



UvA-DARE (Digital Academic Repository)

Interest groups

Hanegraaff, M.; Berkhout, J.

DOI

[10.4337/9781800883437.00023](https://doi.org/10.4337/9781800883437.00023)

Publication date

2023

Document Version

Final published version

Published in

The Elgar Companion to the European Union

License

Article 25fa Dutch Copyright Act (<https://www.openaccess.nl/en/in-the-netherlands/you-share-we-take-care>)

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Hanegraaff, M., & Berkhout, J. (2023). Interest groups. In S. Faure, & C. Lequesne (Eds.), *The Elgar Companion to the European Union* (pp. 171-181). (Elgar Companions to International Organisations). Edward Elgar Publishing.
<https://doi.org/10.4337/9781800883437.00023>

General rights

It is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), other than for strictly personal, individual use, unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

Disclaimer/Complaints regulations

If you believe that digital publication of certain material infringes any of your rights or (privacy) interests, please let the Library know, stating your reasons. In case of a legitimate complaint, the Library will make the material inaccessible and/or remove it from the website. Please Ask the Library: <https://uba.uva.nl/en/contact>, or a letter to: Library of the University of Amsterdam, Secretariat, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam, The Netherlands. You will be contacted as soon as possible.

14. Interest groups

Marcel Hanegraaff and Joost Berkhout

The political scientist Robert Dahl once provokingly wondered: ‘In a system where every adult may vote but where knowledge, wealth, social position, access to officials and other resources are unequally distributed, who actually governs?’ (Dahl 1961, p. 1).¹ This question, 60 years later, seems especially timely for the European Union (EU). EU citizens may vote once every five years. In the meantime, the EU hosts around 30,000 staff working to represent interests in Brussels. As the EU institutions employ roughly 33,000 officials, this means that for every policymaker working in Brussels, there is at least one interest representative or lobbyist. This ratio is substantially higher than in any other political system in the world, including Washington DC which is usually considered the centre of the lobby universe. It may therefore be no surprise that there is substantial academic (e.g., Dür et al. 2019), journalistic (e.g., FT 2022) and campaign group (e.g., CEO 2022) interest in the role of lobbyists in Brussels. Who is represented by lobbyists? What type of activities do they initiate? What is their impact on EU policymaking? In this chapter, we provide an overview of some of the main findings in the scholarly literature.

To structure the chapter, we differentiate between three stages of interest group involvement in EU politics. The first stage is about the mobilization of individual organizations into EU politics and contours of the organizational population residing in Brussels. This stage deals with the distribution of active interest groups in Brussels: do some groups face more obstacles to politically mobilize in the EU than others? On which issues do we find relatively large numbers of stakeholders? In the second stage interest groups decide on a strategy to pursue their political goals. Which strategies do lobbyists choose most frequently? And why do groups sometimes ‘go public’ whereas in other times prefer to engage in ‘quiet politics’ as much as possible? The third and final stage concerns how interest groups gain effective policy access and affect public policy. The key question is which groups are eventually more influential than others in the EU. We follow the dominant practice in contemporary behavioural studies of interest groups and use the term ‘interest group’ and ‘lobbyist’ to denote all organised actors attempting to influence public policy without aspiring to hold office.

In the next three sections, these questions are answered based on the latest academic insights. Please note that a single book chapter can never exhaustively discuss the full breadth of studies of EU lobbying.

¹ Please note that this chapter draws heavily on a book chapter by one of the authors, see: M. C. Hanegraaff, (2020). ‘Interest Groups in the European Union: Mobilization, Strategies, and Influence.’ In: P. Harris, A. Bitonti, C. Fleisher, and A. Binderkrantz (eds). *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Interest Groups, Lobbying and Public Affairs*. Palgrave MacMillan.

MAIN DEBATE AND DEVELOPMENT OF A SUBFIELD: IS THE EU UNIQUE?

The EU is not a ‘typical’ political system: there is no EU public sphere, the layered institutional structure includes more entry points and veto players than in many national political systems and the substantially focussed set of policy competences at the EU level attracts a particular set of interests. These particularities make the interactions in the policymaking process potentially different from other political systems. For lobbyists active in Brussels, it is vital to understand how the EU functions. For academic observers, we frequently do not know whether observations in the EU ‘travel’ to national contexts and vice versa, nor is there a full agreement whether to theoretically rely on *sui generis* theory or more general concepts. We therefore discuss three institutional characteristics of the EU that affect interest group politics and relate them to theory and typology formation.

