



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

The Timing of Compliance: Electoral Cycles, Ideology, and Seasonal Patterns in EU Directive Transposition

Smit, Mauk

Citation

Smit, M. (2025). *The Timing of Compliance: Electoral Cycles, Ideology, and Seasonal Patterns in EU Directive Transposition*.

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

License: [License to inclusion and publication of a Bachelor or Master Thesis, 2023](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/4177417>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).



The Timing of Compliance: Electoral Cycles, Ideology, and Seasonal Patterns in EU Directive Transposition

Mauk Smit

S3568474

Political Science: International Politics

Supervisor: Dr. Rutger Hagen

Second reader: Dr. Roos van Haer

December 20, 2024

Word count: 7901

Abstract

European Union (EU) member states are mandated to transpose over 1,500 directives annually into national law, yet the timing of these transpositions varies widely. The compliance process is influenced by political, ideological, and institutional factors, but the exact timing mechanisms remain underexplored. This thesis examines how national electoral cycles, government ideology, and seasonal patterns affect the timing of EU directive transposition. Empirically, it combines monthly data on transposition measures across EU member states from 2020 to 2024 with information on elections, government ideology, and seasonal variations. The findings indicate that electoral cycles impact compliance, with transposition activity decreasing significantly in the months leading up to elections. Contrary to expectations, right-leaning governments are associated with more transposition measures than left-leaning ones, potentially reflecting strategic compliance behaviour. Seasonal factors also strongly influence timing, with reduced activity during the August recess and a surge in December to meet year-end deadlines. These results highlight the interplay between political, ideological, and temporal dynamics in shaping EU directive compliance. The findings have significant implications for understanding the strategic behaviour of member states and for enhancing the effectiveness of EU governance.

Introduction

Every year, EU member states transpose over 1,500 directives into national law, yet the timing of these measures is anything but uniform (European Union, n.d.). Directives are legislative acts issued by the European Union that set specific goals for member states to achieve. Unlike regulations, which apply directly, directives allow national governments flexibility in how to implement them within a given timeframe, ensuring harmonization across the EU while respecting domestic legal systems (Craig & de Búrca, 2020).

In the European Union, compliance with directives is fundamental to maintaining integration and ensuring the effectiveness of its legislative framework. Directives require member states to incorporate them into domestic law within a specified timeframe, harmonizing national policies and fostering cohesion across the EU (Börzel & Risse, 2009). Previous studies have extensively examined the reasons why EU member states fail to transpose directives on time, identifying factors such as electoral cycle, government ideology and the complexity of the directives themselves (Haverland & Romeijn 2007; Kaeding 2006; König & Luetgert 2009). These studies provide valuable insights into the obstacles that contribute to delays in compliance. However, limited research has focused on the specific timing of directive transposition by member states. To address this gap, this thesis examines the research question: *What factors drive the timing of EU directive transposition in member states?*

In the context of the European Union, national elections, government ideology, and seasonal factors can all play a role in shaping the timing of legislative implementation. These legislations include directives and other types of EU legislation, such as regulations and decisions. National elections provide an opportunity for citizens to express their views on EU integration and assess the performance of their government. This creates incentives for leaders to carefully consider the timing of transposition or legislative action to avoid burdening voters or risking electoral backlash (Kaeding, 2006; Thomas, 2014). Based on this, the first hypothesis is: EU member states are less likely to transpose directives in the months leading up to national elections.

Similarly, the ideological stance of the ruling government may influence legislative priorities. Left-leaning governments, generally more supportive of EU integration, are more likely to align with EU objectives and prioritize the implementation of legislation (Börzel & Risse, 2009; König & Luetgert, 2008). In contrast, right-leaning governments, often more sceptical of EU policies, may approach transposition or implementation more selectively, leading to strategic delays or varying levels of compliance (Falkner & Treib, 2018). This leads

to the second hypothesis: Left-leaning governments will implement more transposition measures than right-leaning governments.

Additionally, seasonal factors such as institutional breaks, like the summer recess in August or frequent December deadlines, create predictable fluctuations in legislative activity. Studies show that December often sees a surge in transposition measures, aligning with end-of-year reporting requirements, while August tends to coincide with reduced legislative activity due to administrative slowdowns (Toshkov, 2011; Zhelyazkova et al., 2017). This leads to the third hypothesis: Seasonal factors influence the number of transposition measures, with fewer measures in August and more in December.

By examining these dynamics, this thesis reveals how member states balance domestic political realities with supranational commitments. While the findings suggest that electoral cycles, ideological leanings, and seasonal effect play a role, the analysis highlights that there are more factors influencing transposition timing. This thesis contributes to the broader literature on European integration and compliance by offering a framework that integrates political and temporal dimensions, providing a deeper understanding of the strategic behaviour of member states.

The societal relevance of this research lies in its exploration of how political and temporal dynamics impact the timing of directive implementation, directly influencing when citizens, businesses, and governments benefit from EU policies. For businesses, harmonized EU legislation reduces regulatory uncertainty, lowers compliance costs, and creates a level playing field across member states. By aligning standards, businesses can expand operations across borders and take advantage of the EU's single market, fostering growth and competitiveness (Kaeding, 2008). Citizens benefit directly when directives addressing crucial areas such as environmental protection, labour rights, or consumer safety are implemented on time. Difference in timing of transposition can hinder the enforcement of these policies, postponing access to their intended protections (Falkner & Treib, 2018). Governments, on the other hand, rely on timely compliance to avoid infringement procedures and financial penalties from the European Commission, while maintaining credibility and trust in their ability to align with EU obligations (Börzel, Hofmann, Panke, & Sprungk, 2010). By ensuring transposition timing aligns with optimal political and institutional conditions, policymakers can streamline implementation, maximize the effectiveness of EU directives, and deliver their intended economic, social, and environmental benefits without unnecessary delays or disruptions (Treib, 2014)

This thesis is structured as follows: the next section provides an overview of the relevant literature of EU directive transposition. The theoretical framework and hypotheses are developed in the third section, followed by a detailed explanation of the research design in the fourth section. The fifth section presents the results, examining the impact of elections, ideology, and seasonal effects. Finally, the sixth section discusses the implications of these findings for EU policy. A conclusion will be made in the finale part together with suggestions for future research.

Literature Review

EU directives

The creation and implementation of EU directives are inherently political processes that reflect both supranational and national dynamics. At the supranational level, directives originate from the European Commission, which proposes legislation as part of the EU's policymaking agenda. According to Hix and Høyland (2011), the Commission's role is pivotal in setting legislative priorities that align with broader European objectives, such as market integration, environmental sustainability, or social policy harmonization. Directives are designed to ensure a balance between achieving EU-wide goals and allowing member states the flexibility to adapt these objectives to their domestic legal and institutional frameworks (Hix & Høyland, 2011) .

For example, the Renewable Energy Directive (2009/28/EC) was introduced to promote the use of renewable energy across the EU as part of broader climate change and energy security goals. While the directive set binding targets for member states, such as achieving a 20% share of renewable energy in overall consumption by 2020, it allowed countries to choose their preferred strategies for achieving these targets, reflecting the flexibility inherent in directives (European Commission, 2009). This directive illustrates how EU legislation can pursue ambitious common goals while respecting the diversity of national circumstances.

Once proposed, directives require approval from the Council of Ministers representing member states and the European Parliament, which together negotiate the final text through a process of political bargaining. This negotiation stage introduces significant political considerations. Steunenberg and Rhinard (2010) argue that the Council, in particular, represents a key arena where member states' national interests come into play. Countries may push for adjustments to directives that reduce domestic implementation burdens or align better with their institutional frameworks. Similarly, Börzel and Risse (2009) note that the final form of a directive is often a product of compromise, balancing the integrationist goals of the EU with the political realities of diverse member states.

