European Institutions and Unsuccessful Norm Transmission: The Case of Transparency

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Abstract. European institutions are seen as having a positive role in the processes of democratic consolidation in East and Central Europe through the transmission of democratic norms. But not all democratic norms appear to be promoted with equal success by international institutions. This study focuses on the unsuccessful transmission of the norm of transparency. I show how the EU, the Council of Europe, and NATO were unable to influence the adoption of legislation impacting the free flow of information. I argue that this lack of success was due to the nature of the norm and its lack of “resonance” with the foundational norms on these institutions.

Introduction

Recent domestic changes taking place in the new democracies of East and Central Europe (ECE) often are attributed to the direct impact of European institutions. International organizations (IOs) such as the EU, the Council of Europe and NATO, are generally seen as having a positive role in the processes of democratic consolidation in the former communist countries.

One of the main mechanisms through which IOs contribute to domestic change is through the transmission of norms. “Norm entrepreneurs” from within international organizations work with governmental institutions and domestic societies to promote democratic norms.

Initial constructivist literature, in response to “rationalist approaches,” attempted to show that norms are transmitted, that they “matter” and that they affect behavior. More recently, the constructivist focus has shifted to refining our understanding of such processes. The main question that is currently being pursued in the literature is more complex: Under what circumstances is it more likely for a norm to be transmitted? Factors taken into account when answering this question are the type of norm, characteristics of the actors involved in the transmission of the norm (e.g., the power of the state promoting it), and characteristics of the “target” of the norm (the country or group of countries it is being promoted in). In other words, depending on what the norm is, on who promotes it and on where it is being promoted, one can expect to have a more or less successful transmission.

This study seeks to contribute to the literature on norm transmission by focusing on an additional factor: the “organizational platform” used by the norm entrepreneurs. I ask if there are certain characteristics of international organizations that make them more or less likely to be used successfully in promoting norms.
Additionally, I consider whether certain types of norms are more likely to be transmitted through international organizations than others. I will not offer a definitive answer to these questions. But I will offer a relevant case of a norm that — although considered central to democracy — was not successfully transmitted through any of the three major European institutions: the norm of transparency.

Unsuccessful norm transmission is not a rare occurrence. In fact, one can argue that successful norm transmission in the arms control, environmental, or human rights realms have generally been preceded by numerous unsuccessful attempts to promote such norms. But there is a paucity of studies focusing specifically on unsuccessful cases of norm transmission. This approach allows us to observe some variance across the dependent variable (i.e., successful vs. unsuccessful norm transmission). By focusing on the failure of some actors in transmitting the norm of transparency, and comparing this to existing models describing “successful” transmission of norms, we can identify the factors that explain this “unsuccessful” case.

The literature on norms does not offer any precise definition of successful norm transmission. This is perhaps because in order to assess success of transmission one needs to evaluate the strength of the norm in a specific target (e.g., a country, group of countries, or an IO) before and after the process of norm transmission. This is not an easy task considering the broader difficulty of gauging the presence (let alone the strength) of a norm.

In this essay, I first evaluate the success of the transmission of the transparency norm in ECE by focusing primarily on changes in behavior, i.e., on the actual practices of offering information to the public. This is considered one of the essential elements in evaluating norm strength. Two other methods of assessing norm strength — changes in official rhetoric and the creation of institutions supporting the norm — will not be emphasized as much. I have found evidence of increases in ECE elites’ rhetoric regarding the need for greater transparency and of the emergence of institutions supporting transparency, but these developments are not convincing evidence of normative change. I will show that, although many institutions supporting transparency (such as freedom of information laws, the institution of ombudsman and press freedom legislation) have emerged in these countries, the practices of transparency are still lagging. This leads me to conclude that the transmission of the norm of transparency has not been altogether successful. I then turn to some of the factors that may explain this lack of success.

This study focuses on the efforts of three European institutions to affect government transparency in East and Central Europe. I compare their actions with (1) the expectations derived from existing models of successful IO norm promotion, and (2) the actions of other actors (NGOs and states) that contributed to the transmission of the norm of transparency to ECE. I conclude that the European IOs have not been successful in transmitting transparency. The last sections of this essay attempt to explain what led to this failure. My main argument is that European institutions have been unsuccessful in transmitting transparency because this particular norm does not “resonate” with the norms on which these IOs were founded.
Transparency and Democratic Consolidation

During the past few decades, the number of democratic countries has increased substantially.\(^1\) While the initial focus of political scientists was on the processes of democratization, interest slowly shifted to democratic consolidation as related to the ability of the new democracies to survive.\(^1\) Research on the diversity of states undergoing democratic consolidation has led to a more complex understanding of the process. The growing number of works on this topic has suggested a broad set of factors — either institutional or belief-based — critical to the survival of new democracies.\(^1\)

One such factor is government accountability. Democratic theory has long suggested that governments need to show continuous responsiveness to citizen preferences.\(^2\) Governments must be accountable to society not only through elections, but also between elections. They need to inform the public of their actions and intentions and offer mechanisms through which they can be punished for not being “representative.” Thus, the “transparency” of governments towards their societies is seen as a necessary factor of government accountability and responsiveness and, implicitly, of a truly democratic polity.

Transparency is also important for new democracies because it leads to greater public understanding of and support for government policy. Conversely, in opaque political systems, citizens lose faith in their ability to influence political decisions. This, in turn, leads to lower public support for the government, putting its survival into doubt.\(^1\)

Although there has been increased interest in transparency in the political science literature — especially in its relationship to democratic consolidation — there has been little agreement on a common definition of the concept. Transparency is defined here as the ability of any citizen to gain access to information held by government.\(^2\)

The main institutions that support government transparency are legislation on access to information (similar to the Freedom of Information Act in the United States), on freedom of the press, and the institution of ombudsman.\(^2\) In the past decade, East and Central European countries have been adopting many such institutions supporting transparency. The number of newspapers, journals, radio, and television stations has increased tremendously.\(^1\) More important, the past decade has seen the adoption of a series of laws meant to encourage freedom of the press in all of the former Soviet bloc countries.\(^1\)

All of the countries in this study have included the right to access information in their constitutions. They have also adopted specific freedom of information legislation (Hungary in 1992, Czech Republic in 1999, Slovakia and Bulgaria in 2000, and Poland and Romania in 2001). These developments are impressive considering that only 11 Western democracies had adopted such acts by 1990.\(^1\)

Most of the ECE countries also have adopted or improved specific institutions that contribute to the quantity and quality of information made available to the public: external audit and control mechanisms, the institution of ombudsman,\(^2\) economic and financial statistics bureaus,\(^2\) laws on access to environmental information, legislation for transparency in campaign financing, and so forth. Some of
these recently instituted provisions are considered more progressive than existing legislation in established democracies.29

Yet, as suggested earlier, the simple adoption of institutions of transparency does not constitute sufficient evidence that the norm of transparency has been successfully transmitted.30 The literature focusing on democratic change in East and Central Europe has noted that the adoption of institutions is not always followed by changes in actual practices.31 This has certainly been the case for transparency. Problems related to the design of the institutions supporting transparency, as well as to the slow and incomplete implementation of existing legal provisions, have led to few actual changes in government practices related to public access to information.

