

# **Measuring European relations of lobby power (since the German word play does not translate)**

**An analysis of available statistical data on the development and on the unequal status  
of the representation of interests in Brussels (organisations, personnel, finance)**

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Müller and Katja Walter coded the dataset (Wonka et al. 2007), counted the staff at trade unions and professional associations and produced all figures. Using Data Mining Software, Matthias Schlögl converted the Transparency Register into an Excel File, thereby enabling a supplementary analysis of the Wonka et al (2007) dataset. We would like to take the opportunity of thanking all colleagues, who have spent many hours of hard work and without whom, based on the data situation alone, we would have not been able to achieve a preliminary assessment of the balances of power in Europe, as in particular the European Transparency Register is still causing many more difficulties than it is creating transparency.



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# 1. Introduction: Superiority of the business lobby or “normal” pluralism in Brussels?

The image of an immense superiority of business interests over trade unions and other stakeholders in Brussels is legendary. This is described and confirmed by a large number of older or more recent publications, such as “Die EGmbH der Bosse & Banker” (Klaß 1989), “Das Europa der Corporations” (Sand 1990) or simply “Europe Inc.” (Balanyá et al. 2000). Critical voices complain about the one-sided advice given to policymakers, which would sometimes foster disastrous developments, for example in view of the lack of regulation of the financial markets. In contrast, other researchers emphasise the positive contribution made by organised interests and lobbyists in the political debate in general and with regard to policy formation in Brussels in particular (van Schendelen 2005). Individuals working for business associations or corporations, consultancy firms or think tanks are first and foremost introduced as proficient experts, whose competencies are indispensable in respect of highly complex legislative procedures. The prevalence of particular interests would not be very probable. The architecture of European institutions would counteract any one-sided monopolising by strong interests, for example (Schmedes 2010). These widely divergent positions either emphasise the unequal distribution of power among lobby groups and imbalances, or hierarchies with regard to policy advice including the restriction of participation and the resulting one-sidedness of the results, or pluralism and complexity of opinion forming as well as the legitimacy of procedures and the results they generate. The contrasting perspectives are obviously difficult to reconcile.

According to the pluralism theory, the large rise in the number of interest groups in Brussels, which have been lobbying the European Commission, the European Council and increasingly the European Parliament since the end of the 1980s following the adoption of the Single European Act (1987: Completion of the Single Market), would have to be rated as rather favourable. Rudolf Speth (2010), who does not regard this development as just being positive, attributes the growth of public relation activities in Brussels in particular to the increasing differentiation of society, which also affects business associations. Hence, the increasing number of economic interest groups may be interpreted as a fragmentation, associated with a potential weakening as a result of a lack of integration and consolidation capacity. In contrast, case studies (e.g. on the debate on the European Regulation concerning REACH, the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals, compare Riss 2010) point out that the cacophony of business interests has occasionally been coordinated quite well. Many different forms of representing economic interests (e.g. of a company within the scope of its representation, its national industry association, its European association etc.) must also be recognised as a strong point, because they (are able to) offer opportunities of wielding multiple influence via various channels and on different target officials. Apart from that, the representation of certain economic interests in Europe is strengthened in spite of increasing differentiation of the lobbying landscape, if specific divisions occur alongside cross-border alignments of interests. If divisions between smaller and medium-sized companies and big business at the national level is accompanied by a consolidation of interests of large companies from different countries at European level, one can surely not speak of proliferation and differentiation only. On the contrary, in particular the supranational concentration of lobby power has to be made the focus of the study to understand the transformation of the association landscape and the balances of power. In fact, there is a whole range of distinctive developments since the 1990s. In Brussels,

traditional European umbrella organisations of national associations have been joined by European associations of major corporations, new associations with mixed (private and public or cross-industry) membership, representations of individual (major) corporations, service providers for lobbying (specialised consultancy firms, law firms), longer-term and ad-hoc alliances as well as think tanks and NGOs, which create an increasingly confusing melange (compare Greenwood 2007, Schmedes 2010 talks of a “mosaic”).