Once adopted, directives enter the implementation phase, where member states must transpose them into national law within a given timeframe. Falkner et al. (2005) emphasize that transposition is not a straightforward administrative task but a continuation of the political process. National parliaments, governments, and bureaucracies play active roles in determining how to incorporate EU directives into domestic legislation. This phase often reflects national political priorities, with Steunenberg and Toshkov (2009) and Dörrenbächer, Mastenbroek, and Toshkov (2015)

arguing that domestic political actors, including veto players, can slow down or alter implementation to align with local preferences.

Directives are thus not merely technical or administrative tools but deeply embedded in the political processes of the European Union and its member states. From their inception in the European Commission to their negotiation in the Council and Parliament, directives are shaped by the competing interests of supranational actors and national governments (Hix & Høyland, 2011; Börzel & Risse, 2009). These political dynamics continue during the transposition phase, where national actors, including parliaments, governments, and bureaucracies, interpret and implement directives in ways that reflect domestic political priorities (Steunenberg & Toshkov, 2009). As Falkner et al. (2005) note, the political nature of directives means that delays or strategic timing in transposition often stem from the same bargaining and compromise that characterize their creation.

Variables influencing the timing of directive transposition

The process of transposing EU directives into national law varies significantly across member states, shaped by a combination of administrative, economic, and political factors. Scholars have long debated the relative importance of these variables, with differing views on how they interact and influence timing. This section delves into the interplay of these factors, drawing on a range of perspectives to explore the complexities of directive transposition.

The efficiency of a member state's administrative system plays a critical role in determining how quickly directives are transposed. Toshkov (2011) highlights that countries with well-resourced bureaucracies are generally better equipped to handle the legal and technical demands of transposition. Administrative capacity not only enables states to manage complex directives but also mitigates delays caused by internal inefficiencies. Zhelyazkova et al. (2017) support this view, emphasizing that higher levels of bureaucratic organization lead to faster and more accurate transposition. However, Börzel and Risse (2009) caution against viewing administrative capacity as a standalone determinant. They argue that political priorities often override efficiency, particularly when a directive clashes with domestic interests or political agendas. For example, even highly capable administrations may delay transposition if the directive imposes burdensome requirements that conflict with government objectives (Börzel & Risse, 2009).

Institutional frameworks also influence transposition timing. Steunenberg and Rhinard (2010) draw attention to the role of veto players, political actors or institutions capable of blocking legislative changes. In federal systems like Belgium, where regional governments

yield significant power, transposition often requires consensus among multiple stakeholders, leading to delays (Knill & Lenschow, 2005). Similarly, coalition governments face added layers of negotiation as parties balance their individual priorities (Kaeding, 2006). Börzel and Risse (2009) observe that coalition governments are particularly vulnerable to delays, as parties within the coalition must negotiate to reach consensus on contentious directives. Dörrenbächer, Mastenbroek, and Toshkov (2015) further highlight that coalitions' ideological diversity often exacerbates these challenges.

Steunenberg and Rhinard (2010) expand on this, noting that the presence of multiple veto players, political actors or institutions capable of blocking legislative decisions, can slow down or even derail the transposition process. For instance, in coalition systems like the Netherlands or Germany, disagreements between pro-EU and Eurosceptic factions within the same government often lead to deliberate postponements of EU legislation, particularly during election periods when tensions between parties are heightened (Haverland, 2000). In contrast, unitary systems with centralized decision-making structures, such as France, tend to exhibit greater efficiency in transposition, as fewer actors are involved in the legislative process (Toshkov, 2010). This dynamic suggests that the structural organization of a country's political system significantly shapes its ability to comply with EU deadlines.

The complexity of a directive is another critical factor influencing transposition timing. König and Luetgert (2009) argue that highly technical or detailed directives demand substantial legal and procedural adaptation, increasing the likelihood of delays. Börzel and Risse (2009) describe this as the "misfit hypothesis," which posits that the greater the divergence between EU requirements and national laws, the more challenging and time-consuming transposition becomes. Directive complexity often interacts with administrative capacity and institutional arrangements. Falkner et al. (2005) note that even member states with efficient bureaucracies struggle with directives that impose significant regulatory changes, as these often require extensive consultation and negotiation with domestic stakeholders. Steunenberg and Toshkov (2009) introduce the concept of institutional learning, arguing that experienced member states such as Germany or France have developed the capacity to manage complex directives more effectively over time. In contrast, newer member states, particularly those in Central and Eastern Europe, often face steep learning curves due to limited institutional memory and recent transitions to EU membership (Toshkov, 2008).

Economic conditions also shape the timing of directive implementation, with wealthier states often better positioned to meet EU deadlines. Toshkov (2011) finds a positive correlation between GDP per capita and transposition speed, attributing this to the greater administrative

and financial resources available in economically advanced states. However, Falkner and Treib (2018) challenge the notion that economic strength always translates to efficiency. They cite Germany as a counterexample, where federal structures often create internal bottlenecks despite the country's robust economy. The relationship between economic conditions and transposition timing becomes particularly evident during periods of economic stress. Haverland and Romeijn (2007) argue that governments facing fiscal constraints may deprioritize EU directives perceived as costly or burdensome to businesses. This strategic approach reflects a trade-off between compliance with EU obligations and the need to address domestic economic challenges, underscoring the political dimension of transposition.

Public opinion and the salience of EU directives further complicate the transposition process. Rauh (2019) notes that the politicization of EU policies has heightened public scrutiny of directive implementation, particularly for high-profile issues like climate policy or labour rights. This dynamic becomes especially pressing when directives align with politically sensitive initiatives at the EU level (Rauh, 2019). For example, under Ursula von der Leyen's leadership, the European Commission has placed significant emphasis on timely compliance, particularly in the context of the European Green Deal, a transformative initiative aimed at achieving climate neutrality by 2050 (Eckert, 2021). Delivering on this ambitious agenda requires seamless coordination and prompt action across member states. However, delays in directive implementation represent a critical obstacle, slowing progress toward shared environmental goals and threatening the EU's credibility in addressing global challenges (Jordan & Matt, 2014).

The salience of initiatives like the European Green Deal often intensifies public debate and places additional pressure on national governments to align with EU priorities. Thomas (2014) finds that electoral considerations exacerbate this tension, as governments nearing elections may hesitate to transpose directives that impose economic burdens or fuel opposition criticism. Similarly, Börzel and Risse (2009) argue that coalition governments are particularly vulnerable to these delays, as divergent party interests can complicate decision-making, especially when policies require significant economic or social adjustments. Thomas (2014) finds that electoral considerations amplify the role of public opinion, as governments nearing elections are less likely to transpose controversial directives that could alienate voters. This dynamic is particularly evident in systems where public awareness of EU policies is high, making compliance a potentially polarizing issue. Governments facing re-election may delay transposition to avoid perceived negative consequences for their voter base, preferring to sideline contentious issues until after elections (Rauh, 2019).

Additionally, electoral considerations influence how directives are framed and presented to the public. Toshkov (2008) argues that governments nearing elections often reframe directives to align with their political narrative, emphasizing benefits while downplaying potentially unpopular aspects. This strategy can delay transposition, as it requires additional time for consultation and negotiation among stakeholders to reshape the directive's domestic implementation plan. Kaeding (2006) supports this, showing that such reframing efforts are more likely in member states with higher levels of EU scepticism, where public opinion can significantly shift electoral outcomes. De Vries and Tillman (2011) find indeed that voters in Europe vote based on relevant issues, such as the implementation of directives.