An important, yet indirect,32 reflection of the lagging practices of transparency in ECE can be found in the relatively high levels of corruption.33 Similarly, measures of press freedom released by Freedom House show that violations are far more common in ECE than for other countries that have adopted free press institutions.34 Overall, observers discuss the persistence of a “culture of secrecy” in these post-communist systems.35 A Freedom House study shows that data on budgets, economic statistics, public procurement, privatization, tax revenues, and court proceedings are difficult to obtain even in countries where comprehensive legislation for access to information is in place.36 Even in the relatively more open political systems of the Czech Republic37 and Hungary38 one finds evidence of lagging practices of transparency.

Furthermore, even after many institutions supporting transparency were adopted in ECE, it quickly became apparent that these institutions were not very effective. For example, in the Czech Republic, although a Freedom of Information (FOI) law has been adopted, the often exorbitant and not fully regulated costs of obtaining information has discouraged many individuals from using the law.39 Also, although the institution of ombudsman has been adopted in many ECE countries, budgets for this institution are often still quite small and, in some cases, permanent building facilities were a long time coming.40 Freedom of the press laws (especially “broadcast laws”) allow for loopholes through which governments can still exert much control over the media. Even in ECE countries that have advanced furthest towards having a truly free press, old practices of government control over the media have not yet been eliminated. In 1999, the International Press Institute in Vienna criticized Hungary’s control over state television noting that “it calls to mind the intolerance of past Soviet-bloc governments of media criticism.”41 In January 2001, public protests against the Czech government’s attempts to control state television led to huge demonstrations lasting several days. Observers see such events as proof that ECE politicians are still very intolerant to a free press and to criticism.42

The above examples indicate that the government practices of offering timely and accurate information have still not taken root in ECE. This contrasts with developments in traditional democracies where, even though it may have taken longer to adopt institutions of transparency, government practices allowing for the free flow of information are much more advanced. This suggests that, if norm entrepreneurs have attempted to transmit the norm of transparency to ECE, they have failed. This is especially important because they have had the opportunity to
affect transparency at a time when laws dealing transparency were being drafted and adopted.

**International Organizations and Norm Transmission**

The literature on norms has shown that, in cases where norm transmission is successful, IOs have adopted international mechanisms to make compliance more likely. The conditions for membership in a particular IO imply acceptance of the norm, and acceptance of the possibility of sanction for being a noncompliant member. Further, IOs publicize cases of non-compliance in order to “shame” governments into changing their institutions and practices. On the incentive side, IO officials offer encouragement and expertise to governments, exchange information, and even offer financial assistance to other actors (especially NGOs) that are promoting the same norm.

We should thus expect similar actions from the European institutions transmitting the norm of transparency to ECE. The following sections will evaluate the ability and willingness of three of the most important European institutions to promote transparency in the area: NATO, the EU and the Council of Europe.

**NATO**

External threats traditionally have been the emphasis of NATO security concerns for ECE. The internal ethnic conflicts that erupted early after the end of the Cold War in ECE made the alliance emphasize domestic security and stability. The Partnership for Peace was intended, in part, to bolster democratic reforms in the new democracies. But, while the prospect for joining NATO may have had an indirect effect on the domestic struggles between reformers and old elites, NATO only required a small number of domestic institutional changes. The only required change relevant to this study was making national defense budgets public. The thinking behind the condition of transparent defense budgets was that such would “facilitate public scrutiny and legislative supervision, as well as reduce suspicions in neighboring states.” Yet, while transparency of the budget was clearly emphasized as an important factor in furthering democracy, NATO requirements targeted only the military realm.

While NATO never really promoted transparency in East and Central Europe, its actions probably led to the most comprehensive debates regarding government transparency. These debates were the result of one of the important requirements the organization set down for all prospective members: that “aspirants would be expected upon accession to have in place sufficient safeguards and procedures to ensure the security of the most sensitive information as laid down in security policy.” The reason for this condition is really very straightforward: NATO and its members want to make sure that any of the information they share with their new partners does not fall in the hands of third parties. This condition implied the adoption of laws intended to protect “official secrets” or “state secrets.”

In some cases (such as Bulgaria and the Czech Republic), such laws were passed with few problems. That “NATO required it” was sufficient argument for passage through parliament. In other cases (e.g., Romania and Slovakia), the adoption of
secrecy laws was viewed by societal groups as a step back from the general trend of greater government openness. Whether true or not, many perceived that former communist forces would use secrecy laws to maintain an environment that would benefit the anti-democratic groups, especially those “hiding” within the reformed secret services.

In Slovakia, in February 2001, a draft of the law on classified information was withdrawn by the Cabinet from the parliament due to the strong opposition of some political parties and non-governmental organizations. In Romania, it took more than a year to pass a secrecy law due to similar opposition.

In fact, in the Romanian case, when debate about the law began in parliament in early 2000, strong opposition to the idea of such a law, as well as to some of the specific wording, led to its initial defeat. The fact that the principal proponent of the “state secrets” law, General Ioan Talpes, was an MP who had previously been the director of the Romanian Foreign Secret Service certainly contributed to the perception that the law was a way for the secret services — still associated by many Romanians with the infamous “Securitate” — to assert their control over information and to gain greater power. A powerful movement for the adoption of a freedom of information law actually emerged in Romania as a reaction to the initial efforts to pass the Secret of the State law. The main sponsor of the Romanian FOI bill, Senator Eugen Vasiliu, began presenting the FOI law as a necessary “antidote” to the law of state secrets. He argued that the secrets’ law emphasizes the exceptions (secrets) to the rule (openness) and should therefore only pass at the same time as (or even after) the FOI law.