Meanwhile, based on this background, the differentiated academic research in respect of lobby groups in Europe has established that the “...established organisation landscape of employers’ and professional associations...in comparison to all other social organisational areas (trade unions, environmental and consumer associations etc.) is characterised by the fact that it is by far the strongest in terms of numbers, the most differentiated with regard to representational structures and the most complex concerning the internal structure” (Platzer 2010, 420, our translation). Platzer emphasises a plenitude of powers of business associations in Brussels, although this cannot be established on the basis of the study at the supranational level alone. The author states that the argument often represented in literature concerning a “...dominance of vested interests in (economic) policy decision-making processes ... would [probably] be accurate; however, only if one included the ... national association level and above all the independent EU policy lobbying by transnational corporations.” (Platzer 2010, 435, our translation).

The large and still growing complexity in the EU and the very different assessments and controversies in respect of scope and influence of the Euro lobbies (compare Berkhout/Lowery 2010, 4) confront science and practice with great challenges. A more detailed breakdown of the landscape of lobby groups in Europe can make an important contribution to clarify uncertainties and to deepen the discussion. For many citizens, Europe is still far away and it is not easy to get a fair picture of the procedures in Brussels and between Brussels and the national capitals. A better overview and impression of EU policy activities by interest groups and businesses on the one hand and trade unions or NGOs on the other can improve EU policy realism and make it easier for many actors to take steps towards more effective Europeanization of lobbying. After all, an in-depth analysis of private and civil society balances of powers with regard to EU policies provides the opportunity of promoting the discussion about “post-democratic” conditions at national level (Crouch 2004, Mair 2006) and also the status of *post-national* democracy in Europe. Not least the rejection of the European Constitution in referenda in France and the Netherlands requires a more thorough debate of the question whether the current options and forms of participation in Europe are adequate to securing the participation of all participants and parties concerned.<sup>2</sup> To achieve this, many bases for an objective discussion have yet to be developed by means of scientific studies and realistic approximations to EU policy lobby powers.

What does the landscape of lobby institutions and lobbyists in Brussels, which is more or less regarded as being problematic, look like? Is it possible to go into more detail concerning the distribution of organisations, persons and finance in view of interest representation in the

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<sup>2</sup> In reaction to the defeat in the referenda on the European Constitution, in particular the European Commission increasingly relied on the options of *participative democracy by increasing the offers for direct citizens’ participation* (e.g. citizens’ conferences, online consultations or citizens’ initiatives). But the analysis of the introduced proceedings indicates that the new instruments remain marginal and that traditional (established) lobby powers - also within the scope of new proceedings - are far more successful than unorganised citizens (Hüller 2010, Quittkat 2011). In particular due to the fact that at the same time measures to improve the transparency of lobby powers were not adequately implemented - the new (voluntary) Transparency Register is deficient in many respects -, there is still a large discrepancy between aspiration and reality of good European governance (compare Alter EU 2010).

European Union, and how can the relation of powers between different social interests and their associations be evaluated? These are the key questions of the expertise, which had been researched on behalf of the Vienna Chamber of Labour, in particular in August and September 2011, on the basis of existing datasets and a small number of discussions with experts.<sup>3</sup> Due to the short time and the limited capacities, this short study can only provide a substantiated approximation to the subject matter, as a satisfactory answer to the questions raised would require a longer study and extensive surveys. But we shall develop preliminary, hopefully comprehensible and plausible assessments on the basis of existing datasets on the one hand, and we will try to gain a better understanding of the steps required to provide more scientifically precise details on the other. Much will depend on the future development of the *European Transparency Register* to this end, which in its current state is still providing sub-standard information only.<sup>4</sup> We shall focus on the current state of the European Register, which we, because of its quality deficiencies, have only sparingly used for this study throughout the text. For the time being, one must basically agree with Berkhout and Lowery (2010, 2): “Indeed, no one will be able to definitively assess claims about temporal changes in the structure of the EU interest system until a true lobby registration system is adopted.” This statement on the changing landscape of lobbies in Brussels also applies to the options of the statistical analysis of lobby organisations, staff and funding currently available. But what can be said about lobby power relations in Brussels even if we have to respect the warning signs with regard to claims to scientific accuracy?