Election timing further interacts with other variables, such as the complexity of directives and institutional structures. König and Luetgert (2009) argue that directives requiring extensive legal or technical adaptation are particularly vulnerable to delays during election periods, as governments prioritize simpler, voter-friendly policies over complex and less publicly appealing EU obligations. Börzel and Risse's (2009) "misfit hypothesis" complements this view by suggesting that directives misaligned with domestic political preferences are more likely to face delays, especially when elections create additional political pressures.

Moreover, the role of the media in shaping public opinion cannot be ignored. Thomas (2014) and Rauh (2019) both highlight how media coverage of EU directives during election periods often frames them as a burden on national sovereignty, intensifying public resistance and discouraging governments from timely transposition. This increase in public attention driven by the media is especially noticeable in member states with strong populist movements, where Eurosceptic parties use EU directives to mobilize voter discontent (Thomas, 2014). Despite these challenges, some scholars suggest that elections can also serve as opportunities for directive transposition under specific conditions. Toshkov (2011) argues that when directives align with the sitting government's political agenda, they may be transposed quickly to showcase the administration's commitment to EU goals and to gain political capital (Toshkov, 2011).

The ideological orientation of governments has consistently been linked to variations in transposition timing. Börzel and Risse (2009) argue that left-leaning governments, generally more supportive of EU integration, are more likely to prioritize the timely implementation of directives. This aligns with Garrett's (1998) findings that pro-integrationist governments often frame EU compliance as a political priority. Yet, Falkner et al. (2005) caution against oversimplifying this relationship, showing that even left-leaning governments may delay

transposition if the directive poses political risks or conflicts with short-term domestic objectives.

Seasonal factors introduce predictable fluctuations in transposition timing, reflecting both institutional rhythms and political incentives. Toshkov (2011) identifies significant reductions in legislative activity during summer recesses, particularly in August, as well as a surge in activity in December as governments rush to meet end-of-year deadlines. Zhelyazkova et al. (2017) support these findings but caution that seasonal patterns cannot be fully explained by institutional calendars. They highlight the role of political strategies, noting that governments often align transposition efforts with fiscal and policy cycles to maximize administrative efficiency. Falkner et al. (2005) emphasize that these patterns reflect broader governance dynamics, with institutional pressures and political priorities intersecting to shape legislative output. For example, December deadlines often coincide with heightened political attention to EU compliance, creating additional incentives for governments to prioritize transposition during this period (Falkner et al., 2005).

The literature highlights a diverse range of variables influencing the timing of directive transposition, from administrative capacity and economic resources to public opinion and political salience. However, this thesis focuses on three key drivers: national electoral cycles, government ideology, and seasonal patterns. These variables represent critical intersections of political and temporal dynamics, providing a framework for understanding how member states navigate the complex relationship between domestic priorities and EU obligations.

Theoretical framework

Understanding the timing of directive transposition in EU member states requires a thorough analysis of the political, ideological, and temporal dynamics that shape compliance behaviour. This framework explores three key factors: national electoral cycles, government ideology, and seasonal effects, and examines how each impacts the transposition of EU directives.

The impact of national electoral cycle

The timing of directive transposition by EU member states is linked to the electoral cycle, with governments adjusting their behaviour strategically during pre-election periods. Electoral cycles create heightened political sensitivity, as governments prioritize voter approval over administrative obligations. This dynamic draws on theories of political economy, particularly the work on electoral cycles (Nordhaus, 1975), which suggests that governments adapt their actions to maximize electoral gains. This often involves delaying or reshaping policies that could provoke public dissatisfaction.

EU directives frequently require the implementation of measures that can impose costs on businesses, citizens, or specific interest groups. These costs may include stricter environmental standards, labour market regulations, or compliance with financial rules, all of which can generate criticism or resistance (Knill & Tosun, 2009). As Thomas (2014) demonstrates, governments approaching elections are more likely to postpone the transposition of directives perceived as unpopular or burdensome, avoiding potential voter backlash or opposition criticism. This strategic delay is especially pronounced for highly salient directives, such as those linked to contentious issues like climate policy, migration, or EU integration (Rauh, 2019). In member states with significant Eurosceptic sentiment, governments may feel an even greater incentive to delay, fearing that implementing EU directives could alienate voters (Kaeding, 2006).

Elections not only influence political strategies but also affect administrative priorities. Pre-election periods are often marked by a reallocation of government resources, with increased attention given to campaign-related activities. This diversion of focus limits the administrative capacity available for routine legislative tasks such as transposing EU directives (Toshkov, 2011). The administrative burden becomes even more pronounced for complex directives that require significant legal or technical adjustments. According to König and Luetgert (2009), directives demanding extensive adaptations are more likely to face delays during election

periods, as governments concentrate on enacting simpler, less contentious policies to maintain political momentum.

Structural and institutional factors also shape how electoral timing affects transposition behaviour. Coalition governments, in particular, are prone to delays due to internal disagreements among coalition partners. Börzel and Risse (2009) argue that coalitions comprising both pro-EU and Eurosceptic factions face greater challenges in agreeing on directive implementation, especially during elections when parties seek to differentiate themselves.

Public opinion further interacts with electoral dynamics to influence transposition timing. Media coverage of EU directives during election periods often amplifies their salience, framing them as either beneficial reforms or intrusive impositions (Rauh, 2019). Governments may expedite the transposition of directives that align with their political platform to showcase policy achievements. Conversely, they are likely to delay directives perceived as controversial, costly, or misaligned with public sentiment to avoid risking electoral outcomes (Toshkov, 2010).

Taken together, these mechanisms suggest that electoral cycles create strong disincentives for governments to transpose directives in the months leading up to elections. By postponing potentially contentious decisions, governments seek to preserve electoral support and mitigate political risks. Therefore, I expect:

Hypothesis 1: EU member states are less likely to transpose directives in the months leading up to national elections.

The impact of government ideology

The ideological orientation of governments significantly shapes their approach to policy implementation, including the transposition of EU directives. Ideology influences how governments prioritize and interpret their obligations, with left-leaning and right-leaning administrations displaying distinct preferences when aligning domestic policies with supranational objectives (Arslan, Koyuncu & Yilmaz, 2023).

Left-leaning governments are traditionally associated with policies that emphasize social equity, environmental protection, and robust regulatory oversight. These priorities often align closely with EU directives, which frequently aim to harmonize member states' policies in areas such as labour rights, consumer protection, and environmental sustainability (Garrett, 1998). Börzel and Risse (2009) argue that left-leaning administrations, being more supportive of European integration, are more likely to view directive transposition as an opportunity to advance their progressive policy goals. This ideological alignment can lead to a greater

emphasis on timely and thorough compliance, as left-leaning governments perceive transposition as a means to demonstrate their commitment to both EU values and domestic priorities.

Right-leaning governments, which focus on free markets, cutting costs, and limiting government involvement, may struggle with EU directives that add regulations or increase expenses (Fabbrini & Zgaga, 2024). König and Luetgert (2009) highlight that right-leaning governments often approach directive transposition more selectively, prioritizing measures that align with their market-oriented preferences while delaying or resisting those that conflict with their ideological stance. For example, directives related to environmental protections or labour standards may be perceived as overly restrictive or economically disruptive by right-leaning administrations, resulting in slower or less comprehensive compliance (König & Luetgert, 2009).