A first characteristic is the lack of a *unitary public sphere* in the EU. This is important for at least two reasons. To start, it affects the way the EU is perceived by citizens. The EU policymaking process is quantitatively less extensively covered than national politics. Qualitatively, rather than a direct interpretation – for instance through shared media sources – of EU policymaking, the news is translated through 27 different media systems, all with their own unique perspective. Interest groups need to be aware of these mechanisms and cope with their consequences. Second, the fragmented nature of the news media along national outlets makes it much harder for interest groups to mobilize constituents in the EU than in political systems with a joined public sphere, where, for instance, an attention-seeking campaign may first resonate among citizens on Twitter, and subsequently be picked up by national press. While issues discussed in the EU do not tend to dominate national public discussions, it is even rarer that attention is shared across a wide range of member states. This peculiar media context makes the EU ‘lobby game’ different compared to the lobbying in the national political systems in the member states. As further noted below, the ‘public sphere’ deficit of the EU compared to national systems, narrows the strategic repertoire of citizen groups, both in terms of mobilization and public campaigning.

Another key difference between the EU and ‘domestic’ political systems is the *multi-layered* nature of decision-making. With 27 members, interest groups may focus on lobbying national authorities in charge of preparing or implementation of relevant EU-related policies, delegate lobby activities to EU umbrella associations, or lobby any of the EU institutions themselves; all of which have different competences and responsibilities. These diffuse decision-making procedures create access points for lobbyists, but complexity may also raise access barriers. At the EU level, this pattern is reflected in the relatively volatility of lobby presence. The EU lobby community experiences high levels of organizational turn-over with a sizeable proportion of ‘lobby tourists’ and a smaller part of Brussels-based, long-term committed lobbyists with a networked, layered lobby strategy, like chess players playing on multiple boards at the same time. Berkhout and Lowery (2011; also Berkhout, 2015), for instance, find that around 30 per cent of the lobbyists accredited to the European Parliament (EP) between 2003 and 2009, maintain their registration continuously, whereas the rest of the registrants comes and goes, still keeping the register constant at around 1,500 entries (contemporary comparisons with the Transparency Register are difficult due to somewhat different administrative procedures, see e.g., Greenwood and Dreger, 2013). Seen from the member states, national interest groups vary a great deal in the extent to which they are Europeanized and have integrated EU policy

work in their regular campaigns. Such integration is organizationally difficult because the formal roles of the EU institutions deviate substantially from their national counterparts. The distinct tasks of these institutions create particular needs and demands on the part of policy-makers related to the input they require from interest representatives. Bouwen (2004; 2009), for instance, notes the need for ‘technical’ input on the part of EC, and more ‘political’ needs arising from the MEP’s.

Last and related, the nature of *policy competences* and instruments of the EU, such as competition policy and market regulation, differs substantially and is less susceptible to change than the policy focus and impact of national governments. This focus on ‘economic’ policies tends to trigger the interests of market players more strongly than those of citizens.

These differences have, firstly, motivated scholars to theoretically situate their studies in relation to theories of European integration. For instance, Kohler-Koch (1994) identifies interest group politics as co-evolving with European institutions in a mutually supportive manner and, in part, substantiating a neo-functional dynamic of an ‘ever growing union’ (also see Cowles, 1995). Secondly, the unique character of the EU has led several researchers to identify interest group engagement as a distinct systemic type, most notably elite pluralism (Coen, 1997; Eising, 2007), and to a lesser extent sectoral corporatism (Treib and Falkner, 2009). The ‘elite pluralist’ view stipulates that the EU institutions are ‘pluralistically’ open to the input of all sorts of interest groups but that relatively wealthy and professionalized ‘elite’ groups are still better able to have an impact on what happens in the EU. For instance, a Bulgarian labour union will likely find a way to be heard in Europe if it wanted to bring something to the table, but their voice will not be as effective as *BusinessEurope*, the main business association of Europe. Such a ‘elite pluralist’ characterization facilitates the evaluation of EU-specific research questions such as on consultation practises of the European Commission. Richardson and Coen present a flexible system-wide typology when they conclude that ‘EU pluralism might be best characterized as a kind of *chameleon pluralism*, capable of changing its appearance over time during the policy cycle for a given policy problem or within a sub-sector over a longer period of time’ (Richardson and Coen, 2009: 348). In line with the example, *BusinessEurope* may now be the most active (and likely influential) interest groups in Europe, but this can easily change over time and vary substantially across policy areas.