To start with, we will address the development of the Brussels lobby landscape in general (Chapter 2). In the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter, we analyse in more detail the organisation landscape in view of the share of the various societal groups; in chapter 4, we use the number of staff employed to deepen the analysis of the power relations between capital and labour. Germany will serve to provide a relevant benchmark at national level; we also specify the general situation on the basis of three policy fields (finance, transport and climate policy). We will further consider the development of post-democratic conditions at national level and the problems of post national democracy in Europe in chapter 5 to close with a summary of our findings (chapter 6).

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<sup>3</sup> We shall address the data situation in more detail later in the text. All expert discussions are listed in the Annex.

<sup>4</sup> Compare [http://europa.eu/transparency-register/index\\_de.htm](http://europa.eu/transparency-register/index_de.htm).

## 2. The development of the lobby scene in Brussels overall

Various research contributions have recently dealt with the data situation in respect of assessing European interests in more detail. In doing so, certain progress has been made with regard to historical development evolution and completeness. However, even the data material generated within the scope of these research projects is not without errors. Initially, we shall address a study, which dealt with the historical development of lobby groups more systematically.

Following a source presenting comparable datasets, the number of organisations registered in Brussels increased from 2,221 to 2,542 between 1996 and 2007 (Berkhout/Lowery 2010, 9). According to the datasets, the number of “professional associations” (plus 59%), “interest groups” (plus 188%), “national associations” (plus 53%), “international organisations” (plus 38%), “regions” (plus 78%) and “think tanks” (plus 746 %!) rose considerably, whilst the number of “law and lobby firms” (-10%), and of “corporate representations”, the public affairs offices of large corporations (-11%) showed slight losses.<sup>5</sup> Due to the fact that according to the sources (in particular Landmarks Directory, Philip Directory) the non-profit associations (e.g. in the area of education, healthcare, human rights) rose from 152 to 438 entries between 1996 and 2007, whilst the profit-oriented associations (professional and professional associations) during the same period increased from 525 to 835, the distribution of the associations seemed recently to be slightly more balanced. Most recently, the number of professional associations appears to have grown slower than that of other interest groups. Therefore, the numerical proportion between for profit and not for profit lobby groups changed from ca. 1:3 (1996) to ca. 1:2 (2007). In particular the rise of organisations of regional authorities, the increased presence of non-commercial national associations (e.g. sport, charities etc.) and of think tanks has significantly altered the lobbying landscape. However, the change in this composition does not immediately result in a change in the balances of power as many of the newcomers in Brussels represent relatively isolated interests and are not able to organise cross-subject and cross-level tasks, as it is for example possible within the scope of ETUC - not to mention the opportunities of organisations and organisational relationships at Business Europe.

The study (Berkhout/Lowery 2010), which has been consulted here, is first and foremost interested in an historical comparison over a certain period of time and has therefore chosen appropriate comparable data sets. In strong discrepancy to the total number of organisations considered here at the time of 2007 (n=2.542), the probably most carefully researched source (Wonka et al. 2007/08) estimates the total population at 3,700 organisations, which,

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<sup>5</sup> The decline of the number of corporate Public Affairs offices in Brussels is surprising, and probably wrong due to incomplete records. Greenwood (2007), points out that the number of business representations had reached a certain tableau. He has identified 250 representations of corporations in Brussels. Based on Wonka et al. (2007/08), however, we know that in 2007/08 almost 500 businesses were represented in Brussels. A number of not identifiable organisations in this dataset are probably businesses as well. Thanks to investigative research conducted by Alter EU we also know that many consultancy firms did not register in the European Lobby registry or register under another category ([www.foeeurope.org/publications/2010/eu-lobby-firms-registration-2010-03-22.pdf](http://www.foeeurope.org/publications/2010/eu-lobby-firms-registration-2010-03-22.pdf), access 12.9.2011). Under-reporting aside, it is important to point out that the number of business representations as well as the number of other organisations in Brussels strongly fluctuates; hence additions and deletions have to be recorded on a regular basis in order to obtain an accurate picture.



compared to Berkhout/Lowery (2010), amounts to almost 1,200 organisations more. The research group interested in the overall volume at 2007/08 has compared the entries of the Commission's database CONECCS (2007: 749 entries) with the accreditation database of the European Parliament (2008: 1,534 entries) and the Landmarks Directory (European Public Affairs Directory July 2007: 2,522). As 1,105 double entries had to be deleted, 3,700 organisations of 4,805 remained, of which some others had to be deleted as the authors had missed further duplicates due to the listing of organizations in different languages.<sup>6</sup> However, the probably most thoroughly researched database so far on the overall population of lobby groups in Europe is not complete.