Public opinion and political framing further interact with government ideology to influence transposition behaviour. Rauh (2019) notes that directives addressing social or environmental concerns often resonate more with left-leaning constituencies, providing additional incentives for left-leaning governments to prioritize their implementation. Conversely, right-leaning governments may face pressure from their voter bases to resist or delay directives perceived as infringing on national sovereignty or economic competitiveness, particularly in member states with strong Eurosceptic movements (Kaeding, 2006).

Administrative capacity also moderates the relationship between government ideology and transposition timing. Toshkov (2011) argues that while administrative efficiency is critical for timely compliance, left-leaning governments are more likely to mobilize resources to prioritize EU directives that align with their policy objectives. This contrasts with right-leaning administrations, which may allocate fewer resources to directives perceived as peripheral to their ideological agenda.

The strategic behaviour of governments during election cycles can further amplify these differences. Falkner et al. (2005) observe that left-leaning governments may expedite the transposition of EU directives as a means of showcasing their alignment with progressive and integrationist values, particularly when directives coincide with their electoral platforms. In contrast, right-leaning governments may downplay or delay compliance with similar directives to avoid alienating their core constituencies or to emphasize their national sovereignty (Börzel & Risse, 2009).

Taken together, these mechanisms suggest that left-leaning governments, with their integrationist and regulatory focus, are more likely to prioritize the transposition of EU

directives compared to their right-leaning counterparts. By aligning directive transposition with their broader ideological commitments, left-leaning governments can use compliance to achieve both domestic and EU-wide objectives. Therefore, I expect:

Hypothesis 2: Left-leaning governments will implement more transposition measures than right-leaning governments.

The impact of seasonal effects

The timing of directive transposition is not only influenced by political and ideological factors but also by seasonal dynamics. Seasonal patterns in legislative activity are a well-documented phenomenon, reflecting both institutional rhythms and external pressures. Toshkov (2011) and Zhelyazkova et al. (2017) identify significant reductions in legislative activity during summer months, particularly in August, when many European institutions and national governments operate at reduced capacity due to recesses. This slowdown affects the ability of member states to complete transposition processes, particularly for directives requiring substantial legal or administrative adjustments.

In contrast, December often sees a surge in transposition activity, driven by end-of-year deadlines. Falkner et al. (2005) note that this phenomenon reflects both institutional and political pressures, as member states rush to meet compliance obligations before reporting deadlines to avoid penalties or reputational costs. This end-of-year acceleration may also be driven by practical administrative factors, such as the conclusion of budgetary cycles or the prioritization of unresolved tasks before the new year (Steunenberg & Rhinard, 2010).

These seasonal patterns interact with other variables to influence transposition timing. For instance, during August, the limited capacity of bureaucracies may exacerbate delays in complex directives, while in December, governments may prioritize less controversial directives to ensure quick compliance. Additionally, the alignment of directive deadlines with these seasonal dynamics often amplifies their impact, as directives with deadlines in summer months may face disproportionate delays compared to those with December deadlines (Zhelyazkova et al., 2017).

Overall, the cyclical nature of legislative activity suggests that seasonal factors play a significant role in shaping transposition timing. Governments adapt their efforts based on institutional rhythms and administrative constraints, resulting in observable fluctuations in the number of transposition measures throughout the year. Therefore, I expect:

Hypothesis 3: Seasonal factors influence the number of transposition measures, with fewer measures in August and more in December.

Methodology

To examine the three hypotheses regarding the factors influencing the number of transposition measures, a dataset was constructed covering all EU member states from January 2020 to November 2024. This period captures the presidency of the EU under Ursula von der Leyen, providing a contemporary context for analysing transposition behaviour. The data is organized as an unbalanced panel dataset, where each observation represents a specific country during a specific month. This structure enables a detailed analysis of how transposition activity varies across member states and over time.

The primary data for the Number of Transposition Measures was sourced from the EUR-Lex database, which offers comprehensive and reliable records of legislative actions related to the transposition of EU directives (European Union, n.d.). Once the European Union approves a directive, it is sent to member states for transposition into their national legal systems. Member states must adapt their domestic legislation to align with the directive's provisions and notify the EU upon completing the transposition (Craig & de Búrca, 2020). This notification process allows the EU to monitor compliance and assess whether directives are implemented accurately and within the designated timeframe (Kaeding, 2006).

The Number of Transposition Measures serves as a practical proxy for assessing compliance because the transposition process often involves multiple legislative or administrative measures, varying significantly between member states. Directives can require legal adaptations, and member states may notify partial measures or revise legislation after the initial transposition. This fragmented implementation makes it difficult to determine when a directive is fully implemented (König & Luetgert, 2009). Furthermore, the absence of uniform criteria for identifying compliance completion adds to the complexity (Thomas, 2014). By analysing the number of transposition measures, this study adopts a consistent and measurable approach, capturing activities related to directive transposition across member states.

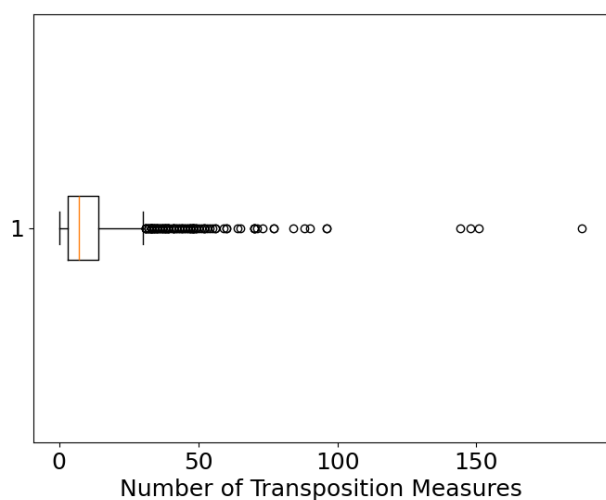
Table 1. Summary statistics of dependent variable: Number of transposition measures

Variable	Count	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Number of transposition Measures	1,593	11.07	14.15	0.00	188.00

The descriptive statistics for this variable, presented in Table 1, reveal substantial variation across countries and months. The mean number of transposition measures per month is approximately 11, with a high standard deviation of 14.15, indicating significant differences in transposition activity among member states. The maximum value of 188 transposition measures in a single month highlights the presence of extreme outliers. Such variability and the occurrence of extreme values could pose challenges for the analysis, as outliers may disproportionately influence the results and lead to skewed interpretations.

In Figure 2 a boxplot presented, which highlights the presence of significant outliers in the data for the number of transposition measures. While the majority of the observations are clustered within a reasonable range, several extreme values can be seen far beyond the upper boundary, with some exceeding 150. Descriptive statistics further confirm this, with the mean of 11.07 and a standard deviation of 14.15 indicating considerable variability. To determine which values are considered outliers the interquartile range technique is used (Seo, 2006). The upper bound for detecting outliers, based on the $1.5 * IQR$ rule, is calculated as 30.5, meaning any values above this threshold are considered extreme.

Figure 2. Boxplot of the Number of Transposition Measures Highlighting Outliers



Given the impact these outliers can have on the regression analysis, a cap of 30 was applied to the number of transposition measures. This adjustment ensures that the regression results are not disproportionately driven by a small number of highly unusual observations, thereby improving the reliability and interpretability of the analysis.

Independent variables

The next section focuses on the independent variables included in the analysis. To assess the three hypotheses, four independent variables are examined: Election Period, a dummy variable indicating whether the observation falls within six months before a national election; Ideology Score, a continuous variable representing the right-leaning or left-leaning orientation of the government; and two dummy variables for the months of August and December, included to explore potential seasonal effects on transposition activity.

