



The Environment

POL 137: IR IN WESTERN EUROPE

I. Reasons for cooperation

- ▶ Transnational issue
 - Externality of environment
 - Collective action problem and the “tragedy of the commons”
 - Externalities threaten state sovereignty
 - e.g. Hungary’s “red sludge” rupture into the Danube (2010)
- ▶ States take differing levels of response
- ▶ Consequences of varied national responses
 - Trade barriers threaten single market
 - Economic competition is diminished for implementing state

Red sludge

Oct. 5 2010



Ruptured wall of red sludge reservoir



Hungarian soldier in chemical protection gear

II. Principles to guide the EU

- ▶ Preventative principle
 - “prevention is better than cure”
- ▶ Polluter pays principle
- ▶ Combat environmental damage at its source
- ▶ Problem: Commission did not have power to enforce until Single European Act (1987)
 - powers grew in subsequent treaties

III. Enforcing environmental policy

- ▶ Kyoto Protocol
 - EU (as a whole) complied with 8% reduction
- ▶ EU carbon emissions trading scheme (ETS)
 - privatize and create market for emissions
- ▶ EP passed legislation committing EU to reducing greenhouse gas by 20% (or more) by 2020