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Summary of the Introductory Chapter

Mutual recognition is generally not mentioned in debates about new modes of governance, though it is an important alternative to hierarchical steering in the form of harmonization. Next to its broad use in the single market, mutual recognition has been transferred to justice and home affairs, and becomes relevant also beyond the European Union. This article discusses how far mutual recognition meets the criteria of new modes of governance. Comparing mutual recognition to its alternative – harmonization and national treatment – it gives an introductory overview of the characteristics of the principle. Mutual recognition, it is shown, faces significant preconditions as rules to be mutually recognized have to be equivalent; moreover, rules with a high degree of input legitimacy are difficult to transfer. Yet, mutual recognition also offers significant advantages over its alternatives, making it an important topic for governance research.

Key Words: Governance; harmonization; mutual recognition; national treatment; single market; trade.

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