Election period

To assess the impact of national elections on the timing of directive transposition, the number of days from the directive's implementation date to the most recent national election is calculated. Based on this information, a dummy variable, election period, is created, coded as "1" if the directive was implemented within six months before a national election and "0" otherwise.

This timeframe aligns with findings from Martin (2004), who noted that governments in European parliamentary democracies exhibit distinct legislative behaviour in the six months leading up to elections, particularly avoiding significant or controversial legislative initiatives. By focusing on the six months preceding implementation, this variable allows for an examination of whether electoral proximity significantly affects the timing of directive transposition, providing a robust framework for analysing the intersection of national elections and EU compliance.

In some cases, elections are not known six months in advance due to the occurrence of snap elections, which are typically called unexpectedly. These elections can arise for various reasons, such as political instability, government collapse, or the inability to form a coalition. For example, Bulgaria has experienced a high frequency of snap elections in recent years. To account for such cases in the coding of the Election Period variable, the announcement date of the election is used instead of the six-month timeframe, unless the announcement date is more than six months before the election. This approach ensures that the variable accurately captures the period of heightened political scrutiny and its potential influence on the transposition of EU directives

Ideology score

The Ideology Score data is sourced from the EU Political Barometer, which estimates ideology using Facebook data and election results from EU member states. Ideology is determined based

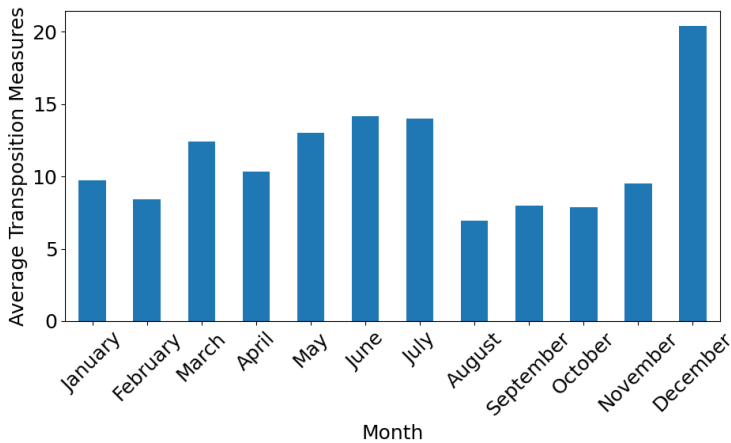
on the weighted average of political party positions on a left-right scale, where 0 represents the far-left, and 10 represents the far-right (Caravaca et al., 2022). This scale provides a consistent measure to compare the ideological tendencies of governments across member states.

Summary statistics for this variable are presented in Table 2. The mean ideology score is approximately 5.46, with a standard deviation of 0.54, indicating some variability in the ideological orientation of governments during the study period. The range spans from 4.01 to 6.63, showing that all observations fall within the centre-left to centre-right spectrum. This information provides valuable insight into the diversity of political landscapes among EU member states.

Seasonal dummies

To account for potential seasonal effects on the number of transposition measures, dummy variables were created for the months of August and December. August is included because it coincides with the summer break for most governments, leading to typically lower legislative activity. December is included because it is a common deadline for EU directives, often resulting in a surge in transposition activity, as explained in the theoretical framework. Figure 1 illustrates the average number of transposition measures per month, highlighting the distinct patterns in these months, with August showing a decline and December showing a sharp increase.

Figure 1. Average transposition measures per month



Control variables

Economic conditions significantly influence the transposition of EU directives, as they shape both governments’ administrative capacity and political priorities. Member states facing economic challenges often delay compliance, particularly with directives perceived as costly or

misaligned with domestic needs (Falkner & Treib, 2018; Haverland & Romeijn, 2007). Monthly GDP and unemployment rate are two key indicators that capture these dynamics.

Monthly GDP reflects economic performance and resource availability. Wealthier states with higher GDP levels are better equipped to manage the complex legal and administrative demands of directive transposition (Toshkov, 2011; König & Luetgert, 2009). Conversely, declining GDP signals economic strain, prompting governments to reallocate resources toward immediate economic concerns, deprioritizing EU compliance (Knill & Tosun, 2009). GDP growth per country was obtained from the World Bank's World Development Indicators database (World Bank, n.d.). However, only quarterly GDP data is available, which limits the resolution needed to analyse monthly trends in economic conditions. To address this, a linear interpolation method was applied to estimate monthly GDP values, following approaches outlined by Stock and Watson (1999) and Marcellino (1999). This method assumes a smooth progression of GDP between quarters, providing a practical approximation for monthly trends.

The unemployment rate provides insight into societal pressures and political sensitivity. High unemployment often shifts governments' focus toward addressing labor market instability, delaying directives perceived as adding burdens on businesses or limiting economic flexibility (Kaeding, 2006; Zhelyazkova et al., 2017). Data on unemployment was also obtained from the World Bank's World Development Indicators database (World Bank, n.d.). Together, monthly GDP and unemployment rate offer a robust framework for analysing how short-term economic performance and broader societal pressures mediate directive transposition behaviour.

Table 2. Summary statistics of independent variables: Ideology score, Unemployment rate and Monthly GDP growth

Variable	Count	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Ideology score	1,242	5.46	0.54	4.01	6.63
Unemployment rate (%)	1,300	6.24	2.56	2.70	17.30
Monthly GDP growth (%)	1,430	0.84	3.56	-18.04	15.90

Research design

The analysis employs a linear regression model to examine the factors influencing the number of transposition measures in EU member states. The dependent variable, measured as the number of transposition measures per month, is regressed on the key independent variables:

Election Period, Ideology Score, and relevant seasonal controls. The regression model is specified as:

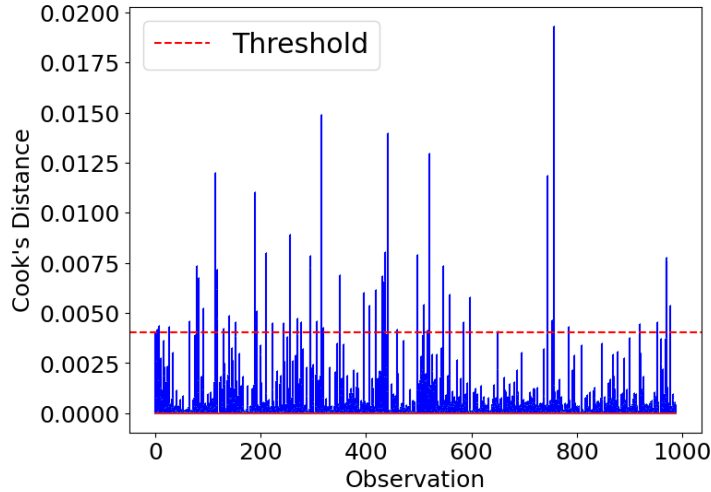
$$\text{Number of transposition measures}_{i,t} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Election Period}_{i,t} + \beta_2 \text{Ideology score}_{i,t} + \beta_3 \text{August}_t + \beta_4 \text{December}_t + \varepsilon_{i,t}$$

Linear regression assumptions

The linear regression assumptions were assessed, including an analysis of influential outliers using Cook's Distance. Cook's Distance measures the impact of individual observations on the regression results, with a threshold of $4/n$ used to identify highly influential points (Altman & Krzywinski, 2016). Observations exceeding this threshold were flagged as potential outliers.

The Cook's Distance plot, presented in Figure 3, reveals that several observations surpassed the threshold, suggesting they have a disproportionate influence on the regression model. To address this, an alternative regression output is provided where these flagged outliers are excluded from the analysis. This adjustment reduces the number of observations from 988 to 933 but ensures that the results are not unduly affected by influential data points.