In more general terms, the conceptual ambiguity and the lack of specification of all these definitions however reduces the theoretical usefulness of the typologies, whereas a narrow and more specific typological embedding makes it more difficult to design studies that travel beyond the EU context. Therefore, the majority of contemporary studies on EU lobbying now conceive the EU as a system of interest representation comparable to any other system, which is different in ‘degree’ rather than in ‘type’ from other cases of lobbying. Scholars increasingly rely on theories of lobbying rather than that they develop theories specific to the EU (Woll, 2006; Lowery et al., 2009; Berkhout et al., 2018). For this reason, this chapter is structured in terms of relevant (sub)theories of interest representation in the EU, rather than holistically merging these theories into a single-system type such as pluralism, corporatism or some specific variant (see Eising 2008).

CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS IN THE STUDY OF EU INTEREST GROUPS

Mobilization: Business Bias or a Pluralist Heaven?

Interest mobilization refers to collective organization of individuals or firms to further a particular political goal. In crude terms, the outcome of political mobilization is observed in the relative distribution of interest groups active in Brussels, its ‘population of interest groups’. Key normative questions relate to the extent to which this distribution is representative of grievances in society or whether some interests are better represented than others in the EU. Interest group scholarship routinely relies upon Olson’s 1965 classic *The Logic of Collective Action* as the most important theoretical reference point. In a nutshell, it posits that small groups with high political stakes or ‘concentrated interests’ find it easier to collectively organize than large groups with diffusely distributed interests. This logic implies that business actors should face fewer collective action problems than citizen groups to mobilize in the EU and therefore are likely to be better represented. In practical terms the free rider problem makes it relatively difficult for NGOs to find supporters and donors as everyone will still profit from their lobby efforts even if they do not financially support the NGO. This problem is less severe for firms, where members of associations are the direct recipients of the lobby efforts of a business association. As a consequence, we should expect more business groups active in the EU than NGOs.

Most empirical studies seem to confirm this expectation: there are more business interest groups active in Brussels than any other type of interest groups. Between the different studies estimating the distribution of interest group activity in the EU, the percentage of citizen groups varies around 15–25 per cent, depending on the institutional venues and sources used to map the groups. The business community (i.e., business associations and firms) is much larger and is estimated to constitute between 60 and 75 per cent of the EU interest group population. The remainder of the organizations are mostly labour unions and research organizations (see Berkhout et al., 2018).

The question is how to interpret these findings. Can we argue, based on these numbers that mobilization in the EU is ‘biased’ towards business organizations, i.e., that these groups have a disproportional and institutionalized advantage over other types of groups to become and stay active. To assess this type of bias, one needs consensus on how an unbiased distribution looks like and compare it to the actual population of interest groups active in Brussels (Lowery et al., 2015). In other words, it may be true that more business groups are mobilized in Brussels compared to any other types of interest groups but this may not be ‘disproportional’ related to salient interests on the policy problems the EU addresses. As noted, many of the competences of the EU institutions are of an economic nature and this plausibly triggers the interests of business groups more explicitly than those of non-business groups. In this view, the relatively numerous business mobilizations seem to be the result of the economic nature of EU policy-making rather than other features of its institutional designs such as the relative strength of the European Parliament, pro-business provision of access to lobbyists by elite decision-makers or the persistence of particular historically instituted patterns of behaviour. Think about the decisions made by the EU, which are mostly economic or related to environmental policies. Many issues of concern to NGOs, such as human rights, social policies, or health issues, are not decided in Brussels. This could explain why the business community is so much more

active in Brussels compared to NGOs who can presumably voice their interests at other, national-level political venues.

To this end, Berkhout et al. (2017) evaluate the relative attractiveness of the EU public policy process to business lobbyists and empirically assess whether the proportion of business groups active in specific policy fields in the EU differs from the proportion of business groups active in the same policy fields in a national context. At an aggregate level (i.e., across all policy fields), they indeed find more business groups active at the EU level than at the national level. Yet, once specific policy fields are compared, there is no difference in business mobilization between the EU and the national level. For instance, the distribution of business groups active in the EU environmental field is similar to the proportion of business groups active on environmental issues in France, Germany, and the Netherlands. Observing more business groups active in the EU is likely caused by the type of issues discussed at the EU level, rather than the inability of NGOs to mobilize at this level (i.e., biased mobilization).