Many non-governmental organizations from East and Central Europe blamed NATO for the emergence of such perceived non-democratic institutions (i.e., laws on state secrets) in their countries. The experts within NATO who were focusing directly on this issue were uncomfortable with the emerging controversies, yet maintained that they were not promoting greater secrecy through such laws. Instead, laws protecting state secrets or military secrets were in place in all democracies member to the alliance. NATO’s request for secrecy laws encouraged the adoption of clearer legal definitions of “secrets,” thus making it more difficult for prospective non-democratic leaders to hide relevant information from societies in such broad categories.

At the same time, with its well-known discretion, NATO preferred to avoid any public discussion of the issue. NATO officials privately noted that the problem (especially in Romania) emerged from weak public relations campaign by these governments as they prepared for the passage of the state secrets law. These NATO officials believed that they had made it very clear to ECE governments and parliaments that protection of information is a single condition that can easily be fulfilled by all prospective members and that has been dealt with in many different and acceptable ways by all other NATO members. The organization’s dread of being perceived as meddling in members’ domestic affairs led to NATO’s refusal to suggest to ECE authorities the exact wording to be incorporated in a state secrets law, although officials from Bucharest and Bratislava were eagerly awaiting such advice. In order to avoid involvement in domestic issues, NATO officials limited their input
to encouragement that such laws be “simple” and “broad.” Unfortunately, such suggestions were perceived by NGOs and some politicians in ECE as conducive to laws that were a threat to democracy.

Many NATO officials were aware of the great tensions that introducing such laws had induced in some Central and East European societies. They tried to explain the relevance of the state secrets law and its compatibility with the development of transparency in new democracies. Nevertheless, in the Romanian case they did not suggest that a freedom of information law should be adopted simultaneously in order to ease such tensions. The generally awkward position that some NATO officials felt they were in clearly indicates they did perceive that transparency of governments was “appropriate” and that even if unintentionally, their actions were leading to some “inappropriate” outcomes. The fact that they never expressed their thoughts publicly also indicates that they perceived that it was not NATO’s duty to promote overall transparency.

As a military organization that bases much of its action on the presumption of secrecy, NATO thought it was not in the position to request transparency from others. Moreover, NATO officials perceived that it was difficult for them to promote transparency due to the norm’s incompatibility with their organization’s main purposes and agenda.

Although NATO’s actions unexpectedly triggered the process leading to the adoption of a FOI law in Romania, in most other ECE countries NATO’s role in the emergence of institutions or practices of transparency has been insignificant. The lack of success (or even willingness) of NATO officials to promote transparency is not surprising, given its focus on the highly secretive issue-area of security.

The EU

The European Union’s complex programs for East and Central Europe have a greater democracy component than NATO’s program for the area. One of the membership requirements established by the Copenhagen European Council was specifically “stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, rule of law, human rights and respect for protection of minorities.”

The PHARE program, considered to be the main channel for the EU’s financial and technical cooperation with the countries of East and Central Europe, includes a specific democracy component. This “Democracy Program” was built into PHARE with the declared goal of encouraging “non-governmental organizations that act to boost civic society and democracy in their countries by offering grants to projects that fulfill certain conditions.” Yet, the projects that have been funded through PHARE democracy programs rarely have been intended to bolster a free press or access to information. The EU typically funds projects that help develop and coordinate NGOs, projects focusing on the improvement of the situation of ethnic minorities, and so forth. But the EU has been very cautious when it comes to requiring transparency from member governments or prospective members.

The case of Slovakia illustrates the point. When in the spring of 2001 the “secret of the state” law was introduced in the Slovak Parliament (as part of the preparations...
for NATO membership), many of the NGOs that were instrumental in the passage of the 2000 FOI law perceived the new developments as a threat to their newly acquired institutionalized transparency. In their efforts to block the adoption of the secret of the state law, they contacted the EU and requested that the organization step in and discourage what was perceived as backsliding towards greater government control over information.

The EU officials from the Enlargement Directorate General were confronted with a dilemma. On the one hand, they did believe that the adoption of the secrecy law in that particular format was not encouraging for future democratic developments, and they considered that it was not “appropriate” to not take an official position. Some form of press release from the office of Commissioner Gunter Verheugen was considered. The same EU officials had been very pleased (and somewhat surprised) by the adoption of the FOI laws in Slovakia in 2000 (and the Czech Republic in 1999), yet they had not requested the adoption of these laws. They were especially impressed by the Slovak law both because of Slovakia’s recent history of less-than-democratic practices during the Meciar Government, as well as because the Slovak law was considered more liberal and effective than the Czech one adopted a year earlier.

Although the EU officials wanted to help protect the recently acquired institutions supporting transparency from the secrecy laws, they believed that they could not do so effectively. They hurriedly searched in existing EU documents for support for arguments that would discourage the introduction of such restrictive laws. They wanted to support greater transparency, but they believed the EU framework did not offer sufficient tools to do so. EU officials were relieved when the law was withdrawn from consideration for domestic reasons; the EU would not need to take an official position. The EU still has not made government transparency a clear part of the political criteria set down for membership. The one exception to this is in the environmental realm.

Overall, many non-governmental organizations and politicians from Romania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia were dismayed by the lack of EU support for their fight for greater transparency. They have not fully understood why the EU has been so active and adamant on other issues related to democratic consolidation and yet so passive in its support for freedom of information and transparency.

The Council of Europe

The Council of Europe is the only organization of the three discussed here that has set down as its main mission the creation and endurance of democracy. It is not surprising, therefore, that it is also the only one to adopt a common position on access to all government held information — not just information in one particular field.

The first mention of the issue of access to information can be found as far back as the 1953 European Convention of Human Rights. In 1981, the Council of Europe adopted Recommendation No. R(81)19 on the access to information held by public authorities and in 1982 a declaration on the freedom of expression and information.
Yet, these documents offer vague wording with regard to the “rule” of access to information and have allowed for very broad exceptions. This is especially true for the European Convention on Human Rights that stipulates that the right to information may be circumscribed for “interests of national security,” “territorial integrity,” “public safety,” “prevention of disorder,” “protection of morals,” “protection of the reputation of others,” and “for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence,” etc. While the reasons behind these exceptions to the rule of transparency may be understandable, the vague wording has led to the inability of the Human Rights Court to uphold this right. It is noteworthy that all parties bringing cases of “freedom of information rights” to the Court have lost. Council of Europe officials privately argue that the Court does not want to take a leading role on this issue because it first wants member states to reach closer agreement on a common set of rules and limits for access to government information.