Due to the fact that in the meantime the new Transparency Register of the European Commission has more than 4,100 entries (September 2011), it would require another stage of research - which, unfortunately could not be carried out within the scope of the present study - <sup>7</sup>, to compare the dataset of 2007/08 (n=3.700) used mainly in this study with the dataset of the Transparency Register. For example, the number of the ca. 50 trade unions at Wonka et al. (2010) increases to ca. 100 in the Transparency Register (September 2011). The comparison of the two best sources will probably result in a total number of European lobby groups, which is above the larger number in the Transparency Register (n=4.100). For example, a comparison of the Transparency Register entries in the category Think Tanks (n=97) with the entries at Landmarks 2009 (n=118), which probably have recorded the largest part of the 146 organisations in the combined dataset of 2007/08 (there category Think Tanks and Training), only result in two matches. In addition, a study by Alter EU (March 2010) showed that 117 consultancy firms, which were definitely active in Brussels, had (so far) not made an entry in the Transparency Register.<sup>8</sup> The Transparency Register in turn had 115 registered organisations in this category, i.e. 105 less than in the dataset of 2007/08 (n=220).

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<sup>6</sup> We used and coded the dataset Wonka et al (2007/08) for the present study, which is freely available on the internet. Any errors found, are documented in Annex III.

<sup>7</sup> Data mining software in form of an Excel dataset was used to make the Transparency Register dataset available, which is selectively referred to in the present study. Unfortunately, we were not able to completely base the research within the scope of the present study on this extensive dataset, as a required comprehensive comparison of data would have exceeded the period of time available. The data of the Transparency Register as such in its present form can therefore not be easily used, unfortunately. In the near future, an instrument will be developed within the scope of the work of the Alter EU network of lobby-critical NGOs, which will hopefully enable an easier and more systematic analysis of the data in the Transparency (based on the U.S. Organisation Open Secrets, compare <http://www.opensecrets.org/>).

<sup>8</sup> Compare [www.foeeurope.org/publications/2010/eu-lobby-firms-registration-2010-03-22.pdf](http://www.foeeurope.org/publications/2010/eu-lobby-firms-registration-2010-03-22.pdf) (access 12.9.2011).

As a **first interim result**, we can conclude on the basis of the present datasets and the described researches and considerations: the total number of organisations in Brussels, which are at least dealing with lobbying tasks, is probably higher than the 4,100 appearing in the Transparency Register (as at September 2011); a more realistic number is probably **between 4,500 and 5,000 organisations**. In particular a comparison of the dataset of 2007/08 (n=3.600) with the Transparency Register can come closer to the present overall population, which, however, has to be supplemented by further surveys and researches, to obtain a reliable basis for estimating the actual overall population of European lobby groups.

These considerations in respect of the overall population are not without significance. Estimates still assume that about **15,000 lobbyists** are working in Brussels, whereby so far - due to the difficult data situation - no scientifically reliable study on the number and distribution of the organisations, their personnel and their funding is possible. The current numbers reflect this speculation.<sup>9</sup> Back in 1992 already, the EU Commission estimated the number of lobbyists in Brussels to be 10,000, based on then ca. 3,000 (European and national) lobby groups.<sup>10</sup> In 2003, a study for the European Parliament found that this original estimate of the Commission had been too high (EP 2003); however, the frequently quoted number of 15,000 lobbyists in Brussels is nevertheless conservative as lobby activities developed in very dynamic ways since the early 1990s in Brussels inter alia due to the greater involvement of the European Parliament in legislative procedures. The 2009 Landmark Register alone reported 1,500 European professional associations selectively listing 6,000 representatives (leading positions only) (personal communication Sylvain Laurent, *Projet Pressure*<sup>11</sup>). Even if, in accordance with our estimate of the overall population the ca. 3,000 further organisations in Brussels would be represented by only 2 persons on average, more than 15,000 persons in Brussels would be active in this field, as the 6,000 persons listed by Landmarks are not identical with the number employed by these organisations in Brussels (6000 plus X persons plus 3000 x 2 persons = 12.000 plus X persons). Apart from that, one has to consider with regard to the overall estimate of lobbyists in Brussels that in the meantime a considerable part of European lobby work is carried out by people, who come to Brussels for this purpose (or to their own national capitals!). The system of multi-level governance in the EU has in many places led to a highly integrated lobbying structure at both European and national level.