De Bruycker et al. (2019) present a conceptual and empirical nuanced view on business interest mobilization bias in the EU. The authors argue that mobilization in the EU is not a classical Olsonian process in which new organizations are formed out of nothing or a pluralist process of interest disturbance that triggers latent groups into action. The formation of political organizations tends to favour business groups. Yet, within the EU and its member states, citizen and business groups already exist and policy mobilization in the EU is a matter of internal issue ‘prioritisation’, rather than related to establishing new ‘organizations’, and therefore the theories mentioned, most notably *The Logic of Collective Action*, does not apply. This may favour non-business interest groups. That is, the ideological roots of citizen cause groups gives relevant guidance on internal prioritization, whereas business associations frequently require a relatively lengthy process of internal consensus-formation in response to policy challenges. In other words, it is much easier for Greenpeace to become politically active as they do not actively consult members what should be done compared to *BusinessEurope*. The latter organization will consult its members at length and needs to find a compromise. Often this leads to much delay and potentially an unfavourable starting position compared to NGOs.

Another relative strength of non-business cause groups relates to the funding schemes of the EU (Greenwood, 2007; Sanchez-Salgado, 2014). The EU has relatively elaborate funding schemes for interest groups. Well-known funds falling in this category are the Connecting Europe Facility, which receives €2.5 billion for transport, energy and digital services, and Life+, which receives €3.4 billion for environmental policy. These grants are critical for interest organizations in Europe as they support the organizations’ long-term survival and advocacy efforts. While this system benefits certain groups over others, recent research highlights that the funding system does distribute resources among business groups and citizen groups in a proportional manner (Crepaz and Hanegraaff, 2020). At the same time, this likely allows citizen groups to stay active in Brussels, even without a strong membership base. As a result, the overall distribution of interest groups active in the EU does surprisingly not seem to be (as) biased to business groups as is often thought.

As the EU engages in very regular contacts with interest groups and distributes large amounts of money to interest groups, the EC has often been criticized by citizens and (populist) political parties. To counter this critic the EU has created a transparency register (e.g., Balme and Chabanet, 2008, 232; Bunea, 2018; Greenwood and Dreger, 2013). Until 2014 the register was voluntary leading especially business groups to not register. Since 2014 we have

seen a gradual increase of mandatory elements added to the register. First registration was needed to apply for funding and when interest groups engaged in contacts with senior members of the EC and the EP. Recently the Commission further increased the mandatory aspects of the lobby register, including more funding to manage the register. With these new additions the EU has one of the most transparent and elaborate lobby registers in the world, but several other regulations, especially related to lobbying the European Council, are less strict than in other parts of the world (Crepaz et al., 2018)

To summarize, interest groups become active in Brussels in a way largely similar to their mobilization in national settings. There are many more business groups active in Brussels than other types of interest groups, but it seems to reflect the nature of the EU policymaking and such mobilization patterns are also routinely found in the national capitals of member states.

Strategies: Coping with Varying Political Opportunities

Interest groups tailor their approach to fit the institutional and policy context in the EU. This is in line with the ‘contextual’ conceptual approach to lobbying (Klüver et al., 2015), which emphasizes the ‘demands’ on the part of policymakers for interest group information, support and engagement. At the same time, important strategic differences arise from the types of interests mobilized and the plausibly related organizational preferences for inside or outside lobbying (Dür and Matteo, 2016), thus emphasizing the ‘supply’ of influence activities on the part of interest groups. Interest group activities are routinely conceived of as the result of an exchange relationship between groups and policy makers (e.g., Bouwen, 2004; Berkhout, 2013; Klüver, 2013). The EU lobby community has already existed for a couple of decades and it is relatively open for new groups to enter. One may therefore assume that competitive pressures work effectively and that supply and demand are, on aggregate, in equilibrium. Strategic behaviour is therefore needed to avoid areas of over-supply of lobby activity and to jump into action when issue-specific demands arise in the policy process.

To start on the side of the ‘supplying’ groups, a common distinction is made between inside and outside lobbying. Inside lobbying refers to the direct contacts of interest groups with policymakers; outside lobbying techniques are indirect ways to influence the political process such as through the media or protest activities. Inside lobbying, for instance, refers to a situation where Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg attends the public session of the EP but also ‘inside’ talks to MEPs privately. An example of outside lobbying is the large media campaign initiated by Oxfam to oppose the TTIP agreement between the US and the EU. Studies recurrently find that citizen groups rely more on outside lobbying tactics, while business groups rely more on inside tactics (Dür and Mateo, 2016). The reasons are that business groups’ organizational repertoire more closely aligns with bureaucracies. The appeals of citizen groups are also more easily connected to public opinion and that citizen groups are in need of visibility due to a more competitive struggle broad-based, open citizen membership than the closed and focussed membership of business groups. Still, it must be noted that the distinction between the use of outside and inside lobbying by business and citizen groups is often not as strong as one may theoretically expect. Many citizen groups in the EU are highly professionalized and their staff highly capable of forging direct ties with key policymakers. Likewise, many business groups make use of the media to influence EU policymaking. It is therefore better to think about the use of inside and outside lobbying as a scale, where business groups slightly favour inside lobbying more than NGOs do.

