From Incremental to Comprehensive: Towards Island-Friendly European Union Policymaking

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Abstract: The sustainability challenges faced by islands in the European Union (EU) are not well reflected in EU policy, where the approach to island issues has been incremental and fragmented. This paper identifies EU islands and their main sustainability issues, and argues for a stronger awareness of island issues in EU policy processes. It notes in particular the current restrictive definition of islands, which excludes island states, and the fact that the issues of peripherality and insularity do not fit into any of the categories provided in the EU's impact assessment guidelines. Moreover, since European islands are found at various administrative scales, there is a lack of harmonized statistical data on fundamental factors necessary for monitoring their sustainable development.

Keywords: European Union, impact assessment, insularity, islands, peripherality, sustainability

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