Because the Court bases its decisions on the European Convention of Human Rights, it takes into account the more restrictive wording of the 1953 documents rather than the recommendation of 1981 and its declaration of 1982. In fact, while these two later documents are somewhat more precise in their wording, their non-binding character allowed for their passage in the first place. This “lack of bite” of the Council of Europe documents can also explain the surprising fact that they were adopted in 1982 when only seven Council of Europe members had actually adopted specific access to information legislation and could technically fully abide by the principles in such a declaration.

Thus, while the Council of Europe has set down some conditions that new democracies need to meet with regard to government transparency, such conditions have been weak. This is true even in the realm of freedom of the press. A September 1999 Court ruling against the Romanian government for infringements upon the free expression rights of a journalist was actually the first such case brought against the Romanian government. This is relevant considering that Freedom House indices list Romania as the “least free” of the six countries discussed here.

The Council of Europe’s role in affecting democratic developments in ECE has not been limited only to its mechanisms of conditionality. Much of the compliance with Western procedures and norms is also the result of the processes of socialization. The Council of Europe organizes seminars and roundtables, study visits for East European officials and experts to acquaint themselves with practices and legislation in West European countries, as well as expertise missions to help draw up media laws and access to information laws. All of these activities result in “policy dialogues, jawboning, learning, persuasion, and the like,” and thus tend to influence ECE elites’ understanding of “appropriate behavior.”

The Directorate General of Human Rights of the Council of Europe has organized a series of such activities (activities for the development and consolidation of democratic stability, or ADACS) that were intended to emphasize the importance of government transparency. Yet, Council of Europe officials privately recognize that through such ADACS they have emphasized the adoption of “broadcast” and “press” laws and far less of “freedom of information” laws. Only 17 of the 373
ADACS activities focus directly on access to information issues and this smaller set of programs has emerged only in the past several years. More important, of the six East and Central European countries on which this study focuses, only two (Bulgaria and the Czech Republic) have actually been the recipients of such programs and only after they had already appeared to be committed to adopting such legislation in the first place. The Council has not organized any workshops and has not sent expertise missions to those countries in which there was no apparent initial interest in adopting legislation on access to information.

As in the case of NATO and the EU, bureaucrats within the Council of Europe have been convinced of the importance of promoting transparency in East and Central Europe. They see it not only as a necessary but also as “appropriate.” For this reason there has been some frustration that they do not have the official tools to use as “leverage” when promoting transparency. One official, dealing with freedom of the press issues in the Council of Europe, stated that access to information legislation is more difficult to promote than freedom of the press because of the lack of clear Council of Europe documents supporting it. He was waiting impatiently for concrete results of the “group of specialists on access to official information” within the Steering Committee for Human Rights of the Council of Europe.

This discussion of efforts by the European institutions to influence transparency in ECE suggests the absence of actions that one would expect from IOs successfully transmitting a norm. The three organizations have not adopted formal mechanisms of conditionality that would encourage prospective members from ECE to adopt comprehensive and effective domestic institutions of transparency. Such mechanisms exist only for narrower realms such as the environment or the military budget. They also have not “shamed” the new democracies by publicizing cases in which governments have not offered relevant information to their societies. Moreover, the institutions did not attempt to organize or financially support non-governmental organizations that were promoting transparency in ECE. In some cases they were in contact with such NGOs and did exchange information promoting transparency, but these exchanges were minimal. Moreover, the European institutions have not always seen eye to eye with such NGOs. This has made it difficult to form a “network” of norm entrepreneurs. Overall, the European institutions have not taken any of the actions suggested earlier that IOs usually take when they successfully promote norms.

It is relevant that the period discussed above was one in which important laws (such as those of “secret of the state,” or “freedom of information”) were being adopted. Such laws have a lasting effect on future practices of transparency. One would expect that, had the European institutions truly wanted (and been able) to affect transparency in ECE, they would have been especially active during the adoption of these laws, just as they have been in the past with other democratic institutions.

The above discussion also reflects that, although officials from the European institutions did not take actions in support of greater transparency in ECE, they expressed (at least in private) their desire to do so. Bureaucrats from these IOs often mentioned that they believe that it was indeed “appropriate” to have transparent
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governments in ECE. They themselves thus appeared prepared to promote a norm of transparency, but they were not successful in doing so.

The Norm of Transparency and Its Transmission

If one accepts the generally used definition of norms — “standards of appropriate behavior for actors with given identity” — then it can be argued that many non-governmental as well as governmental actors have accepted a norm of transparency. Increased calls from NGOs and some political elites for greater access to government-generated information show a growing acceptance of the “appropriateness” of government transparency. David Vincent points out, for example, that in the British system, political elites and societal actors have increasingly come to accept that information collected by the government should (with few precise exceptions) be made available to societal actors. He argues that such beliefs were not nearly as powerful a century ago.

The norm of transparency is clearly spreading. If adoption of FOI domestic legislation is a measure of the “internalization” of a norm by a country, before 1970 only six countries in the world could be said to have done so. Since then, more than 30 have adopted “freedom of information” legislation.

As the norms literature suggests, the spread of a norm at the international level usually takes place through the concerted efforts of norm entrepreneurs from NGOs, governmental institutions, and international organizations. The transmission of the norm of transparency to ECE does not seem at first blush to differ from the transmission of other norms.

The role of NGOs in promoting the norm of transparency is consistent with predictions made by existing models of norm transmission. Transnational NGOs such as Article XIX, Transparency International, Open Society Foundation, the American Bar Association’s Central and East European Law Initiative, etc., have been very active in the efforts to encourage the adoption of institutions of transparency in ECE. In most of the ECE countries, specific domestic NGOs also have emerged as the most active supporters of transparency. Together, these organizations have lobbied parliaments to convince them of the need for greater transparency. They have formed coalitions among themselves as well as with other organizations that do not focus directly on the issue of transparency. These NGOs have arranged televised interviews and published articles and brochures in their attempt to convince the public of the need for greater openness. Most of these NGOs even have participated in the drafting of the laws on access to information, on freedom of the press, and on the creation of the institution of ombudsman. Overall, their efforts have been instrumental in promoting the idea that a truly democratic (and efficient) government must be transparent. Since the adoption of legislation supporting government transparency, they have also been very active in encouraging the implementation of such laws. They organize courses for government bureaucrats to explain the provisions of the laws on access to information. They also take their governments to court in cases in which the public is refused information.

NGOs have received much aid (especially financial aid) from some governments — a development that is also expected according to the literature focusing
on norm transmission. It is noteworthy that much of this aid originate with the US and Sweden — two countries that are known for being among the first to adopt access to information legislation. The US influence was perceived as an ideational one (most promoters of the FOI law knew of the US Freedom of Information Act and used it as their main example of legislation on access to government information), as well as a material one (most of the external funding for the NGOs working on increasing transparency came from the US).