Secondly, when they are lobbying inside the political system, interest groups tailor their activities on the basis of demands on the part of their lobby targets. Groups decide about their venue shopping strategies, i.e., what political venues to target (e.g., Princen and Kerremans, 2008). Venue shopping in the EU requires groups to find answers to questions such as: will we or our allies target the EP or the European Commission (EC)? Who goes to national governments, and which one among the 27 should be targeted? Or are all these venues targeted together? This also pertains to characteristics of the policy process in terms of policy stage and policy area: some concerns will find a more favourable hearing early on in the policy process whereas others are better addressed at the implementation stage. Similarly, policy-specific sub-communities also substantially vary in the nature of the demand for interest representation (e.g., Broscheid and Coen, 2007). For instance, an environmental NGO concerned about air traffic could present its views in relevant fora on environmental policy but may also, or alternatively, bring in its arguments in policy consultations on state support for airport infrastructure. These are all critical questions as they provide an answer to the question whether political venues are dominated by the same type of organizations, or whether there is strong variation in interest group activity across political venues. For instance, one of such answers is that business is most active at the EC, while NGOs are more active at the EP or in the media. Overall, the literature has not found much evidence for a systematic tendency of certain types of groups to target and access particular institutional venues only; rather similar type of organizations (business and more resourceful groups) are the most active groups across all types of venues, including the EC, the EP and the media (Hanegraaff and Berkhout, 2018). Moreover, interest groups which are domestic ‘winners’, that is, having better access to the national level, are also more likely to gain access at the EU level (Beyers, 2002). As such, lobbying multiple venues is common for interest groups in the EU, but at each political venue, most seats at the table are likely to be already taken by other groups with a well-tailored supply that matches particular institutional demands.

To summarize, EU lobbying takes place in a competitive context. This means that groups need to forge alliances and focus on multiple venues at once. Even with a very elaborate strategic plan, no battle will be easy as foes will likely have a similarly elaborate strategic focus. This makes it tough to have an impact on policymaking in the EU. Yet, some do a better job than others.

Influence: Business as Usual?

Business interest representatives were instrumental to the development of EU. It has been widely documented that large corporations supported political leaders in the 1970s and 1980s in the design of the single market and its legal framework (Eising 2008; Green-Cowles, 1995). For some time, this view on business influence in the EU remained the dominant perspective on the role of interest groups in the EU. Yet, despite this early work on the importance of the business lobby in the formation of the EU, there is not much empirical effort to explicitly map the policy influence of business groups between the 1990s and early 2000s. Organizational mobilization, strategies and access were commonly used as meaningful proxy for interest group influence (e.g., Coen, 1998; Mazey and Richardson, 1993; 1998). More recent studies also note business actors are likely to be relatively influential because they tend to gain more access to policymakers in the EU. For instance, Rasmussen and Carroll (2014) and Coen et al. (2021) find that, at more competitive access points, business groups are the most active and

outnumber citizen groups at a higher rate than at other access points. For instance, on issues such as the European Green Deal or TTIP, the business dominance is the most apparent. Moreover, Berkhout et al. (2018) find that business groups are better represented at the EU institutions once decision-making procedures enters the final stage before a decision is being made.

The number of organizations active at political venues, however, does not necessarily mean they are also more influential. Over the past decade, a more conceptually focussed approach to the study of policy influence has therefore become dominant (Lowery, 2013). The ‘actual’ influence of interest groups in EU policymaking processes, in such decision-making-oriented approaches, is empirically and conceptually based on the extent to which policy preferences of interest groups are reflected in the policy outcomes on particular issues (Klüver, 2013; Dür et al., 2015). Within this burgeoning literature, two main findings stand out. Firstly, in contrast to most access studies, these works find that business groups are not more influential than citizen groups in the EU (Klüver, 2013; Dür et al., 2015; De Bruycker and Beyers, 2019). Klüver (2013) highlights how influence through EU consultations is not decisively affected by the number of business groups or their input in these processes, but rather by the overall strength of the lobby community mobilized for a specific position, irrespective of the groups involved. This is a major insight as it counters the idea that business groups secretly steer the course of action in the EU in conjunction with EU policymakers. Secondly, this finding is confirmed by the INTEREURO project which is by far the largest study on interest group influence in the EU (Beyers et al., 2014). This collaborative project of scholars working in several European universities tracked the influence of interest groups across 70 random EU legislative proposals. The findings, surprisingly, highlight that citizen groups see their preferences more often attained (Dür et al., 2015) and are perceived by policy experts (De Bruycker and Beyers, 2019) as more influential than business groups. One of the reasons for this is that the EU has been for most of its history a distinct economic project with the aim to create a competitive environment for EU business organizations. This has led to a situation where for a long time business actors benefitted the most in the policies developed in the EU. Since then, we have seen that policies of the EC are mostly geared towards making the EU economy more inclusive, fair, and sustainable. Such issues are closer to the preferences of NGOs and labour unions (seemingly) leading them to have a stronger impact on EU policies than ever before.