Figure 3. Cook's distance plot for identifying influential observations



Results

In this section, the results are presented to address the research question and hypotheses. First, the number of transposition measures during election periods is compared to non-election periods using a t-test. Next, a regression analysis is conducted, including all key variables: election periods, government ideology, seasonal patterns, and control variables (GDP and unemployment rate).

Electoral cycle t-test

The t-test results, as presented in the table, show that the mean number of transposition measures during election periods is 10.23, compared to 9.60 during non-election periods. While this suggests a small difference of -0.63, the t-statistic of 1.06 and the corresponding p-value of 0.289 indicate that the difference is not statistically significant.

Table 3. Results of t-test comparing transposition measures during election and non-election periods.

Variable	Election period	Non-election period	Difference	t-statistic	p-value
Mean	10.23	9.60	-.0.63	1.06	0.289
Observations	237	1356			

For Hypothesis 1, which suggests that EU member states are less likely to transpose directives in the months leading up to national elections, the results do not provide strong evidence to support this claim. Contrary to expectations, the mean number of transposition measures is slightly higher during election periods, though this increase is not significant enough to rule out random chance. This outcome suggests that election periods do not consistently disrupt transposition activity across member states.

Linear regression

The regression analysis explores the key determinants of transposition measures, testing the effects of electoral cycles, government ideology, and seasonal patterns while controlling for economic conditions such as unemployment rates and monthly GDP growth. Two models are presented: Model 1, which includes the full dataset, and Model 2, which accounts for influential

observations to ensure robustness. The results for each variable are discussed in relation to the hypotheses.

Table 4. Regression results for the determinants of transposition measures

VARIABLES	Model 1	Model 2
Election Period	-0.7928 (0.740)	-2.0188*** (0.714)
Ideology	2.2183*** (0.468)	1.9241*** (0.439)
Unemployment	-0.2937*** (0.099)	-0.2509*** (0.092)
Monthly GDP growth	0.5025*** (0.170)	0.2063 (0.164)
Month August	-2.2421** (0.971)	-3.2180*** (0.923)
Month December	7.0154*** (0.976)	6.7201*** (1.099)
Constant	-0.7111 (2.708)	0.6884 (2.541)
Observations	988	933
R-squared	0.099	0.092
F-stat	18.05	15.61

NOTE: The table shows the results of linear regressions estimated using OLS, with the Number of Transposition Measures as the dependent variable. Model 1 includes all observations, while Model 2 excludes influential points surpassing the 4/n threshold based on Cook's Distance. The regressions use normal standard errors, and the results highlight the change in the number of transposition measures for each coefficient. Standard errors are reported in parentheses.

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The results show that election periods have a notable impact on transposition activity, as suggested in hypothesis 1. In model 1, the coefficient for election period is negative (-0.7928) but not statistically significant, indicating no strong evidence that transposition measures decrease during election periods. However, when controlling for influential observations in model 2, the coefficient becomes larger and statistically significant at the 1% level (-2.0188***). This finding indicates a clear decline in transposition activity during election periods, providing partial support for the hypothesis. The strengthened results in model 2 suggest that governments may delay the implementation of directives as elections approach, likely to avoid potentially unpopular measures that could affect electoral outcomes.

The role of government ideology reveals an unexpected trend. While hypothesis 2 proposed that right-leaning governments implement fewer transposition measures, the results show the opposite. In both models, the coefficient for ideology is positive and statistically significant (2.2183*** in Model 1 and 1.9241*** in model 2), indicating that right-leaning governments are associated with more transposition measures. This contradicts the original hypothesis. The slight decrease in the coefficient in model 2 demonstrates that removing influential observations does not alter the overall relationship, underscoring the robustness of this result.

Finally, the findings strongly support hypothesis 3, which focuses on seasonal effects. The coefficient for month August is negative and statistically significant in both models (-2.2421** in model 1 and -3.2180*** in model 2), confirming a sharp decline in transposition activity during the summer recess. Conversely, the coefficient for month December is positive and highly significant (7.0154*** in model 1 and 6.7201*** in model 2), reflecting a surge in activity at the end of the year. These results align with expectations that institutional and administrative rhythms drive predictable fluctuations in transposition timing, with slowdowns during August recesses and increased efforts to meet year-end compliance deadlines in December.

In summary, the findings provide partial support for the effect of election periods on transposition timing, a surprising contradiction regarding government ideology, and strong confirmation of the influence of seasonal dynamics. Differences between the models highlight the importance of addressing influential data points to ensure reliable conclusions.

Discussion

In this study, the research question: *What factors drive the timing of EU directive transposition in member states?* has been answered by analysing the influence of electoral cycles, government ideology, and seasonal patterns on transposition activity. The results align with and challenge findings from previous literature, offering valuable insights into compliance behaviour.

The evidence suggests that transposition activity decreases during election periods, though the findings are mixed. While there is some indication that governments delay directive implementation during these times, this effect is not consistently significant across all analyses. This aligns with the argument by Thomas (2014) that governments may postpone the transposition of potentially unpopular directives near elections to avoid alienating voters. This behaviour is consistent with political economy theories (Nordhaus, 1975), which suggest that governments prioritize electoral gains over administrative obligations during politically sensitive periods. However, the mixed evidence implies that electoral effects may vary depending on directive salience or specific domestic political contexts, warranting further research into these moderating factors.

For the relationship between government ideology and transposition measures, the findings indicate that right-leaning governments are associated with more transposition measures, contrary to expectations. This challenges previous arguments by Börzel and Risse (2009), which suggested that left-leaning governments, due to their pro-regulation and integrationist stance, would be more proactive in implementing directives. Instead, the results may reflect a strategic approach by right-leaning governments to scatter transposition efforts across multiple smaller measures, reducing the visibility of potentially controversial policies and minimizing voter backlash. This behaviour aligns with their preference for less visible government intervention. Furthermore, it is possible that right-leaning governments selectively prioritize directives that align with their market-oriented agenda, as argued by Fabbrini and Zgaga (2024). These findings highlight the need for further exploration into how ideology shapes not only the volume but also the strategic distribution and timing of transposition measures.

Seasonal effects strongly influence transposition timing, as shown by the substantial slowdown in August and the sharp increase in December. These patterns align with findings by Toshkov (2011) and Zhelyazkova et al. (2017), which attribute reduced activity in August to the summer recess and the December surge to efforts to meet year-end deadlines. These results underscore the systematic influence of institutional rhythms on compliance behaviour,

demonstrating how administrative calendars shape the timing of legislative actions across EU member states. The evidence strongly supports the idea that institutional and administrative cycles significantly impact when directives are transposed.

Limitations

Despite these insights, the study faces several limitations, particularly regarding endogeneity due to omitted variable bias. While electoral cycles, ideology, and seasonal factors were examined, other variables such as directive complexity, bureaucratic efficiency, or public salience and administrative capacity were not explicitly included in the models. As highlighted by König and Luetgert (2009), complex directives often experience delays due to the extensive legal or administrative adjustments they require. Additionally, Toshkov (2011) emphasizes that administrative capacity varies significantly across member states, particularly between newer and older EU members, affecting their ability to comply with EU obligations efficiently. The absence of these variables may have impacted the models' explanatory power, as reflected in the relatively low R-squared values (0.099 for model 1 and 0.092 for model 2), and could partly alter the relationships between the examined factors and transposition timing.