Sweden has the oldest FOI law in the world (since 1766) and it may not be surprising that it is the strongest advocate in the EU for stronger rules for access to EU information. Helena Jaderblom, Chair of the Group of Specialists on Access to Official Information in the Council of Europe (a group that is promoting more specific guidelines for a common position on access to information), is a representative of the Swedish Ministry of Justice. Further, the Swedish government has cooperated with NGOs from ECE to promote legislation on access to information and on the institution of ombudsman.

Where the case of transmission of the norm of transparency appears to differ from the expectation generated by existing theories and examples of successful transmission of other democratic norms is with regard to the role of IOs. While norm entrepreneurs can be found promoting transparency through NGOs as well as through some governments, they have not been successful in using international organizations as organizational platforms for the transmission of this norm. This is relevant because a truly successful process of norm transmission implies all possible actors becoming involved in the process. Katherine Sikkink has shown, for example, that human rights norms were not successfully transmitted to countries where domestic NGOs were not active, even though international NGOs and IOs had been actively promoting these norms. Similarly, one can speculate that had the European institutions truly contributed to the transmission of transparency to ECE the process would have been more successful.

As suggested above, many officials from the three European institutions appear to believe in the appropriateness of government transparency for the new democracies. In fact, some have attempted to use their positions to influence officials from ECE to adopt legislation on transparency, but have not been successful. A telling example is that of one EU official who initially tried using his position in the organization to promote greater transparency in some countries of ECE. His lack of success persuaded him to make unofficial contact with Swedish representatives to the EU and suggest that Sweden arrange bilaterally for a series of lectures and meetings of the former Swedish Ombudsman in some East and Central European countries in order to promote institutions of transparency.

It is intriguing that norm entrepreneurs have not been able to successfully use the European institutions in promoting transparency in ECE. This is especially surprising because other norms that support democratic consolidation have been promoted in the past by these IOs. This observation leads to two interrelated questions: Is there “something special” about the three European institutions that makes them ineffective as organizational platforms for the transmission of a norm of transparency? Is there “something special” about the norm of transparency that makes
it less likely to be promoted through IOs than other norms? Some possible answers to these questions will be used to offer a series of generalizable conclusions about IOs and norm transmission.

**Conclusion: IOs and Norms Resonance**

There are two main explanations for the lack of effectiveness of the three European institutions in transmitting the norm of transparency: (1) not all members of these IOs had internalized the norms, and (2) the IOs themselves had not yet internalized it. The first factor has meant that there is a lack of agreement among decision-makers from national governments resulting, ultimately, in their lack of willingness to officially promote transparency. The second factor led to the inability of “decision-implementers” (i.e., bureaucrats from within IOs) to promote this norm on their own.

The first explanation is important in understanding why mechanisms of conditionality were not put in place by the three European organizations. Although the organizations’ most powerful members are long-standing democracies, some of them have not yet adopted relevant institutions of transparency. The UK adopted a FOI law in December 2000, after most of the ECE countries studied here had already adopted their own laws, and after almost three decades of concerted struggles by several non-governmental groups. Although Germany has freedom of information laws in many of the Länder, it does not have one at the federal level despite powerful demands from civil society to have one adopted. Other, less powerful members of these IOs such as Austria and Luxembourg have also not yet adopted FOI laws.

The above does not imply that there is no “norm of transparency” in the UK, Germany, Austria, and Luxembourg, but rather that there is no commonly accepted norm among European states. In all of these countries (as well as in other European countries), both governmental and societal actors view the free flow of information as appropriate. What varies from one state to another is the degree of transparency, i.e., the degree to which various actors accept the different exceptions to the norm. The lack of a common norm can be explained (using existing models of norm transmission) by arguing that the norm entrepreneurs have not succeeded in persuading a “critical mass” of states and thus the norm has not reached the necessary “threshold” that leads to its institutionalization in the rules of IOs.

This lack of a commonly accepted transparency norm in member states has led to difficulties in the adoption of mechanisms through which IOs can promote such a norm. The EU has only been able to adopt a directive on access to information in the environmental realm (where member states have a common position). NATO only adopted a common position on transparency of the military budget. The Council of Europe has only adopted non-binding and generally weak mechanisms for the transmission of transparency. The fact that the Council of Europe has only very recently adopted a recommendation reflecting a common position on FOI, indicates that, up to now, there has not been any real agreement on the issue. Thus, it can be argued that the European institutions were not able to adopt such mechanisms due to the lack of interest of some states, especially some of the major ones.
A realist approach would indeed emphasize that international organizations are only the reflection of the existing power balance and that the rules and norms of such organizations must be consistent with the interests of powerful states. For this perspective, the fact that such states did not want to promote transparency in ECE (either bilaterally or through IOs) implies that the norm could not have been successfully transmitted.

But others accept that international organizations are more than such a reflection of power and that they often “develop a dynamic of their own.” The literature on IOs often emphasizes how the actions of bureaucrats within such organizations are not fully determined by member-state interests. For example, Peter Haas has shown that officials from the UN’s Environment Program worked with like-minded lower-level officials from national governments to create the Mediterranean Action Plan, a regime for marine pollution control. The regime emerged although its “norms and principles ran counter to the short-term interests of the participants.” This was possible due to the high degree of “appropriateness” such bureaucrats’ attached to issues of environmental protection. The norms that guided their actions were not as powerful among national decision-makers who initially opposed the plan.

Officials from other IOs (including the three European ones discussed here) have, at times, also played independent policy-making roles, and not just “policy-implementing” ones. This has been due to the specific cultures and worldviews that are characteristic of IO bureaucracies and that may not be as strongly held by bureaucrats from national governments.

A constructivist approach would emphasize that the collective norms of IOs do not necessarily reflect the behaviors and values of member states. For this perspective, it is not crucial that powerful IO members have not fully internalized a norm in order for the organization to promote it. Norm transmission can also be the result of actions that quasi-independent mid-level and lower-level bureaucrats of international organizations take as a result of their individual beliefs. It is at this level that the literature on norm transmission suggests that we will find the norms entrepreneurs from IOs working together with other norms entrepreneurs from NGOs or from national bureaucracies.

