**Hamish Payne (2020)**

# An assessment of the impacts of Scottish and German rural planning legislation, laws and decision-making processes on the environment and biodiversity

Scotland and Germany are two EU countries who have differing governing systems, yet must both incorporate national and EU environmental and habitat legislation into their rural planning law. This research investigates the ways in which environmental legislation is integrated into the national framework and how effectively this occurs. The methodology is a mixed methods study, examining archival data, case studies and interviews to ascertain how effectively the legislation functions in both countries, and whether environmental consideration in the planning process hold the power over development, or whether development is inevitable, regardless of environmental implications of projects. Owing to the differences between the two system and where the power is held, this tends to reflect the willingness to strive national environmental targets and those of the EU. Germany’s Federal system leads to poorer coordination between states to meet national and EU objectives, whereas in Scotland the government hold the ultimate power over many instances of decision making. There is evidence that both the states and the Federal government can utilise EU law to bypass public consultation to pass desirable or economically promising projects. In Scotland, the formation of extensive mitigation strategies appears assist in projects meeting approval.