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<sup>9</sup> Various contributions in a lobby-critical compendium (Alter EU 2010) name three different figures: 15,000 lobbyists (page 23), 10,000 (page 49), 30,000 (page 94).

<sup>10</sup> Commission of the European Communities, *An Open and Structured Dialogue Between the Commission and Special Interest Groups*; SEC(92)2272 fin.

<sup>11</sup> Within the scope of the Strasbourg-based research association "Projet Pressures", an extensive collection of historical data on lobby groups (based on the Landmarks register) is currently carried out, which for the first time will provide a better insight in the evolution of the European lobby group landscape, because it is also possible to systematically analyse the dissolution, fusion and establishment of associations. This data can be expected with anticipation (compare in respect of the research connection: <http://projetpressure.blogspot.com/>).

As a **second interim result**, we can conclude on the basis of reflections based on existing data, that the total number of persons in Brussels, who are at least dealing with lobbying tasks, is certainly higher than the 15,000 most frequently quoted. In particular taking into account the lobby activities in Brussels carried out by non-residents (part-time lobbyists or lobby migrants), the number of lobbyists can be estimated at 15,000 to 20,000.

Although it is impossible to present reliable details on the financial resources of the Brussels representation of interests on the basis of the data available,<sup>12</sup> one can nevertheless engage in an informed speculation in order to get a better idea of the money spent in Brussels for lobby purposes. With regard to lobby expenditure, the entries in the Transparency Register so far have been completely inadequate; frequently even misleading. Many associations do not provide any details (including trade unions); many state a very low amount (category less than EUR 50,000), even though several persons are working in Brussels offices. In contrast, the German employers' associations BDI and BDA specify their expenditure in the European Transparency Register as being EUR 900,000 and EUR 950,000 p.a. respectively (in the case of BDA this includes an office with three experts, BDI and BDA share an office in Brussels), which is probably realistic, as in accordance with Directives<sup>13</sup> adopted by the Commission in June, the total of salaries as well as all other costs in connection with the representation of interests should be included (e.g. budgets for events, studies, contracts etc.). Compared to this, the umbrella organisation for European employers', Business Europe, with a total budget of ca. EUR 8 million, has 34 experts in Brussels, and so far specifies a lobby budget of EUR 600,000 p.a. (as at September 2011).

If we estimate the costs per expert in Brussels as being ca. EUR 100,000 p.a. (probably too high for many NGOs and possibly too low for many businesses/professional associations), we achieve, on the basis of the overall estimated 15,000 to 20,000 persons, an overall budget for personnel costs of EUR 1.5 billion to EUR 2 billion p.a.. In addition, one can estimate at least EUR 500 million to 1 EUR billion for other expenditure (events, contracts with consultancy firms etc.). However, only a mandatory Transparency Register with clear and uniform requirements regarding the amount to be registered would provide a reliable source. Due to the analysis of the lobby register existing in the United States we are reliably informed that the registered expenditure there amounted to US\$ 3.51 billion (2010, ca. 2.6 billion Euro at 1,4 Dollar per Euro).<sup>14</sup>

As a **third interim result** we can conclude on the basis of reflections and information derived from data available that approximately EUR 1.5 to 2 billion p.a. are spent for personnel in charge of lobby tasks at EU level. These costs may amount to up to EUR 3 billion p.a., provided the expenditure for events, contracts with consultancy firms etc. is taken into account.

<sup>12</sup> Compare the analysis of Alter EU on the subject of "Under Reporting" (June 2011): [www.alter-eu.org/sites/default/files/documents/under\\_reporting\\_final.pdf](http://www.alter-eu.org/sites/default/files/documents/under_reporting_final.pdf) (online, access 14.9.2011).