In other cases of norm transmission, even when there were no formal mechanisms through which the European institutions could influence governments of East and Central Europe (i.e., mechanisms of “conditionality”), there were many “unofficial” processes going on. Democratic norms have been transmitted to ECE simply through the process of interaction with EU and national representatives who have been socialized within a different set of norms than their East and Central European counterparts. Such processes of socialization are often emphasized in the constructivist literature. But this process of transmission appears to have also been absent in the case of the norm of transparency. Why was this the case?

The norms literature suggests that it is more likely for states to accept norms if domestic institutions or cultures (i.e., other existing norms) “resonate” to such a norm. This study adds that, in order for norm entrepreneurs to be successful, the organizational platforms they use must also “resonate” to the norm.
It appears that bureaucrats from European institutions — the actual norms entrepreneurs that we would expect to act — did indeed try privately to convince ECE officials of the need for greater transparency. They used both normative (that it is “right” to offer more information to the public) as well as instrumental arguments (that lack of transparency has an effect on corruption and on economies). But the officials of these IOs recognize that they have had very little behind-the-scenes success.

The EU has legitimacy problems, as well, as the issues of its own transparency and corruption. These problems make it hard for the EU to take a hard line against ECE countries. After a recent scandal over allegations of the Slovak government’s mishandling of PHARE funds, observers noted that the EU was unlikely to take a harsh stance towards the Slovak officials considering that the EU Commission leadership was replaced en masse in 1999 after its own corruption scandal.99

Even officials of the new democracies have in some cases expressed similar questions about the EU’s ability to promote greater transparency given its own opaque-ness. One EU official offered an example of a meeting she had with a top ECE governmental representative. When she suggested that greater transparency was a way to combat corruption, the government representative told her that the EU was not in a position to preach transparency or to tell others how to fight corruption.100

Oftentimes EU officials have not attempted to promote transparency for fear of such responses. This appears to be the case not just for officials from the European Commission, but also from the other bodies of the EU. Most notably, some officials from the European Parliament have acknowledged, in private, that they have far greater problems in acquiring information from the Council than some ECE parliaments do from their executive branches of government.101 This has made it difficult for the European Parliament to pursue transparency with ECE government officials. One Council of Europe official noted that recent changes regarding his organization’s internal rules on access to information have given him more legitimacy in requesting greater transparency of others. Nonetheless, the issue is still a difficult one for him to discuss with ECE officials.102

The EU, Council of Europe, and NATO are not unique among international organizations for their lack of transparency. Many IOs have been accused of unwillingness to offer information to the public. Recent literature has pointed to the causes of the lack of transparency of such organizations. It has been argued that the great success of international organizations in the past decades has been, in fact, the result of their opaque character and their functioning as closed “clubs” of governmental representatives.103

Some observers point out that a “culture of secrecy” within IOs emerged as the result of their initial design to offer greater efficiency by not publicizing dissent.104 This argument has been especially powerful with regard to the institutions discussed here. The EU, Council of Europe, and NATO were designed after World War II to help in the rebuilding of a devastated Europe and to forge ties (often among peoples that had been adversaries in wars) in reaction to emerging external threats. These IOs were elite-driven mechanisms of cooperation that were not intended to reveal signs of internal dissent to their peoples or external actors.105
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It is not surprising that international organizations accused themselves of a lack of transparency have not been able to promote transparency in member states or in prospective members. In order for IOs to be successfully used as organizational platforms by the norm entrepreneurs, the IOs themselves have to reinforce the norms that are being promoted.

Most norms — applicable at the national level — may be more easily promoted through IOs because they do not have any equivalent at the IO level. When Council of Europe officials promote the abolishment of capital punishment in new democracies of ECE, they are credible and have the necessary authority because their members have done so and because such a norm is not directly applicable to their organization. When officials of European institutions encourage governments to show greater tolerance to minorities they themselves cannot truly be accused of lack of such tolerance because there are no actual “minorities” within IOs. But access to information is one of the few principles applicable to national governments as well as to supranational entities.

IOs do not have many common traits with governments and the norms that are promoted rarely apply to them. But they do have one important common trait: they both have bureaucracies that prefer to offer the public as little information as possible. By offering information, their actions come under greater scrutiny and the IOs become more vulnerable. IOs are not built on the basis of a norm of transparency and therefore are poor organizational platforms for norm entrepreneurs to promote such a norm to new democracies.

NOTES

1. The US Institute for Peace generously supported this research through a Peace Scholar dissertation fellowship. An earlier draft of this paper was presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco (September 2001). The author wishes to thank Ronald Linden and a number of anonymous reviewers for useful comments on previous drafts.

2. This study focuses on a “traditional” group of six countries in East and Central Europe: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia. These countries (or their communist predecessors) have been seen as offering a useful “most similar systems research design.” For the broader research (of which this study is part), they are of interest because they offer both similarities and differences regarding government transparency.


5. In a well-known example of such initial work, a group of scholars offer a compelling set of cases from the security realm arguing that some of the behavior of actors can only be explained by taking into account such norms. See Peter Katzenstein, ed., The Culture of National Security (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).


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9. Finnemore and Sikkink, op. cit., p. 899, argue that all norm promoters at the international level need organizational platforms through which they promote their norms. These are usually non-governmental organizations or inter-governmental organizations.

10. I would like to thank an anonymous reviewer for suggesting this observation.


12. There are several such models of norm transmission. The main ones discussed here are those offered by Finnemore and Sikkink, op. cit., and by Risse and Sikkink, op. cit.

13. The relevance of norm “strength” for assessing the success of transmission (versus simply norm existence where a norm was not present before), is based on Jeffrey Legro’s argument that norms are “continuous rather than dichotomous entities: they do not just exist or not exist but instead come in varying strengths.” See Legro, op. cit., p. 33.


15. Ibid., p. 484.


22. The concept is used in different ways in different sub-fields of political science, based on different understandings and definitions. Thus, the literature discusses transparency with regard to the information offered by governments to their societies (“domestic government transparency”), information offered by governments to external actors (“external transparency”), information offered by international organizations either to members or to societies (“transparency of an international organization”), etc. A broader definition of transparency of actor A towards actor B is “the ability of B to receive information from A.” See Alexandru Grigorescu, “The Conceptualization and Measurement of Transparency,” Paper presented at Northeastern American Political Science Association, Albany, New York (November 2000).


This trend is reflected in the results of the “Press Freedom Surveys” conducted annually (for approximately 100 countries) by the NGO Freedom House. These surveys include “scores” focusing specifically on “laws and regulations” that support press freedom. For a listing of such scores for the 1994-2002 period, and a discussion of the methodology used by Freedom House to calculate them, see http://www.freedomhouse.org/research/pressurvey.htm (last accessed July 28, 2002).

