change of gear (Radaelli, 2007: 4; Allio, 2008; Meuwese, 2008). In fact, a group of experts produced the Mandelkern Report at the request of the European Ministers of Public Administration. Since then better regulation has become a crucial point on the European agenda. In 2002 the Commission launched an Action Plan focusing on the adoption of RIA and of minimum standards of consultation (European Commission, 2002). In 2003 the European Commission adopted the Communication *Updating and simplifying the Community acquis*, under which a series of actions were launched with the purpose of reducing the regulative stock and increasing the knowability of existing provisions. In 2004 the Ministers of Finance and Economic Affairs of six Member States, representing their countries in the Economic and Finance Affairs Council and on Competitiveness Councils, signed a letter designed to give a new boost to the better regulation process.

In this second period, as regard to the specific governance patterns of the regulatory quality policy followed at the European level, some scholars identified all the distinctive components of an open method of coordination: guidelines; benchmarking and sharing of best practices; multi-lateral surveillance; indicators; iterative process; implementation through domestic policy and legislation (Radaelli and De Francesco, 2007a). RIA was undoubtedly the privileged tool in European better regulation policy. Emphasis was placed on the problem of governance in an institutional context in which interactions between public administrations and pressure groups, civil servants and politicians, but also Europe and Member States (or even regions) are decisive. Simplification programs were relevant but not pre-eminent.

Around 2005 there was a new turning point. In accordance with the revised Lisbon strategy, the Communication *Better regulation for growth and jobs (2005)* set the objective to reduce the competitive gap between Europe and other economies with regard to regulatory quality. Particular attention was devoted to the problems of small and medium enterprises. The objectives pursued at the



European level were very complex. In fact, they included interventions in the law-making process, the introduction of regulatory impact analysis and consultation, as well as normative and administrative simplification (European Commission, 2005). Special emphasis was placed on the reduction of administrative burdens (European Commission, 2007). Undoubtedly, as previously noted, there was a difference between the 'weight' of different tools. In fact, in recent years Europe 'speaks more of Procrustean deregulation than of better regulation' (Wiener, 2006).

In 2006 the Directive on Services, 2006/123/CE, which included a number of articles dedicated to simplification, was adopted. In particular, it required Member States to simplify their bureaucratic procedures for the start up and the life of service enterprises and to realize one-stop shops (both real and virtual) to provide a unified bureaucratic contact point. Then, in 2007 the Commission launched an Action Programme for reducing unnecessary (repetitive, redundant or obsolete) administrative burdens. This program was based on the Standard Cost Model, which assumes that every bureaucratic information obligation should be identified and measured. The declared goal was to achieve a 25% reduction in administrative burdens for businesses by 2012.

As the redefinition of the Lisbon Agenda, European better regulation policy has therefore focused on competitiveness. Reducing administrative burdens became the principal objective rather than making regulation processes more transparent, responsible and open. Europe's purpose in this third period was mainly to fight compliance costs and to cut red tape (Wiener, 2006). Still, however, the European Commission asked that 'national systems would allow due account to be taken of the full impact of new legislative proposals, including their impact on competitiveness' (European Commission, 2005).

Furthermore, much harder instruments than the Open Method of Coordination, for instance directives, were adopted. However, at the moment, it is too early to ascertain whether this is the first symptom of a shift in the way European better regulation policy is handled. Europe has encouraged Member States to establish their own better regulation national strategies (European Commission, 2005) and, in particular, to launch programs for simplification and for the measurement and reduction of administrative burdens (European Commission, 2007). Moreover, as a consequence of the adoption of the Open Method, decisions regarding the institutional setting were delegated to the domestic level. In fact, the Commission recommended that all Member States should establish national better regulation strategies 'along with the supporting structures adapted to their national circumstances' (European Commission, 2005: 8). Furthermore, the European Commission has underlined that 'improving the regulation process requires time, financial and human resources, as well as adjustment of current institutional structures. This cannot be achieved without strong and sustained political support' (European Commission, 2006).

To conclude, in the time span considered there have been two turning points, which circumscribe three different periods. The first was characterized by the



absence of a coherent and significant European better regulation policy. The second period started with the publication of the Mandelkern Report in 2001: RIA was its main tool, the strategy was to strengthen regulatory European system governance and the policy design seems to have been characterized by the Open Method of Coordination. The third period began around 2005: attention focused on the reduction and simplification of administrative burdens, and ‘harder’ approaches, such as the adoption of directives, have been adopted.

### **Bottom-up analysis (1996–2001)**

Italian better regulation policy began around 1990. The normative environment was characterized by a long-term stratification of norms from diverse sources of different levels of government. Regulation was too wide, too deep and too rigid. Administrative procedures were too slow and administrative burdens too many and too costly (Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, 1994). Change began in 1993, when Sabino Cassese, the technical Minister of Public Administration in the Ciampi Government, implemented a rolling programme of administrative simplification. The objective was essentially to reduce the time and cost of bureaucratic procedures. The government was short lived, but it obtained significant results. In fact, it simplified nearly 50 administrative procedures (Natalini, 2006: 191).

