Complying with Europe
EU Harmonisation and Soft Law in the Member States

Gerda Falkner
Oliver Treib
Miriam Hartlapp
Simone Leiber

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What does EU law truly mean for the member states? Do they abide by it or don’t they, and why? Complying with Europe presents the first encompassing and in-depth empirical study of the effects of ‘voluntaristic’ and (partly) ‘soft’ EU policies in the member states. The authors examine ninety case studies across a range of EU Directives and shed light on burning contemporary issues in political science, integration theory and social policy. The book reveals that there are major implementation failures and that, to date, the European Commission has not been able to perform its control function adequately. While all countries are occasional non-compliers, some usually take their EU-related duties seriously (world of law observance). Others frequently privilege their domestic political concerns over the requirements of EU law (world of of domestic politics). A further group of countries neglect these EU obligations almost as a matter of course (world of neglect). This innovative study answers questions of crucial importance for politics in theory and in practice, and suggests how implementation of EU law can be fostered in the future.

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1 Introduction: flexible EU governance in domestic practice
2 Theorising the domestic impact of EU law: the state of the art and beyond
3 EU social policy over time: the role of Directives
4 The Employment Contract Information Directive: a small but useful social complement to the internal market
5 The Pregnant Workers Directive: European social policy between protection and employability
6 The Working Time Directive: European standards taken hostage by domestic politics
7 The Young Workers Directive: a safety net with holes
8 The Parental Leave Directive: compulsory policy innovation and voluntary over-implementation
9 The Part-time Work Directive: a facilitator of national reforms
10 Voluntary reforms triggered by the Directives
11 The EU Commission and (non-)compliance in the member states
12 Beyond policy change: convergence of national public–private relations?
13 Implementation across countries and Directives
14 Why do member states fail to comply? Testing the hypotheses suggested in the literature
15 Three worlds of compliance: a typology
16 Conclusions: myth and reality of social Europe

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