Furthermore, as De Bruycker (2019) indicates, groups which have the support of public opinion are more likely to see their preferences attained in politics. This pattern especially applies when civil society organizations advocate through the media. In this case, policies tend to be more responsive to fluctuations in public support and citizens are more likely to change their opinion. The findings correspond to studies at the national level, which show that citizen group mobilization strengthens the responsiveness of policies to the public. The way citizen groups are crucial in ensuring ‘thermostatic responsiveness in EU public policy’ (De Bruycker, 2019; Rasmussen et al., 2014).

In short, despite gaining more access than NGOs, the literature on influence highlights that business groups are not more influential in EU lobbying. Rather, depending on the issue at hand, business sometimes wins, while on other issues NGOs see their preferences more frequently attained. Most importantly, we see that NGOs win on issues which receive much media and public attention, while business organizations win more often if issues are very complex and lack media and public attention. This for instance, explains, why NGOs have been so successful on issues related to the environment (e.g., Green Deal) but have been rather

unsuccessful on issues which hardly receive media attention, such as related to pesticides or other chemicals (e.g., REACH directive). Such influence mechanisms are similar to findings elsewhere. Lowery (2013, p. 3) notes that ‘a generation of research effort followed in which it was found that influence was ... quite specific to the issue at hand, highly contingent on the context in which a decision was made, and only loosely related to the bases of power that were the focus of [early] scholars’.

CONCLUSION

The Brussels-based interest group community co-evolved with the EU’s political and economic development (e.g., Kohler-Koch, 1994). In the early years, business actors clearly profited more from their involvement, which is reflected in legislation broadly beneficial to their needs and desires. Over the past 15 years, this has changed and the lobby community seems more in balance. This is reflected in mobilization, where many different types of interest groups are able to find their way to the various political institutions. It can also be observed in strategies, where different types of groups have professionalized and rely on similar types of strategies. We also see some balance in the final stage, where citizen groups are now found to be equally, or even more, influential than business groups in the EU policy process. Overall, this provides a – perhaps necessary – correction to a past which was likely dominated by the business community.

Looking ahead, some key questions remain open before we posit even stronger claims about the power of interest groups in the EU. First of all, most current studies on interest group influence focus on legislative politics, not on the agenda-setting stage. It could very well be that business actors are more influential in containing the agenda of the EC to their interests. In this view, the wins of citizen groups over the business community are still meaningful, but perhaps not the most vital issues for business too lose. Another issue relates to the times horizon taken. As Dür et al. (2019) argue, one of the main reasons we find little bias in actual lobbying at this point in time, may be that there is not much to win for business groups anymore. As articulated before, the EU business groups were very important for political and economic integration in the early days of the European community. This means that the issues currently discussed in the EU might mostly be corrections of a single market which has perhaps been a bit too responsive to business interests in the past. How such new insights will change our perspective on business lobbying in the EU remains to be seen.