<sup>13</sup> Available online: [http://europa.eu/transparency-register/pdf/guideline\\_de.pdf](http://europa.eu/transparency-register/pdf/guideline_de.pdf) (access 13.9.2011)

<sup>14</sup> Here based on the statements made, almost 13,000 lobbyists were counted, about 1,200 fewer than two years before, when a slightly lower amount was registered. The entries in the lobby register of the USA show that the use of personnel and the amounts spent (may) sometimes strongly fluctuate (compare details at [www.opensecrets.org/lobby/index.php](http://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/index.php)).

## **Conclusion:**

Overall, it can initially be concluded in view of the general development of the lobby landscape in Brussels that probably 4,500 to 5,000 organisations employing 15,000 to 20,000 staff p.a. spend up to EUR 3 billion on lobby activities in Brussels (or partly in the capitals). We have no idea how the authors of the billboard at Brussels South Station (compare the picture on the front page) arrived at the number of 25,000 lobbyists in Brussels, 6,000 of whom accredited. Almost 3,000 lobbyists are personally registered with the institutions. However, in addition, a large number of representatives of associations and businesses have passes for accessing Brussels institutions because they are active in European committees. Also due to the fact that up to 15,000 lobbyists per year are registered in the far more homogeneous economic area USA (<http://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/index.php>), the current figure of 15,000 to 20,000 lobbyists in Brussels is probably not exaggerated.

## **3. Differentiations on the basis of organisation data**

If the requirement is to provide a detailed presentation of the lobby landscape, we currently have to rely on - as explained above - the “cleanest” comprehensive dataset, which contains 3,600 organisations (Wonka et al 2007/08). We had to reduce this total number of entries by 27 double entries (e.g. same group named in different languages) and by 179 entries, which could not be specified in terms of the class of organization (business, labour, etc.) in spite of a (short) research. What remains is a total figure of 3,494 considered organisations, when we use the 2007/08 database as a source.<sup>15</sup>

Based on this data, it is for example possible to show (compare Table 1) that the fourth largest number of “European” lobby groups after the values for the large Member States Germany, UK and France is coming from the United States. Lobby groups from other states, that are not a member of the EU, are more active in Brussels than lobby groups from Member States (e.g. Switzerland comes before Austria). What is particularly obvious is the fact that lobby groups from the youngest accession countries of Central and Eastern Europe are not very well represented. The more populous Poland for example has far fewer groups than Spain. Thus we can expect further growth of the overall number of lobby organisations, if this gap will be closed in the future process of European integration.

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<sup>15</sup> We have adopted - without any further examination - any own analyses of the authors; reference to publication has been made (Wonka et al. 2010).

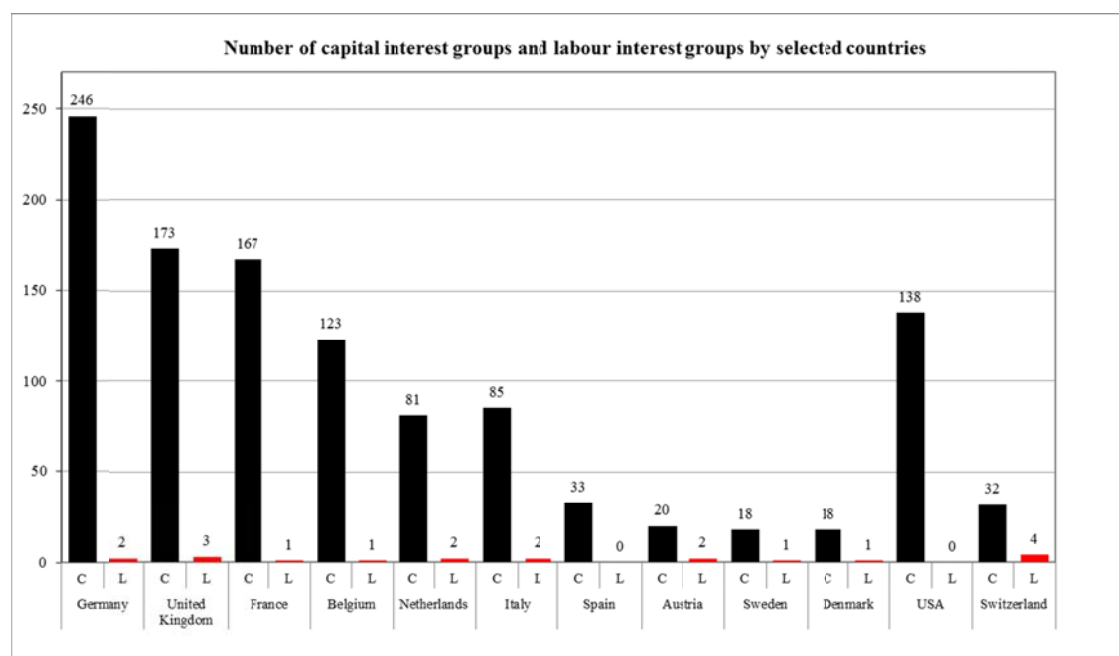
Table 1: Lobby groups according to countries of origin