After this there was a period (1996–2001) during which Franco Bassanini (an expert with a remarkable political career) served almost uninterruptedly as Minister of Public Administration. In this period the goals of better regulation policy were widened (Natalini, 2002). In fact, they included not only procedural simplifications, but also codification and RIA. Reducing administrative burdens, however, remained pivotal. In fact, this period was characterized by more than 100 procedural simplifications, by the introduction of one-stop shops for the start up of economic activities, and by the full implementation of the principle that bureaucracy should be prevented from asking for the data of private citizens that are already in the public register. In this period seven codes were also produced, reducing the number of laws in force.

Interventions on the law-making process proved to be much more marginal than those regarding simplification. In fact, RIA was only experimented in five cases in the period from 1999–2001. Most of them were simplifications sustained by a form of measuring concentrated on administrative cost reduction. Their introduction did not generate any transformation in the regulatory process.

As for the organizational dimension in Cassese’s period, the simplification program was driven by the Department of Public Administration with the contribution of a small group of external experts. With Bassanini there was an observable tendency to formally institutionalize a system of better regulation. In fact, the mechanism of the Annual Simplification Acts was introduced. Stable forms of consultation with the social and economic categories were institutionalized (via the creation of an Observatory for Simplification). Finally, a specific

better regulation body, composed of external experts (mainly lawyers), was set up (Task Force for Simplification) as well as a central help desk devoted to sustaining and coordinating RIA experimentation (Formez, 2005: 100). Bassanini's leadership furnished strong political support.

This institutional set up was very centralistic (Natalini, 2002). All competencies were concentrated in the hands of the Department of Public Administration with the passive and sometimes reluctant participation of the other ministries. The Task Force for Simplification directly reduced administrative times and costs rather than helping other administrations to do the job themselves. This 'extraordinary' solution – added to the 'ordinary' structures – produced quick results, but it did not make administrative capacity grow within 'traditional' bureaucracies, limiting their responsibility for the final effect of quality regulation policy. However, it did favour the development of an embryonic epistemic community composed of a narrow group of experts in RIA and in simplification.

RIA experimentation stemmed essentially from the strong interest of the Prodi Government to demonstrate its reliability to international observers, as well as the genuineness of its commitment to the values of competition, market openness and economic efficiency (La Spina, 2002: 2). As a consequence of these (weak) impulses, in 1998 it was decided by Minister Bassanini that Italy was to be submitted to an OECD regulatory review. In order to comply with OECD evaluation criteria, Law no. 50 was adopted in 1999, making RIA compulsory for regulatory measures drafted by ministries. It did not require an immediate complete enforcement, but made provision for an experimental phase before consolidation.

As a matter of fact, in 2001 Italian progress on better regulation was considered by the OECD to be 'impressive', even though this assessment related more to the reform design than its implementation (OECD, 2001).

It is useful to point out the moment of the first encounter between Italian better regulation policy and the European level. Since 2000 Minister Bassanini and his staff of experts actively promoted the development of a European better regulation policy. In fact, Italy was one of the countries that pushed most strongly for the decision of the Ministers for Public Administration in the Meeting of Strasbourg (6 and 7 November 2000), which approved the *Resolution on improving the quality of regulation* within the EU.<sup>1</sup> Italian pressure on the European Commission can perhaps be explained as an attempt to accredit Italy's image as being to the fore in the drive for regulatory quality together with the UK (Stolfi, 2008).

The first phase of the Italian better regulation policy is strongly characterized by the influence of domestic factors (HP1). But Italian political leaders searched for an external legitimacy – hence the encounter with international networks (HP2) and with the European level (HP3).

<sup>1</sup> This emerges from interviews with two experts on Bassanini's staff.

### Bottom-up analysis (2001–06)

When European better regulation was finally launched with the publication of the Mandelkern Report, Italy turned from being active to passive. During the Berlusconi Government (2001–06) the Bassanini better regulation setting was dismantled (Vesperini, 2006). The Task Force and the Observatory for Simplification were dismantled in 2002.<sup>2</sup> In the meantime, due to the constitutional reform of 2001, the State transferred most of its competencies to the Regions and local authorities. In this way it lost its traditional dominant position with regard to other levels of government.<sup>3</sup>

As a matter of fact, after 2001 the better regulation policy ground to a halt, with two exceptions, introduced by Law no. 229/2003: (a) the re-launch of codification regarding ten new topics; (b) the act of making RIA compulsory for independent regulatory authorities. In the latter case, only the Energy and Gas Authority took this obligation seriously. But even the traditional procedural simplification stopped.