FIVE KEY REFERENCES

- Coen, D., and Richardson, J. (eds). (2009). *Lobbying the European Union: Institutions, Actors, and Issues*. Oxford University Press.
- Dür, A., and Mateo, G. (eds) (2016). *Insiders Versus Outsiders: Interest Group Politics in Multilevel Europe*. Oxford University Press.
- Dür, A., Marshall, D., and Bernhagen, P. (2019). *The Political Influence of Business in the European Union*. University of Michigan Press.
- Greenwood, J. (2017). *Interest Representation in the European Union*. Macmillan International Higher Education.
- Klüver, H. (2013). *Lobbying in the European Union: Interest Groups, Lobbying Coalitions, and Policy Change*. Oxford University Press.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Balme, R., and Chabanet, D. (2008). *European Governance and Democracy: Power and Protest in the EU*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Berkhout, J. (2013). 'Why Interest Organizations Do What They Do: Assessing the Explanatory Potential of "exchange" Approaches.' *Interest Groups & Advocacy*, 2(2), 227–250.
- Berkhout, J., Hanegraaff, M., and Braun, C. (2017). 'Is the EU Different? Comparing the Diversity of National and EU-level Systems of Interest Organisations.' *West European Politics*, 40(5), 1109–1131.
- Berkhout, J., J. Beyers, C. Braun, M. C. Hanegraaff and D. Lowery (2018). 'Making Inference across Mobilization and Influence Research: Comparing Top-Down and Bottom-Up Mapping of Interest Systems.' *Political Studies*, 66(1), 43–62.
- Berkhout, J., and D. Lowery, (2011). 'Short-term Volatility in the EU Interest Community.' *Journal of European Public Policy*, 18(1), 1–16.
- Berkhout, J. (2015). 'Change and Continuity in the Composition of the Lobby Community in the European Union: Lobby Explosion and Lobby Tourism?' In P. A. Shotton and P. G. Nixon (eds), *Lobbying the European Union: Changing Minds, Changing Times* (pp. 17–32). Ashgate.
- Beyers, J. (2002). 'Gaining and Seeking Access: The European Adaptation of Domestic Interest Associations.' *European Journal of Political Research*, 41(5), 585–612.
- Beyers, Jan, Laura Chaqués Bonafont, Andreas Dür, Rainer Eising, Danica Fink-Hafner, David Lowery, Christine Mahoney, William Maloney, and Daniel Naurin (2014). 'The INTEREURO project: Logic and structure.' *Interest Groups & Advocacy* 3(2) 126–140.
- Beyers, J., and De Bruycker, I. (2018). 'Lobbying Makes (Strange) Bedfellows: Explaining the Formation and Composition of Lobbying Coalitions in EU Legislative Politics.' *Political Studies*, 66(4), 959–984.
- Bouwen, P. (2004). 'Exchanging Access Goods for Access: A Comparative Study of Business Lobbying in the European Union Institutions.' *European Journal of Political Research*, 43(3), 337–369.
- Bouwen, P. (2009). 'The European Commission' in Coen, D., and J. Richardson (eds) (2009). *Lobbying the European Union: Institutions, Actors, and Issues*. Oxford University Press.
- Broscheid, A. and Coen, D. (2007). 'Lobbying Activity and Fora Creation in the EU: Empirically Exploring the Nature of the Policy Good.' *Journal of European Public Policy*, 14(3), 346–365.
- Bunea, A. (2018). 'Legitimacy Through Targeted Transparency? Regulatory Effectiveness and Sustainability of Lobbying Regulation in the European Union.' *European Journal of Political Research*, 57(2), 378–403.
- Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO) (2022) <https://corporateeurope.org>, accessed 19 May 2011.
- Coen, D., Katsaitis, A. and Vannoni, M. (2021). *Business Lobbying in the European Union*. Oxford University Press.
- Coen, D. (1998). 'The European Business Interest and the Nation State: Large-firm Lobbying in the European Union and Member States.' *Journal of Public Policy*, 18(1), 75–100.
- Cowles, M. G. (1995). 'Setting the Agenda for a New Europe: the ERT and EC 1992.' *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 33(4), 501–526.
- Crepaz, M., and Hanegraaff, M. (2020). 'The Funding of Interest Groups in the EU: Are the Rich Getting Richer?' *Journal of European Public Policy*, 27(1), 102–121.
- Crepaz, M., Chari, R., Hogan, J. and Murphy, G. (2018). 'International Dynamics in Lobby regulation' in Dialer, D. and Richter, M. (eds) (2018). *Lobbying in the European Union: Strategies, Dynamics and Trends*. Springer. 49–62.
- Dahl, R. A. (1961). *Who Governs?: Democracy and Power in an American City*. Yale University Press.
- De Bruycker, I. (2019). 'Democratically Deficient, Yet Responsive? How Politicization Facilitates Responsiveness in the European Union.' *Journal of European Public Policy*, 1–19.
- De Bruycker, I. and Beyers, J. (2019). 'Lobbying Strategies and Success: Inside and Outside Lobbying in European Union Legislative Politics.' *European Political Science Review*, 11(1), 57–74.
- De Bruycker, I., Berkhout, J. and Hanegraaff, M. (2019). 'The Paradox of Collective Action: Linking Interest Aggregation and Interest Articulation in EU Legislative Lobbying.' *Governance*, 32(2), 295–312.
- Dür, A., Bernhagen, P. and Marshall, D. (2015). Interest Group Success in the European Union: When (and Why) Does Business Lose?. *Comparative Political Studies*, 48(8), 951–983.

