

Governing the RRF: Drafting, Implementing, and Monitoring National Recovery and Resilience Plans as an Interactive Multi-Level Process

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In addition to its remarkable financial envelope, the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) also marks an important qualitative step forward in EU governance, as it introduces a new “demand-driven and performance-based” governance design. In this study, we assess the effectiveness and legitimacy of the RRF’s design, by analyzing its practical functioning during the drafting, implementation, and monitoring of the National Recovery and Resilience Plans (NRRPs) in eight Member States: Belgium, Croatia, Estonia, Italy, Latvia, Portugal, Slovakia, and Spain, together with a number of contrasting “shadow” cases already described in the literature. More specifically, we assess the extent to which governments took ownership of the Plans; the inclusivity of their drafting; and the role of the Commission in steering the process. On implementation and monitoring, we assess how RRF governance has affected domestic policy making; what obstacles have arisen in the implementation process; and how monitoring by the Commission works in practice, with particular attention to its interpretive flexibility and administrative load. The study is based on extensive documentary analysis and supporting interviews with key officials involved in drafting, implementing, and monitoring the Plans.