Not until 2005, when the right-wing political majority adopted a set of interventions to promote the Italian economic system did competitiveness clearly take root within the re-launch of the Lisbon strategy at the European level. A significant proportion of these initiatives was about better regulation. In this period there was a second encounter between the domestic level and Europe. In fact, the Communication *Better regulation for growth and jobs* inspired these endeavours. In particular, two laws (no. 80/2005 and no. 246/2005) with potentially wide impact were approved. These norms generalized the discipline of ‘silence is consent’ (*silenzio assenso*) to all procedures in which a private citizen asks for permission or authorization to start an economic activity. Nevertheless, the generalization of *silenzio assenso* was surrounded by so many limits and exceptions that the effective application of this norm has been substantially nonexistent.

Furthermore, a new all-inclusive program of normative simplification was launched, introducing a guillotine clause mechanism (*taglia-leggi*). The Government was delegated to produce, in a relatively short term (24 months), a number of codes under which all the State laws were to be grouped. All the legal norms not incorporated into these codes were to be automatically repealed. This was a very ambitious plan, but also quite unfeasible, especially in view of the limited capacity for codification shown in previous years (Natalini, 2006: 213).

<sup>2</sup> The competencies in the field of regulatory quality were distributed between different structures: the Department of Legal and Legislative Affairs within the Italian cabinet office dealt with RIA, while the Department of Public Administration kept procedural simplification and codification. Only two Annual Simplification Acts were adopted in the period from 2001 to 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Under this reform most of the better regulation policies would be the prerogative of the Regions and local public administrations. However, at the time of the constitutional reform, the regulatory system of many regional administrations was particularly rudimentary. This inevitably resulted in a deterioration in the quality of the whole Italian regulatory system (Formez, 2004).

Finally, RIA was introduced permanently after a long period (6 years) during which it had been (in the beginning more strongly, but since 2001 much more weakly) only an object of experimentation. But the consolidation of RIA, in accordance with Law no. 246/2005, was subordinated to the introduction of a Governmental Decree, which was approved (as explained in one of the next paragraphs) only in 2008.

To sum up, the domestic impulses (HP1) during this second period lacked a strong commitment to change.

International organizations (HP2) also had a non-irrelevant influence on domestic policy. In fact, the OECD, in addition to its periodical recommendations on the necessity to improve regulation quality, carried out an evaluation of better regulation systems in the Italian regions (OECD, 2007a). The Italian experts enhanced their links within the international better regulation community network. Most of them were involved in international projects of the OECD itself and of the World Bank.<sup>4</sup> Also at a domestic level the group of technocrats, which had grown around Cassese and Bassanini – although weakened by the dismantling of the Task Force – found some niches in which they kept alive the debate on better regulation.<sup>5</sup>

The encounter between Italian better regulation and the EU (HP3) had a significant relevance when it came to agenda setting, but a rather feeble impact. In fact, its impulses received only a rhetorical answer. Domestic acceptance was confined to the adoption of new laws, without any real effect on society and the economy.

### **Bottom-up analysis (2006–08)**

On the organizational dimension, the second Prodi Government (2006–08) represented a turning point at the domestic level. A better regulation system was rebuilt, following quite different criteria from the ones used by Bassanini. In fact, it passed from centralization to a (weak) collegiality and from a State-centred system to a multilevel one. Participation was strongly improved, too. But this ‘new system’ was hampered by an institutional situation characterized by noticeable sectorialization, a remarkable degree of fragmentation and a limited capacity to coordinate between different levels of government.

Indeed, during this third period the fragmentation of the executive undermined the primacy of the Cabinet Office on better regulation. On one hand, competencies were dispersed within the Cabinet Office itself, have been attributed to five different Ministers without portfolio and to five different departments. Furthermore,

<sup>4</sup> This emerges from interviews with two of these experts.

<sup>5</sup> This happened with an action driven by Fornez (an executive agency of the Department of Public Administration) for the diffusion and experimentation of RIA at the regional level. Again some of these experts participated in different attempts (more or less structured) to introduce RIA in a number of Regions (Tuscany, Lombardy, Veneto, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Piedmont) and municipalities (Lucca and Rome). Finally, the National School of Public Administration financed a Pilot Project on RIA in 2004.

codification was attributed to a Special Committee coordinated by an under-secretary of the Minister of the Interior. On the other hand, some sectoral bureaucracies (in particular, the Ministries of Economic Development and of the Interior) developed their 'own' simplification strategies.