- Dür, A. and Mateo, G. (2016). *Insiders Versus Outsiders: Interest Group Politics in Multilevel Europe*. Oxford University Press.
- Dür, A., Marshall, D. and Bernhagen, P. (2019). *The Political Influence of Business in the European Union*. University of Michigan Press.
- Eising, R. (2007). 'The Access of Business Interests to EU Institutions: Towards Elite Pluralism?' *Journal of European Public Policy*, 14(3), 384–403.
- Eising, R. (2008). 'Interest Groups in EU Policy-making.' *Living Reviews in European Governance* 3(4).
- Financial Times (FT) / Espinoza, Javier, (January 11, 2022) Google in last-ditch lobbying attempt to influence incoming EU tech rules.
- Greenwood, J. (2007). 'Organized Civil Society and Democratic Legitimacy in the European Union.' *British journal of political science*, 37(2), 333–357.
- Greenwood, J. and Dreger, J. (2013). 'The Transparency Register: A European Vanguard of Strong Lobby Regulation?' *Interest Groups & Advocacy*, 2(2), 139–162.
- Hanegraaff, M.C. (2020). 'Interest Groups in the European Union: Mobilization, Strategies, and Influence.' In: Harris, P, A. Bitonti, C. Fleisher, and A. Binderkrantz (eds) *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Interest Groups, Lobbying and Public Affairs*. Palgrave MacMillan.
- Hanegraaff, M. C. and J. Berkhout (2018). 'More Business as Usual? Explaining Business Bias Across Issues and Institutions in the European Union.' *Journal of European Public Policy*. 26(6), 843–862.
- Kohler-Koch, B. (1994). 'Changing Patterns of Interest Intermediation in the European Union.' *Government and Opposition*, 29(2), 166–180.
- Klüver, H. (2013). *Lobbying in the European Union: Interest Groups, Lobbying Coalitions, and Policy Change*. Oxford University Press.
- Klüver, H., Braun, C., & Beyers, J. (2015). Legislative lobbying in context: towards a conceptual framework of interest group lobbying in the European Union. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 22(4), 447–461.
- Lowery, D. (2013). 'Lobbying Influence: Meaning, Measurement and Missing.' *Interest Groups & Advocacy*, 2(1), 1–26.
- Lowery, D., Poppelaars, C., and Berkhout, J. (2008). 'The European Union Interest System in Comparative Perspective: A Bridge Too Far?.' *West European Politics*, 31(6), 1231–1252.
- Lowery, D., Baumgartner, F. R., Berkhout, J., Berry, J. M., Halpin, D., Hojnacki, M. and Schlozman, K. L. (2015). 'Images of an Unbiased Interest System.' *Journal of European Public Policy*, 22(8), 1212–1231.
- Mazey, S. and Richardson, J. (eds) (1993). *Lobbying in the European Community*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mazey, S. and Richardson, J. (eds.) (1998). *Interest Intermediation in the EU: Filling The Hollow Core?*. Routledge.
- Olson, M. (1965). *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*. Harvard University Press.
- Princen, S. and Kerremans, B. (2008). 'Opportunity Structures in the EU Multi-level System.' *West European Politics*, 31(6), 1129–1146.
- Rasmussen, A. and Carroll, B. J. (2014). 'Determinants of Upper-class Dominance in the Heavenly Chorus: Lessons from European Union Online Consultations.' *British Journal of Political Science*, 44(2), 445–459.
- Rasmussen, A., Carroll, B. J. and Lowery, D. (2014). 'Representatives of the Public? Public Opinion and Interest Group Activity.' *European Journal of Political Research*, 53(2), 250–268.
- Richardson, J. and Coen D. (2009) 'Conclusion: Institutionalizing and Managing Intermediation in the EU' in Coen, D. and Richardson, J. (eds) (2009). *Lobbying the European Union: Institutions, Actors, and Issues*. pp. 337–348, Oxford University Press. Sanchez Sanchez Salgado, R. (2014). 'Rebalancing EU Interest Representation? Associative Democracy and EU Funding of Civil Society Organizations.' *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 52(2), 337–353.
- Treib, O., and Falkner, G. (2009). 'Bargaining and Lobbying in EU Social Policy.' In: Coen, D. and Richardson, J. *Lobbying the European Union: Institutions, Actors, and Issues*, Oxford University Press 256–276.
- Woll, C. (2006). 'Lobbying in the European Union: From Sui Generis to a Comparative Perspective.' *Journal of European Public Policy*, 13(3), 456–469.