Freedom of information acts were adopted by “traditional” democracies as late as 1990 in Italy, 1994 in Belgium, 1996 in Iceland, 1997 in Ireland and Norway, and 1999 in Japan. The United Kingdom’s Freedom of Information Act was finally passed in 2000, receiving Royal Assent on November 30. It was initially expected to come into force for central government departments in April 2002, and further authorities in stages afterwards. See Welcome Page to UK Campaign for Freedom of Information, http://www.cfoi.org.uk (last accessed July 28, 2002). Implementation recently has been delayed for four more years. Correspondence with Maurice Frankel, Director of Campaign for Freedom of Information (May 24, 2001 and October 18, 2001). Other countries such as Luxembourg, Austria, and Germany (at the federal level), as well as the majority of other “third wave democracies,” have not yet adopted such laws. See Ann Florini, op. cit., Annex; and European Commission, Secretariat General, Comparative analysis of the Member States’ legislation concerning the access to documents (Brussels 2000), document SG.B.2/V/CD D.

Among the roles of the ombudsman is to offer individuals the opportunity to request information about government abuses. See, e.g., Paul Mitroi, “Am Intrat in 2000 cu Serioase Lacune Legislative,” Romania Libera (Bucharest) (May 3, 2000), p. 3.


I argue elsewhere that the mechanism leading to the rapid adoption of such institutions of transparency is a much more complex one and is based on the “logic of expected consequences” rather than on a “logic of appropriateness” (i.e., on the transmission of norms). See Alexandru Grigorescu, “Transferring Transparency: The Impact of European Institutions on East and Central Europe,” pp. 59-87 in Ronald Linden, ed., Norms and Naivities: The Impact of International Organizations on the Central and East European States (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002).

See Kaldor and Vajvoda, op. cit.

Low corruption does not necessarily imply high levels of government transparency — as some closed authoritarian systems like Singapore with a very low level of corruption demonstrate. Yet, in most cases, high corruption clearly thrives in an environment of low transparency.

In the 2000 survey conducted by the NGO Transparency International, Hungary was ranked the 31st least corrupt country of 99 surveyed, the Czech Republic the 39th, Poland 44th, Slovakia 53rd, and Bulgaria and Romania tied for 63rd. The average corruption score of the six was 4.05 (out of a possible 10 score for least corrupt countries) — lower than the average 4.44 for all countries and much lower than the average for EU members (8.28). See Transparency International, Global Corruption Report 2000 (Berlin: Transparency International, 2000). Other NGOs and even IOs rank corruption in ECE as some of the worst in the world. See, e.g., David Addis, Keith Henderson, and Louise Lief, eds., “Media Responses to Corruption in the Emerging Democracies: Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Ukraine,” (New York: Freedom House, 1999), accessible at http://www.freedomhouse.org/reports/media.html (last accessed July 28,
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34. The average Freedom House score for legislation supporting freedom of the press in ECE is 9.2 on a scale from 0 (representing "most free") to 30 ("least free"). The score is almost identical to the average for Western democracies. On the other hand, the scores for actual violations of press freedom are much higher for ECE countries (with an average of about 2.5 out of a maximum of 10 representing a maximum number of violations against the media) compared to those in the traditional democracies (most of which score an almost perfect "0" on this scale). See Freedom House, How Free? The Web & The Press: The Annual Survey of Press Freedom (New York: Freedom House, 2001).

35. See, e.g., discussions on the "culture of secrecy" with regard to the adoption of the Romanian State Secrets Law in the editorial, "Trecerea de la o Cultura a Secretului la o Cultura a Transparentei se Doveste Extrem de Anevoioasa," Romania Libera (February 21, 2000), electronic version; and Eugen Vasilii, "Nu Avem o Cultura a Transparentei," DouaZeciSiDoi, No. 17 (April 25 - May 1, 2000), p. 11.


37. The Czech Republic, considered in many ratings as the most transparent in East-Central Europe, is still plagued by lack of transparency in the economic realm. Its system of military contracting is especially prone to corruption. See Stefan Wägtyl, "Comment and Analysis — Eastern Block," Financial Times (July 12, 2000), p. 16. Also, it has been noted that although the national parliament’s meetings are open to the public the workings of local councils are often more opaque. See, Freedom House, Nations in Transit: Czech Republic, at http://www.freedomhouse.org/nit98/czech.html (last accessed July 28, 2002).

38. For example, Hungarian Interior Ministry officials acknowledge that they, like most other bureaucrats, still have a "hedgehog reaction," refusing any comment whenever a journalist requests information from them. Instead of using a press story as a basis for investigation, such officials are reluctant to follow up even detailed allegations. Freedom House, Media Responses to Corruption, op. cit., p. 5. The bureaucracy in Hungary is also blamed — just as in other Central and East European countries — for much of the government’s culture of secrecy. It is, for example, cited as the main cause for the slow pace with which the files of people who had been spied on by the Hungarian police during communism are currently being released. See, e.g., Jane Perlez, "A Country Reluctant to Give Up Its Secrets," New York Times (September 6, 1997), p. A3.


40. See Mitro, op. cit., p. 3.


42. Ibid., pp. 14-17.


47. Personal interview with NATO official from Office of Security, Brussels (May 11, 2001). The issue of transparency (and especially the lack of transparency) is a relatively sensitive one for bureaucrats (both from governments and IOs) and even for some nongovernmental actors. In order to discuss freely the issues of access to information, some of the interviewees preferred that their names not be made public. Thus the names of some of my interlocutors will not be offered and, ironically, a study of transparency will not reveal all of its direct sources.