In this very fragmented context the Government launched some new initiatives:

- The establishment of a Political Steering Body, the Inter-ministerial Committee for the Strategic Guidance of Simplification and High-quality Regulation Policies (2006). The coordinator of this structure was the Minister of Public Administration. Its main task was to coordinate the excessive number of Cabinet Office structures involved in better regulation. In practice, however, it had the limited function of ratifying the choices already taken in each ministry, rather than addressing strategic concerns
- The setting up, within the Cabinet Office, of the Simplification and Quality of Regulation Unit<sup>6</sup>
- The introduction of the Annual Action Plan for Simplification, which included all actions (both normative and administrative) that the Government intended to carry out (Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, 2007). For each action, the administration responsible for the results was specified. The plan represented an instrument of weak coordination that furnished a general framework for very different better regulation initiatives
- The development of forms of vertical coordination between different levels of government, which is essential for achieving smart regulation (Sarpi, 2003; OECD, 2007b). Following this line, a Permanent Table for Simplification was set up, where better regulation policies would be jointly planned by representatives of Government, Regions and local authorities
- The enhancement of participation. At the Permanent Table for Simplification sat a number of representatives of enterprises, citizens and trade unions. The Action Plan for Simplification also acknowledged their proposals. Forms of telematic participation were also experimented.

According to the OECD, the new institutional setting introduced a number of positive features, but it 'remains relatively complex given the number of administrations involved' (OECD, 2008: 17). Nonetheless, the Departments of the Cabinet Office and the Simplification Unit became the main interlocutor of the European Commission and of the international networks.

The declared goal of the Action Plan for Simplification 2007 was to reduce the time and cost of regulation, including nearly the whole range of tools indicated on

<sup>6</sup> The Simplification Unit, composed of 20 experts, was far from being an independent watchdog: it was coordinated by an undersecretary, a formal member on the political level; it was in a staff position with regard to the Departments of Legal and Legislative Affairs and of Public Administration; the heads of these two departments were Unit vice-coordinators; it had a rather vague mandate. It was supported by a secretariat driven by a general director and four managers, which was very weakly staffed with just some administrative functionaries and a few junior researchers.

the European level. In fact, it launched the Standard Cost Model Italian Program (the aim, in accordance with the European initiatives, was to measure administrative burdens and to reduce them by 25% before 2012) and a rolling programme for simplification focussing on a number of specific relevant and critical procedures.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the codification program was re-launched, implementing a census to ascertain the total number of legal norms in force (around 21,000). Finally, the Action Plan reaffirmed the objective of ‘concretely’ introducing RIA and telematic consultation for producing norms.

The acceleration of the better regulation initiatives had different causes. First and foremost, the shift in gear had a domestic impulse (HP1). It is a plausible hypothesis that it was triggered by the fact that Prodi – who as President of the European Commission encouraged the development of the European Better Regulation Policy – became Prime Minister. As a matter of fact, the executive effectively tried to re-launch the better regulation policy that had been abandoned since 2001, but this was hindered by the weakness and precariousness of the parliamentary majority and the consequent fragmentation and instability of the government that gave shape to the policy.

Second, the degree of influence of international organisms and intergovernmental networks increased (HP2). In fact, during this period another OECD review on the Italian Regulation System was under way, consolidating the links between Italian technocrats and international organizations. Furthermore, the first attempts to introduce Standard Cost Model (SCM) in Italy (Cavallo *et al.*, 2008) was a case of intergovernmental policy transfer determined by four causes: (a) the visits to Italy in 2007 of Actal (the Advisory Board on Administrative Burdens, an independent advisory body of the Dutch government); (b) the leadership role of the Better Regulation Executive (part of the British Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform) in diffusing SCM to other countries; (c) the intense networking at the conferences of the Directors of Better Regulation (a body that is not even formally part of the EU); (d) stimuli from inter-governmental networking via the Standard Cost Model Network, which has several links with the OECD and is under Dutch and British leadership (Wegrich, 2009). Evidence of the relevant role played by these intergovernmental pressures is the fact that Fornez and the High School of Public Administration launched two different Pilot Projects for experimenting with standard cost methodology in Italy in 2005–06, before the start of the European project at the beginning of 2007.

It can also reasonably be supposed that there is a casual link between European influence and domestic policy (HP3). First, the attempt to strengthen the governance system could have been (partially) due to the need to formulate and manage an

<sup>7</sup> Today the costs of bureaucratic obligation information have been estimated in some sectors (privacy, environment, fire-fighters and social security), obtaining remarkable effects in terms of administrative burdens reduction, and others are on schedule (tax and customs).

administrative burdens reduction plan for the whole country (as requested by the European Commission). Second, it was a consequence of the Directive on Services, the application of which required coordination between lots of different administrations belonging to various government levels. Third, the Public Administration Department launched its program of measurement and reduction of administrative burdens in 2007 in response to the invitation of the EU. Fourth, on a cognitive dimension, Europe has been an example (not unique, but nonetheless a remarkable one) of administration with a wealth of coordination units, committees, action plans and participation initiatives, which has widely inspired the domestic level to re-shape its better regulation institutional set up.

