

An economic view on environmental law enforcement

- Supervision: Prof. Dr. Stef Proost & Prof. Dr. Sandra Rousseau
- Researcher: Thomas Blondiau
- Sponsored by IWT-SBO (2009-2011) and CES (2011-2012)

This Ph.D. research concentrates on the enforcement process of environmental law. More specifically, it analyzes which objectives specific enforcement actors involved in this process, namely prosecutors and judges, pursue and how economic considerations, such as cost-benefit analysis and the existence of opportunity costs, affect the decisions that these actors make. Furthermore, it also analyzes how broadening administrative enforcement competences, introduced next to criminal enforcement possibilities, affect deterrence against committing environmental offenses. Finally, it focusses on the moral element in sanctioning policies by investigating normatively how repeat and intentional violations should be treated differently from accidental offenses.

In terms of methodology, the work proceeds using a combination of economic modeling and empirical analysis. Some of the specific methodologies are related to welfare economics, game theory, propensity score matching and policy evaluation methods. The empirical analyses are case studies of the environmental enforcement process in Belgium.

The results may have broader relevance since environmental enforcement processes in many European countries bear quite some similarities. Moreover, some of the results may not be restricted to enforcement of environmental policy, since many similarities can be found looking at the enforcement process in other policy areas.

Full text available on: <https://lirias.kuleuven.be/bitstream/123456789/377523/1/Tekst-FINAL.pdf>