

# The politics of European Union health policy-making : an actor-centred institutionalist analysis

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**The politics of European Union health policy-making  
An actor-centred institutionalist analysis**

**Sandra Boessen, november 2008**

Health research tends to portray policy reform as a technocratic process. However, health policy cannot be understood without politics. (*this dissertation*)



In EU health policy-making, the European Commission plays the role of a purposeful opportunist. (*this dissertation*)



Whenever governments interfere with economic decisions in the marketplace for public health reasons, the ‘business predicament’ (Wilson, 1974) is an important preoccupation. (*this dissertation*)



EU health policy-making perfectly illustrates that Schattschneider (1960) was right when he wrote that ‘organisation is the mobilisation of bias’. (*this dissertation*)



‘The first rule of politics: be there!’ immediately explains the problem of health interest representation in the EU. (*this dissertation*)



As long as there is no clear European agenda related to health and healthcare policy, development of EU health policy will remain ad hoc and incremental. (*this dissertation*)



Sensible decisions will not reflect scientific rationality. The concept of evidence-based policy needs to be replaced by a more realistic conception of the relation between research and policy decisions.



Gezondheidsbelangen moeten voortdurend de strijd aan gaan met andere belangen. Voor deze, veelal economische belangen valt vaak ook iets te zeggen. Het resultaat is incoherent beleid.



Streef niet naar perfectie. Uitmuntend is goed genoeg.



Het verschil tussen ezels en geleerde doctoren zit hem soms minder in het hoofd dan wel tussen de oren.