A second limitation concerns measurement error in the dependent variable. The number of transposition measures, while practical, does not perfectly capture the full implementation of a directive. As noted by Haverland and Romeijn (2007) and Thomas (2014), member states may notify partial or fragmented measures, complicating the assessment of compliance. For hypothesis 1 in particular, this limitation may impact the relationship between electoral timing and transposition behaviour.

This research builds on recent and relevant data, capturing the period from 2020 to 2024 during the presidency of Ursula von der Leyen, which provides contemporary insights into EU compliance behaviour. Despite the limitations mentioned, such as potential endogeneity and measurement challenges, the use of recent data strengthens the thesis relevance and applicability. Another key strength lies in its multi-dimensional approach, examining the interplay between political, ideological, and seasonal factors. This comprehensive framework not only advances the academic understanding of compliance timing but also provides actionable insights for policymakers to anticipate and address delays in directive transposition.

Conclusion

This thesis examined the research question: *What factors drive the timing of EU directive transposition in member states?* Three hypotheses were tested to address this question. The first hypothesis proposed that EU member states are less likely to transpose directives in the months leading up to national elections. The second hypothesis suggested that left-leaning governments implement more transposition measures than right-leaning governments. The third hypothesis posited that seasonal factors influence the timing of transposition, with fewer measures in August and more in December.

The analysis utilized a panel dataset covering EU member states from 2020 to 2024. The findings provided mixed evidence. For hypothesis 1, the results showed that transposition activity decreases during election periods, particularly when influential observations are excluded, indicating the effect of political timing on compliance. hypothesis 2, however, revealed unexpected results, with right-leaning governments implementing more transposition measures than left-leaning governments, suggesting potential strategic behaviour. hypothesis 3 was strongly supported, as a clear seasonal pattern emerged, with legislative activity decreasing in August and significantly increasing in December, driven by institutional calendars and year-end deadlines.

In conclusion, this thesis highlights that electoral cycles, government ideology, and seasonal patterns are important factors influencing the timing of EU directive transposition. These findings contribute to the understanding of how political and temporal dynamics interact with supranational obligations, providing insights relevant for both academic research and policymaking.

Future research in this area could explore additional factors influencing the timing of EU directive transposition, such as the complexity of directives or public salience. Examining how specific policy areas, like environmental or financial directives, affect compliance timing could provide more nuanced insights. Comparative studies focusing on differences between newer and older EU member states, considering administrative capacity and institutional learning, may also reveal important dynamics. Additionally, incorporating qualitative methods, such as interviews with policymakers, could help understand strategic decisions behind the timing of transposition measures.

References

- Altman, N., & Krzywinski, M. (2016). Analyzing outliers: influential or nuisance?. *Nature Methods*, 13(4), 281-283.
- Arslan, E., Koyuncu, C., & Yilmaz, R. (2023). The Influence of Government Ideology on Renewable Energy Consumption in the European Union Countries. *Sustainability*, 15(20), 14870.
- Börzel, T. A., & Risse, T. (2009). Conceptualizing the domestic impact of Europe. In K. Featherstone & C. M. Radaelli (Eds.), *The politics of Europeanization* (pp. 57–82). Oxford University Press.
- Börzel, T. A., Hofmann, T., Panke, D., & Sprungk, C. (2010). Obstinate and inefficient: Why member states do not comply with European law. *Comparative Political Studies*, 43(11), 1363–1390. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414010376914>
- Craig, P., & de Búrca, G. (2020). *EU law: Text, cases, and materials* (7th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- De Vries, C. E., & Tillman, E. R. (2011). European Union issue voting in East and West Europe: The role of political context. *Comparative European Politics*, 9(1), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1057/cep.2010.9>
- Dörrenbächer, N., Mastenbroek, E., & Toshkov, D. (2015). National parliaments and transposition of EU law: A matter of coalition conflict? *West European Politics*, 38(3), 584–606. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2014.990697>
- Eckert, S. (2021). The European Green Deal and the EU's regulatory power in times of crisis. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 59(Annual Review Issue), 81–91. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.13123>
- European Commission. (2009). *Directive 2009/28/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources*. Official Journal of the European Union. Retrieved from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu>
- European Commission. (2020). *A European Green Deal: Striving to be the first climate-neutral continent*. <https://ec.europa.eu>

- European Union. (n.d.). EUR-Lex: Access to European Union law. Retrieved from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu>
- Fabbrini, S., & Zgaga, T. (2024). Right-wing sovereignism in the European Union: Definition, features and implications. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 62(2), 341–359. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.13500>
- Falkner, G., & Treib, O. (2018). Three worlds of compliance or four? The EU-15 compared to new member states. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 46(2), 293–313. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.2008.46.issue-2>
- Haverland, M. (2000). National adaptation to European integration: The importance of institutional veto points. *Journal of Public Policy*, 20(1), 83–103. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0143814X00000778>
- Haverland, M., & Romeijn, M. (2007). Do member states make European policies work? Analysing the EU transposition deficit. *Public Administration*, 85(3), 757–778. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9299.2007.00668>
- Haverland, M., Steunenberg, B., & Van Waarden, F. (2011). Sectors at different speeds: Analysing transposition deficits in the European Union. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 49(2), 265–291. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.2010.02139.x>
- Hix, S., & Høyland, B. (2011). *The political system of the European Union* (3rd ed.). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Jordan, A., & Matt, E. (2014). Designing policies that intentionally stick: Policy feedback in a changing climate. *Policy Sciences*, 47(3), 227–247. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11077-014-9192>
- Kaeding, M. (2006). Determinants of transposition delay in the European Union. *Journal of Public Policy*, 26(3), 229–253. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0143814X06000547>
- Kaeding, M. (2008). Lost in translation or full steam ahead: The transposition of EU transport directives across member states. *European Union Politics*, 9(1), 115–143. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1465116507085959>
- Knill, C., & Lenschow, A. (2005). Compliance, competition and communication: Different approaches of European governance and their impact on national institutions. *Journal*

- of Common Market Studies*, 43(3), 583–606. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.2005.00566>.
- Knill, C., & Tosun, J. (2009). Hierarchy, networks, or markets: How does the EU shape environmental policy adoptions within and beyond its borders? *Journal of European Public Policy*, 16(6), 873–894. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501760903088086>
- König, T., & Luetgert, B. (2008). Troubles with transposition? Explaining trends in member-state notification and the delayed transposition of EU directives. *British Journal of Political Science*, 39, 163–194. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123408000380>
- Marcellino, M. (1999). Some consequences of temporal aggregation in empirical analysis. *Journal of Business & Economic Statistics*, 17(1), 129–136. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07350015.1999.10524800>
- Martin, S. (2004). The effect of parliamentary rules on legislative output: Evidence from the Irish Parliament. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 29(4), 427–448. <https://doi.org/10.3162/036298004X201195>
- Nordhaus, W. D. (1975). The political business cycle. *Review of Economic Studies*, 42(2), 169–190. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2296528>
- Rauh, C. (2019). Politicization, participation, and polarization: How increasing public attention changes European politics. *European Journal of Political Research*, 58(1), 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12289>
- Seo, S. (2006). *A review and comparison of methods for detecting outliers in univariate data sets* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Pittsburgh).
- Steunenberg, B., & Rhinard, M. (2010). The transposition of European law in EU member states: Between process and politics. *European Political Science Review*, 2(3), 495–520. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755773910000196>
- Steunenberg, B., & Toshkov, D. (2009). Comparing transposition in the 27 member states of the EU: The impact of discretion and legal fit. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 16(7), 951–970. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501760903226625>
- Stock, J. H., & Watson, M. W. (1999). Forecasting inflation. *Journal of Monetary Economics*, 44(2), 293–335. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0304-3932\(99\)00027-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0304-3932(99)00027-6)