### Bottom-up analysis (2008–09)

The Berlusconi IV Government (at the very beginning) has not profoundly changed the better regulation strategies inherited from the previous government. The most remarkable element of discontinuity is the exercising of a more convinced and visible political leadership. In fact, a Minister of Normative Simplification has been introduced. However, this innovation has paradoxically increased the fragmentation of the institutional set up. On one hand, the new minister has received only the competencies on codification, whereas administrative simplification is ascribed to the Minister of Public Administration and RIA to the Undersecretary of the Cabinet Office. The same three-part division can be noticed at the bureaucratic level. In fact, codification, simplification and RIA have been attributed – as in the previous legislature – to three different departments. On the other hand, some of the principal instruments of horizontal and vertical coordination introduced in the previous legislature (the Action Plan and the Table for Simplification), although not formerly suppressed, have not been (to date) re-activated. At the same time, there is evidence of a progressive stabilization of better regulation structures within the Cabinet Office.

However, the Berlusconi IV Government has a large majority in the Parliament. Consequently, it can make use of normative instruments much more readily than the former government and does not need to continually negotiate its decisions.

In particular, the Government has adopted two laws by decree, no. 112/2008 and no. 200/2008, which have: (a) suppressed an enormous number of obsolete dispositions (about 3000 laws and 30,000 other normative acts); (b) consolidated the SCM Italian Project launched by the Prodi Government;<sup>8</sup> (c) pursued the objective to radically simplify administrative procedures regarding business activity.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, Regulation no. 170/2008 – which was essential to enforce Act no. 246/2005, that

<sup>8</sup> It has led to the introduction of a full-extensive plan of measurement, which should be performed by the Public Administration Department. Furthermore, on the basis of this measurement, each ministry should adopt its own burden reduction plan. Finally, it has authorized the executive to cut or to redefine obligation information imposed by laws and legislative decrees.

<sup>9</sup> In particular, one-stop shops have been re-launched after a fairly long period in which very limited attention was given to this type of simplification.



(as noted above) made economic impact analysis compulsory – was enacted, disciplining (in detail) RIA. Indeed, at first sight the new Italian RIA seems to be profoundly different from the international standards (Natalini and Sarpi, 2009).<sup>10</sup>

Although the strength of the political impulse increased (HP1), the change in legislature has brought about limited but significant variation regarding strategies pursued as well as on institutional set up. The intensity and the direction of pressures of intergovernmental networks (HP2) have remained substantially unchanged, relating for the most part to the diffusion of SCM. Instead, the EU-level boost (HP3) has concerned the enforcement of the Directive on Services and the involvement of the Italian administration in the implementation of the European SCM Program.

## Conclusions

The analysis shows that Europeanization has had a partial effect on Italian better regulation policy. The intensity of this policy has followed an evolution only partially correlated with European pressure (Figure 1). In fact, European impulse (HP3) has progressively increased from 2002 onwards with the introduction of a sort of Open Method of Coordination and then with the adoption of the Directive on Services and the launch of the SCM project. Instead, in Italy it is possible to note a declining trend from 2001 to 2005, followed in the last 3 years by a progressive growth of attention to better regulation policy. This could have partially been influenced by the action of international organisms and intergovernmental networks (HP2), but the domestic impulse is the most determinant cause – in concurrence with others – of the degree of intensity of implementation of Italian better regulation policy (HP1).

As a matter of fact political commitment has been discontinuous and either overly concentrated in just the Minister of Public Administration or too distributed among a number of ministers. This fundamental weakness has shaped the domestic strategies, which have been gradually brought into line with the European recommendations (Figure 2). If at the beginning the Italian privileged tools were essentially Simplification and Codification, after a period of substantial stagnation the re-launch of better regulation has (also) been characterized by the use of SCM and RIA. But the implementation of these instruments is strongly conditioned by domestic features and constrained by institutional ‘stickiness’.

Regarding the institutional setting, Europeanization has represented a factor of coordination, but also (paradoxically) of complexification (Figure 3). The pressure

<sup>10</sup> In fact: (a) although as a rule it should accompany all bills that will be discussed by the Council of Ministers, the executive can arbitrarily decide to exempt ‘particularly complex’ cases; (b) it is not compulsory to compare different regulative options and to make (more or less open) consultations; (c) the publication of RIA is merely optional.