50. See Rodica Daniciuc, "Parlamentului a Legislatia Turnatoria," Romania Libera (Bucharest) (April 12, 2000), p. 3; and interview with Eugen Vasilii, former MP who sponsored the Romanian FOI law, Bucharest (December 20, 2000).
51. Adrian Ursu, “Dorin Marian a ticluit de noua lege privind siguranta nationala,” Adevarul (Bucharest) (January 5, 2000), p. 5
55. Ibid.
56. One official told of a meeting with a Romanian Member of Parliament in Bucharest. After the NATO official presented the case for the state secrets law, the Romanian MP said he had served a sentence of 13 years in Communist jails. He asked how he can go back to his constituency and tell them that he supports a law on secrecy that will take Romania back in time to the practices of the Communist dictatorship. Although the NATO official was prepared, in principle, to answer such questions, he felt deeply uncomfortable offering them to such an individual. Personal interview with NATO official from Office of Security, Brussels (May 11, 2001).
57. It is significant that NATO bureaucrats jokingly refer to the comprehensive collection of documents on their security policy as “the bible.”
62. This fact is recognized both by EU officials as well as by Czech and Slovak MPs and NGO representatives, especially with regard to the very high (and often discouraging) fees that Czech law allows in exchange for the official information that is being offered. Supporters of the Czech FOI law are now considering altering it to make it as effective as the Slovak one.
63. Personal interview with EU official from the Enlargement Directorate, Brussels (May 10, 2001).
64. In 1990 the Council Directive No. 90/313 was adopted on the “freedom of access to information on the environment” specifying that member states must adopt legislation that ensures the freedom of access to and dissemination of information on the environment held by public authorities.
65. Personal interview with Ventsislav Karadjov, legal expert, national program director of Transparency International Bulgaria, Sofia (May 14, 2001); telephone interview with Ioana Avadani, director of Center for Independent Journalism, Bucharest (May 16, 2001); personal interview with Vladislav Pirosik, director of Environmental Lobbying Facility, Bratislava (May 22, 2001).

70. See Checkel, “Compliance and Conditionalities,” op. cit.

71. Council of Europe, Assistance Programmes: Activities in the Year 2000 (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2000); Council of Europe, Council of Europe Co-operation and Assistance Programmes in the Media Field (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2000).

72. Such expertise missions are only organized at the request of public authorities, i.e., governments or parliaments. Author’s correspondence with Cristophe Poirel, Head of Media Division, Directorate General of Human Rights — DG II, Council of Europe (October-November 2000).

73. Personal interview with Dr. Mario Oetheimer, Program Counselor, Directorate General II — Human Rights, Media Division, Council of Europe, Strasbourg (May 9, 2001).

74. The “leverage” (and the lack thereof) was very often mentioned both by EU and Council of Europe officials. As bureaucrats, it was clear that, when presenting arguments to elected or non-elected officials from ECE, they felt the need to back their arguments with “official documents,” representing the political will of Western governments.

75. Since my interview with the official (May 9, 2001), the Council of Europe’s Committee of Ministers released a set of recommendations (February 21, 2002) for freedom of information asking all members and prospective members to adopt FOI laws. It is noteworthy though that this recommendation has been possible only after almost all Council of Europe members (including the six countries under study here) had already passed FOI laws.

76. During the adoption of the Moldovan FOI Act — one of the only cases in which a European institution did indeed offer suggestions for the drafting of the law (see Council of Europe, 2000, op. cit.) — the Council of Europe gave a far more positive assessment of the draft law than NGOs did. See, e.g., Article 19, The Global Campaign for Free Expression, “Memorandum on Aspects of the Moldovan Draft Law on Freedom of Information” (London: The International Centre Against Censorship, May 1999). Council of Europe officials considered that the passage of such a law in Moldova must take into account the “political realities” (i.e., that an anti-reformist party would soon gain power) and that NGOs were “idealistic and exaggerated” in their critique of the Moldovan law. Personal interview with Council of Europe official, Strasbourg (May 9, 2001).

77. Finnemore and Sikkink, op. cit., p. 891.


79. Vincent, op. cit.

80. According to Finnemore and Sikkink, op. cit., internalization is considered to be the last stage in the evolution of the life cycle of a norm.


82. In Slovakia, the coalition that promoted the FOI law was made up of approximately 120 NGOs. See Vladimir Pirosik, “Everything that is Not Secret by Law is Public,” http://www.changenet.sk/spravy/show.asp?smid=2397&smid=54 (last accessed July 28, 2002).

83. Such NGOs are active in all ECE countries that have adopted laws on access to information. Personal interview with Jindřiska Prokopova, head of freedom of information program of the Open Society Fund — Czech Republic, Prague (May 21, 2001); personal interview with Gergana Jouleva, Chairperson, Access to Information Programme, Sofia (May 15, 2001); personal interview with Sarlota Pufflerova, director of Minority Rights Group — Slovakia, Bratislava (May 22, 2001); personal interview with Oldrich Kuzílek, former MP in the Czech Parliament, who is currently setting up an NGO that will deal with the implementation of the Czech FOI law, Prague (May 21, 2001).

84. Under the recent Swedish presidency of the EU there was a drive for greater access to official documents. For example, now it is not just the documents “emerging” from the EU institutions that are accessible to the public, but also those submitted to the institutions by member states. Also, citizens of full members and citizens of candidate countries have access to EU documents. See Swedish Presidency of the EU, “Important Decision on Regulations on Public Access to EU Official Documents” (July 2, 2002), http://eu2001.se/static/eng/docs/oppenhet_0425_eng.asp (last accessed July 7, 2002).
86. Personal interview with EU official from the Enlargement Directorate, Brussels (May 8, 2001).
87. European Commission, Secretariat General, op. cit.
88. See Finnemore and Sikkink, op. cit., pp. 900-901.
92. Ibid., p. 379.
94. See, Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore, “The Politics, Power, and Pathologies of International Organizations,” International Organization, Vol. 53, No. 4 (1999), pp. 699-732. The two authors offer a complex discussion of the “pathologies” of IOs. They include several examples of how the specific cultures (and subcultures) within IOs differ from those at the national level and how such cultures may affect organizational behavior. For instance, the authors show how the worldviews of economists from the World Bank or the lawyers from the UN High Commission on Refugees protection division have shaped the policies of these organizations.
96. The EU is considered by some to have actually perpetuated the culture of secrecy within bureaucracies of some of the first “third wave democracies” such as Portugal. See Antonio Barreto, “Portugal: Democracy Through Europe,” pp. 95-123 in Jeffrey Anderson, ed., Regional Integration and Democracy: Expanding on the European Experience (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999).
98. The concept of “resonance” may not be the best for describing the “fit” between a norm and an IO as organizational platform. The concept is preferred here because it suggests a useful analogy with “resonance” used by Checkel and Risse and Sikkink for states. Perhaps a better way to discuss the relationship between the norm that is transmitted and the “organizational platform” is in terms of “legitimacy.” Transmission of norms often involves convincing others of the appropriateness of the norms. One needs legitimacy to convince of appropriateness. This assertion does not only apply to IOs but also to other organizational platforms such as NGOs. For sake of brevity, the link between norm transmission and legitimacy will not be further discussed here.
100. Interview with EU official at the Enlargement DG, Brussels (May 2001).
102. Personal interview with Council of Europe official, Strasbourg (May 9, 2001).
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