- Thomas, M. (2014). The relationship between national elections and the delay in transposition of EU directives. *Politics & Policy*, 42(6), 911–946. <https://doi.org/10.1111/polp.12052>
- Toshkov, D. (2008). Embracing European law: Compliance with EU directives in Central and Eastern Europe. *European Union Politics*, 9(3), 379–402. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1465116508093490>
- Toshkov, D. (2011). The quest for relevance: Research on compliance with EU law. *European Union Politics*, 12(4), 456–480. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1465116511417189>
- Treib, O. (2014). Implementing and complying with EU governance outputs. *Living Reviews in European Governance*, 9(1), 1–47. <https://doi.org/10.12942/lreg-2014-1>
- World Bank. (n.d.). World Development Indicators. Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/>
- Zhelyazkova, A., Kaya, C., & Schrama, R. M. (2017). Notified and substantive compliance with EU law in enlarged Europe: Evidence from four policy areas. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 24(2), 248–267. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2016.1146326>

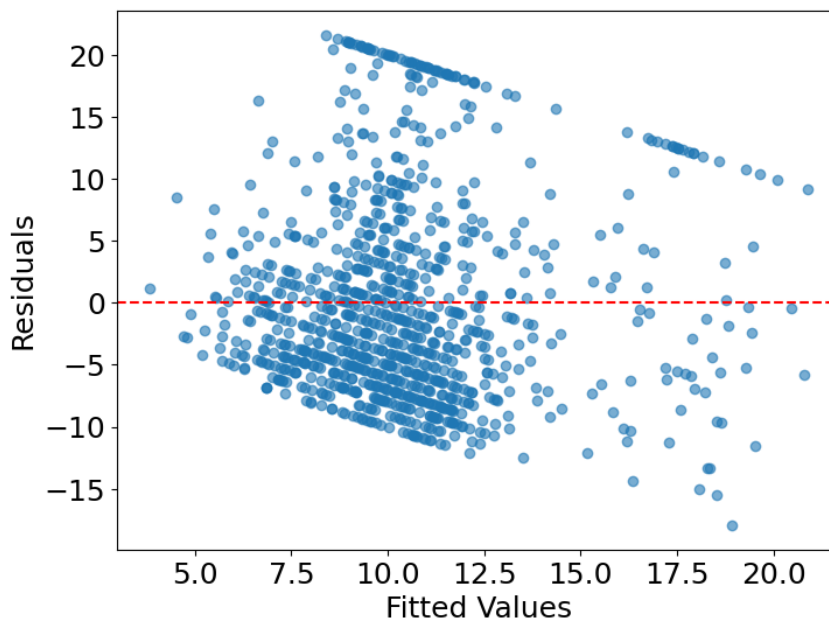
Appendix A: Tests of assumptions for linear regression

Table 5. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) scores for multicollinearity analysis

Variable	VIF
Election period	1.003
Ideology score	1.011
Unemployment rate	1.024
Monthly GDP growth	1.024
August	1.009
December	1.019

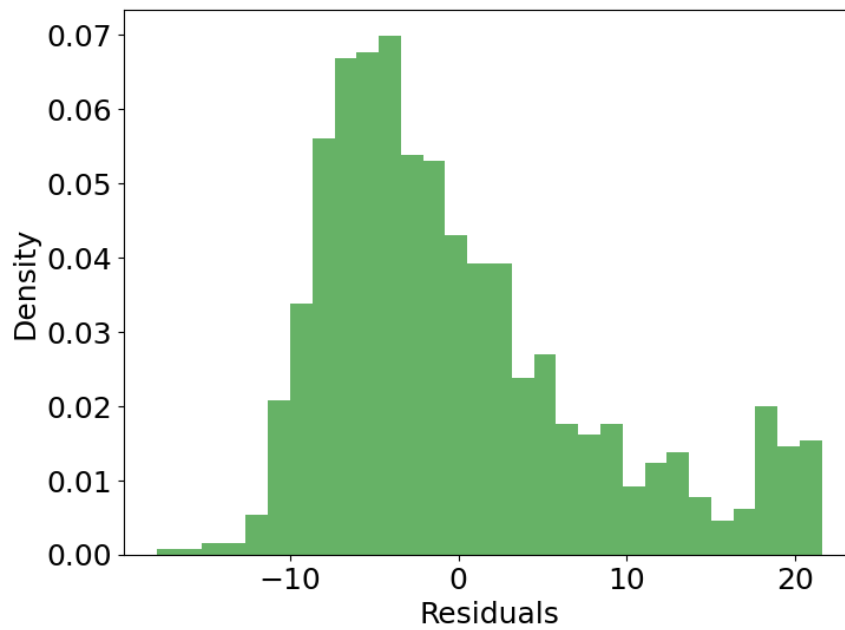
NOTE: The table presents the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) scores, all of which are well below 10, indicating no multicollinearity. The Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.316 suggests no autocorrelation in the residuals.

Figure 4. Residual plot for linearity



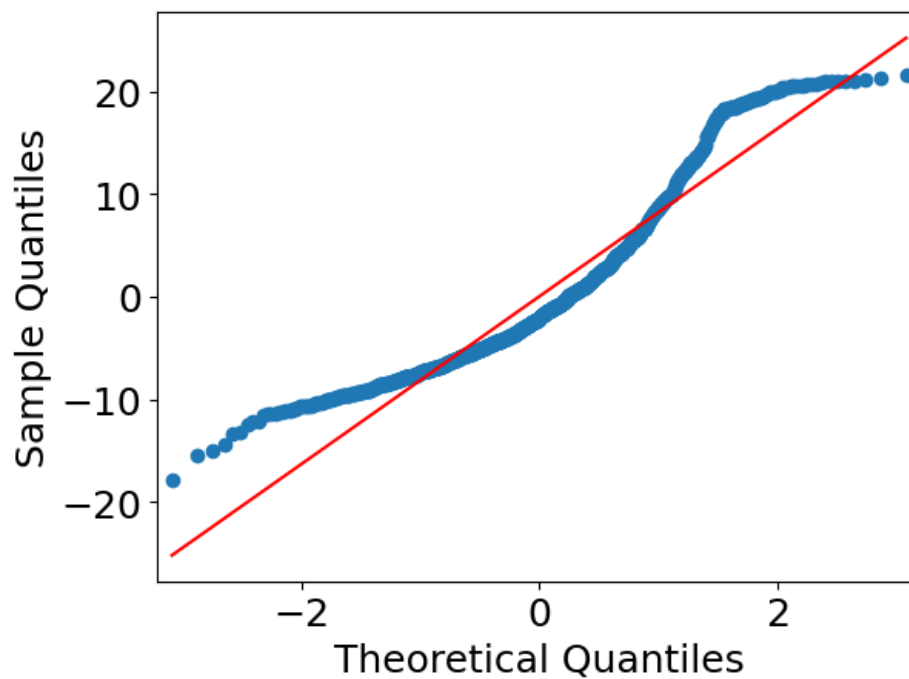
NOTE: The figure presents the residual plot for linearity, showing a random scatter of residuals around the horizontal axis, indicating that the assumption of linearity is reasonably satisfied.

Figure 5. Histogram of residuals to evaluate normality



NOTE: The figure presents the histogram of residuals, showing a roughly symmetric distribution, which suggests that the normality assumption is reasonably met.

Figure 6. Q-Q Plot for residuals to evaluate normality



NOTE: The figure presents the Q-Q plot for residuals, with most points lying close to the red line, indicating that the residuals follow a normal distribution.