Periods	HP1	HP2	HP3	Domestic implementation
1996–2001	Strong political commitment	Country Review OECD	Resolution on improving the quality of regulation	High
2001–2006	Weak political commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Periodical recommendations OECD</li> <li>• Regional Review OECD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action Plan (2002)</li> <li>• Communication Better regulation for growth and jobs (2005)</li> </ul>	Low
2006–2008	Medium political commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Country Review OECD</li> <li>• SCM Intergovernmental network</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• European SCM</li> <li>• Adoption Directive on Services</li> </ul>	Medium
2008–2009	Strong political commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SCM Intergovernmental network</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation on European SCM</li> <li>• Implementation on Directive on Services</li> </ul>	High

Figure 1 Evaluation of hypotheses and degree of domestic implementation

for enhancing governance mechanisms has favoured the introduction of a dedicated minister as well as of specific units, acts, plans and the adoption of an agreement on better regulation between different levels of government. This European centripetal force has been partly offset by the contrary pressure imposed by the fragmentation of the Italian institutional system. As such, the level of coordination of better regulation policies has remained low. The new (supposedly centripetal) institutions (Inter-ministerial Committee, Simplification Plan, Permanent Table) have turned into fora in which different interventions and points of view are put side by side but without a more general synthesis being achieved.

As a result the impact of Europeanization on the Italian better regulation policy could be classified, in accordance with Borzel and Risse (2000), among cases that are in part by absorption and in part by accommodation. The European influence is conditioned by other variables (mainly domestic) and is focused on agenda setting rather than on implementation. In accordance with comparative studies (Radaelli, 2005), the research shows that the diffusion of better regulation policy

Periods	EU Tools	Domestic Tools
1996–2001	-	Simplification, Codification, RIA (adoption in 1999 and pilot stage)
2001–2006	RIA, Simplification, Codification	No evidence, RIA atrophy and elimination of simplification bodies and task forces
2006–2008	RIA, Simplification, Codification, SCM	Simplification, Codification, SCM
2008–2009	RIA, Simplification, Codification, SCM	Codification (currently limited, abrogation of obsolete laws), Simplification (erratic), SCM, RIA (but very limited implementation).

**Figure 2** Effects of the encounter between domestic and European policy: Tools

Periods	Europeanization Pressure on Institutional Set Up	Domestic Institutional Set Up
1996–2001	-	Centralization
2001–2006	Coordination	-
2006–2008	Coordination	Coordination, but Fragmentation
2008–2009	Coordination	Coordination, but Fragmentation

**Figure 3** Effects of the encounter between domestic and European policy: Institutional set up

and good regulatory governance generates – despite the wide diffusion of tools with the same label – a limited substantial convergence. It confirms that the national political context matters.

Some insights stand out, but their significance can (in perspective) only be evaluated through cross-unit analysis. In particular, Europe seems to be more

influential on Italy when directed towards the reduction strategy. This causal relationship cannot be localized or episodic, because the effect could (also) be due to the size of the stock of administrative burdens accumulated in Italy. Examining better regulation policies in other European countries might make it possible to evaluate the ability of generalization of the relation between the 'weight' of bureaucracy and the success of the European 'reductionist' approach to better regulation. It could also be possible to test the hypothesis that boosting the introduction of coordination instruments in an already fragmented institutional context paradoxically leads to complexification.

To explain the case outcome, consideration can also be given to the influence of the action certification mechanism, defined as 'the validation of actors, their performance and their claims by external authorities' (McAdam *et al.*, 2001: 121). This can be related to the logic of appropriateness because certification can affect the identity of actors as well as the circumstantial situation (Barzelay, 2007: 534). In this case, the mechanism worked, in part, because of the build up of the Italian better regulation institutions. In fact, a key step in creating and progressively consolidating the role of these structures was to certify them as points of reference for – and in part as an agent of – international networks and the European Commission.

Future research could usefully explore the mechanisms of Europeanization in greater detail, with the ambition of using mechanisms to provide causal explanations to case-based narratives like the one presented in this article. Strikingly, scholars working on Europeanization have developed their own catalogue of mechanisms, ignoring to some extent the cumulative knowledge available in political sociology. To illustrate, key mechanisms developed in the context of the study of contention, like actor certification, seem at first sight to be promising explanatory devices for an understanding of how certain actors benefit, or lost out, from Europeanization.

In terms of methodological progress, the analysis has shown the extreme relevance of assessing the impact of European influence with a bottom-up approach. Examining the Italian case from an exclusively top-down point of view would have revealed only some (partial) alignments between aims pursued at the European level and the domestic policy. But it would be wrong to argue that this result should be attributed to pressure from Brussels. In fact, the bottom-up analysis has provided clear evidence that the growth of efforts at simplification and codification in recent years is essentially domestic in origin. The research design has avoided overrating the European influence, identifying periods in which the EU level was unable to trigger any change when the 'right' conditions did not exist at the domestic level.

Finally, there is evidence that the European influence is incorporated at a domestic level through a gradual and partial penetration of values, models and ideas strongly determined by the domestic re-interpretation of European signals. Domestic institutions are not passive, insofar as 'they re-appropriate EU norms and use them according to their strategies in domestic political systems' (Pasquier, 2005: 296).

Highlighting these findings does not entail acceptance of a point of view prejudicially devoted to considering only the cognitive and social dimension of Europeanization: norms and authoritative powers still (as always) matter.

## References

- Allio, L. (2008), The emergence of better regulation in the European Union. PhD Thesis, King's College London.
- Arnold, H. (1987), 'Political control of administrative officials', Conference on the Law and Economics of Procedure, Vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 279–286.
- Barazzoni, F., V. De Magistris, A. La Spina and A.T. Imbriano (2005), *L'analisi di impatto delle regolazione in dieci paesi dell'Unione Europea*, Roma: Formez.
- Barzelay, M. (2007), 'Learning from second-hand experience: methodology for extrapolation-oriented case research', *Governance: an International Journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions* 20(3): 521–543.
- Borzel, S.T. and T. Risse (2000), 'When Europe hits home: Europeanization and domestic change', *European Integration Online Papers (Eiop)*, Vol. 4, no. 15. Retrieved 12 January 2010 from <http://eiop.or.at/eiop/texte/2000-015a.htm>
- Cavallo, L., G. Coco and M. Martelli (2008), Evaluating administrative burdens through SCM: some indications from the Italian experience, SCM Network. Retrieved 12 January 2010 from [http://www.administrative-burdens.com/filesystem/2008/05/evaluating\\_admin\\_burdens\\_through\\_scm\\_-\\_italian\\_experience\\_may\\_2008\\_483.pdf](http://www.administrative-burdens.com/filesystem/2008/05/evaluating_admin_burdens_through_scm_-_italian_experience_may_2008_483.pdf)
- Cecot, C., R. Hahn, A. Renda and L. Schrefler (2008), 'An evaluation of the quality of impact assessment in the European Union with lessons for the US and EU', *Regulation and Governance* 2: 405–424.
- European Commission (2002), European governance: better lawmaking, COM(2002) 275 final.
- (2005), Better regulation for growth and jobs in the European Union, COM(2005) 97 final.
- (2006), A strategic review of better regulation in the European Union, COM(2006) 689 final.
- (2007), Action programme for reducing administrative burdens in the European Union, COM(2007) 23.
- (2008), Second strategic review of better regulation in the European Union, COM(2008) 32 final, Brussels, 30 January 2008.
- EVIA (2008), Improving the practice of impact assessment, final report.
- Fabbrini, S. (2003), 'L'europeizzazione: teorie, comparazioni e implicazioni per l'Italia', in S. Fabbrini (ed.), *L'europeizzazione dell'Italia*, Roma-Bari: Laterza.
- Featherstone, K. and M.C. Radaelli (eds) (2003), *The Politics of Europeanization*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gerring, J. (2004), 'What is a case study and what is it good for?', *American Political Science Review* 98(2): 341–354.
- Graziano, P. and M. Vink (eds) (2006), *Europeanization: New Research Agendas*, Basingstoke, Hampshire, UK: Palgrave.
- Green-Cowles, M., J. Caporaso and T. Risse (2001), *Transforming Europe*, Ithaca, NY, USA: Cornell Press.
- Haas, M.P. (1992), 'Knowledge, power and international coordination', *International Organization, Special Issue* 46(1): 1–35.
- Hahn, W.R. and C.P. Tetlock (2007), 'Has economic analysis improved regulatory decisions?'. Working Paper 07-08, AEI-BROOKINGS, Joint Center for Regulatory Studies.
- La Spina, A. (2002), 'Expectations, process and outcome in the transfer of RIA: the Italian case, paper delivered to the workshop on regulatory impact analysis in comparative perspective', London School of Economics, London, 11 March 2002.
- Lodge, M. (2005), 'The importance of being modern: international benchmarking an national regulatory innovation', *Journal of European Public Policy* 12(4): 649–667.
- Lonti, Z. and M. Woods (2008), 'Towards government at a glance: identification of core data and issues related to public sector efficiency'. OECD Working Papers on Public Governance, no. 7.

- McAdam, D., S. Tarrow and C. Tilly (2001), *Dynamics of Contention*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- McCubbins, M., R. Noll and B. Weingast (1987), 'Administrative procedures as instrument of political control', *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 2(2): 243–277.
- Meuwese, A. (2008), *Impact Assessment in Eu Lawmaking*, Zuidpoolsingel: Kluwer Law International.
- Morgan, B. (2003), 'The economization of politics: Meta-regulation as a form of no judicial legality', *Social and Legal Studies* 12(4): 489–523.
- Morlino, L. (1999), *Europeanization and Representation in Two Europes. Local Institutions and National Parties*, paper prepared for the workshop on "Multi-level Party Systems: The Reshaping of National Political Representation", European University Institute, S. Domenico di Fiesole (Florence), 16–18 December 1999.
- Morlino, L. and V. Fargion (2006), 'Introduzione. Europeizzazione e rappresentanza: perché i fondi strutturali', in V. Fargion, L. Morlino e S. Profeti (eds), *Europeizzazione e rappresentanza territoriale*, Bologna, Italy: Il Mulino.
- Natalini, A. (2002), *Le semplificazioni amministrative*, Bologna, Italy: Il Mulino.
- (2006), *Il tempo delle riforme amministrative*, Bologna, Italy: Il Mulino.
- Natalini, A. and F. Sarpi (2009), *L'insostenibile leggerezza dell'Air*, in *Giornale di diritto amministrativo*, no. 3. Italy: Ipsoa.
- Nilsson, M., A. Jordan, J. Turnpenny, J. Hertin, B. Nykvist and D. Russel (2008), 'The use and non-use of policy appraisal tools in public policy making: an analysis of three European countries and the European Union', *Policy Sciences* 41(4): 335–355.
- OECD (2001), *Regulatory Reform Review in Italy*, Paris.
- (2005), *Guiding Principles for Regulatory Quality and Performance*, Paris.
- (2006), *Working Party on Regulatory Management and Reform. Simplification Strategies for Reducing Administrative Burdens*, GOV/PGC/REG(2006)10, Paris, 30 August.
- (2007a), *Italy. Ensuring Regulatory Quality Across Levels of Government. Reviews of Regulatory Reform*, Paris.
- (2007b), *Political Challenges of Implementing Successful Regulatory Reform*, Issue papers, SG/GRP(2007)2, Paris, 23 November.
- (2008), *The Capacity of the Italian Government to Assure High-quality Regulation*, GOV/PGC/REG(2008)9, Paris.
- Olsen, P.J. (2002), 'The many faces of Europeanization'. Arena working papers, WP 01/2.
- Pasquier, R. (2005), "'Cognitive Europeanization" and the territorial effects of multilevel policy transfer: local development in French and Spanish regions', *Regional and Federal Studies* 15(3): 295–310.
- Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri (1994), *I procedimenti amministrativi statali*, Roma, Italy: Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato.
- Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri (2007), 'Action plan for simplification and regulatory quality', Rome. Retrieved 17 May 2010 from [http://www.innovazionepa.gov.it/media/234061/italian\\_action\\_plan.pdf](http://www.innovazionepa.gov.it/media/234061/italian_action_plan.pdf)
- Quaglia, L. and M.C. Radaelli (2007), 'Italian politics and the European Union: A tale of two research design', *West European Politics* 30(4): 924–943.
- Radaelli, M.C. (1999), 'Idee e conoscenza nelle politiche pubbliche europee: tecnocrazia o politicizzazione?', *Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica* 1(3): 517–546.
- (2000), 'Whither Europeanization? Concept stretching and substantive change', *European Integration online Papers (Eiop)*, Vol. 4, no. 8. Retrieved 12 January 2010 from <http://eiop.or.at/eiop/texte/2000-008a.htm>
- (2005), 'Diffusion without convergence: how political context shapes the adoption of regulatory assessment', *Journal of European Public Policy* 12(5): 924–943.
- (2007), 'Whither better regulation for the Lisbon Agenda?', *Journal of European Public Policy* 14(2): 190–207.
- Radaelli, M.C. and F. De Francesco (2007a), *Regulatory Quality in Europe: Concepts, Measures and Policy Processes*, Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.

- Radaelli, M.C. and F. De Francesco (2007b), 'Regulatory impact assessment, political control and the regulatory state'. Paper delivered to the 4th general conference of the European Consortium for political research, Pisa, Italy, 6–8 September 2007.
- Radaelli, M.C. and R. Pasquier (2006), 'Encounters with Europe: Concepts, definitions, and research design', *Politik* 9(3): 1–29.
- Sahlin-Andersson, K. (2003), 'National, international and transnational constructions of new public management', in C. Tom and L. Per (eds), *New Public Management. The Transformation of Ideas and Practice*, Ashgate, UK: Aldershot.
- Sarpi, F. (2003), 'Report on the implementation of regulatory quality instruments in multilevel countries'. Expert meeting on regulatory co-operation between levels of government, Session 3, paper commissioned by the OECD, Paris, 30 June–1 July.
- Stolfi, F. (2008), 'The Europeanization of Italy's budget institutions in the 1990s', *Journal of European Public Policy* 15(4): 550–566.
- Vesperini, G. (eds) (2004), *La semplificazione amministrativa nelle regioni*, Roma: Formez.
- (eds) (2006), *Che fine ha fatto la semplificazione amministrativa?*, Milano, Italy: Giuffrè.
- Wegrich, K. (2009), 'The administrative burdens reduction policy boom in Europe'. Comparing mechanism of policy diffusion, London School of Economics, discussion papers, no. 52.
- Wiener, B.J. (2006), 'Better regulation in Europe'. Duke Law School working paper series, 65.
- Williams, M.E. (2002), 'Market reforms, technocrats, and institutional innovation', *World Development* 30(3): 395–412.