Country	Frequency	%	Country	Frequency	%
<b>EU-15</b>			<b>New EU-27</b>		
Germany	380	17.2	Poland	30	1.4
Great Britain	294	13.3	Czechia	18	0.8
France	292	13.2	Slovakia	13	0.6
Belgium	171	7.8	Hungary	13	0.6
Netherlands	152	6.9	Rumania	7	0.3
Italy	139	6.3	Latvia	4	0.2
Spain	78	3.5	Estonia	4	0.2
Austria	59	2.7	Slovenia	3	0.1
Sweden	47	2.1	Lithuania	2	0.1
Denmark	44	2.0	Cyprus	2	0.1
Finland	19	0.9	Malta	2	0.1
Portugal	16	0.7	Bulgaria	2	0.1
Ireland	15	0.7	<b>Non-EU States</b>		
Luxembourg	12	0.5	USA	173	7.8
Greece	5	0.2	Switzerland	73	3.3

Source: Wonka et al. 2010, S.6

One can get a first impression of the relationship of economic interests and trade unions when these are depicted in accordance with countries of origin. The following Diagram 1 shows the relation of countries with a larger number of lobby groups.

Diagram 1: Economic and workers' interests according to country of origin (2007/08)



Source:

Wonka et al. 2007/08, own calculation.<sup>16</sup> (n = 1.153, number of cases depicted in the figure).

<sup>16</sup> The basis is Wonka et al. 2007/08 trade unions (n=47). Meanwhile, these may be supplemented by trade unions included in the transparency register (n=110), where for example 8 Spanish trade unions are registered. With regard to Germany, the value according to the transparency register

With regard to American lobby groups, it is noticeable that a comparatively particular large number of economic interests is not confronted with an independent lobby group of American Unions.<sup>17</sup> “About 95 per cent of American groups and organizations lobbying in the EU today are business interests” write Thomas and Boyer (2001) in an in-depth study, whereby differences between traditional U.S. interests and only recently established groups are emphasised. In any case, the strong presence of U.S. business lobbies shifts the distribution in Europe significantly towards economic forces. Due to the fact that this probably also applies to other non-European (or extra-EU) lobby groups, these findings should also be considered in respect of the composition of economic interests overall. Whilst non-European economic interests are playing a rather big role in Brussels’ lobbying activities, non-European employee interests are only marginally represented.

Note that this comparison refers to national organisations (businesses, associations), which have an office in Brussels. Whilst most trade unions depend on their European federations to wield influence in Brussels, businesses and associations provide far more funding for both European federations and their own activities in Brussels. Because many negotiation and decision-making processes in the meantime take place in Brussels initially at least, interests not represented there in the relevant parts of the policy cycle are either cut off completely or only able to co-decide legislation already defined to a great extent at the end of the pipe at the national level. That is why national parliaments – the German Bundestag in 2007 – opened European liaison offices in Brussels. Apart from the administration of the German legislature all the parliamentary groups represented in the Bundestag are represented to inform the domestic level early about upcoming legislative procedures of interest. Up to 30 people participate in this parliamentary early warning system, which helps the national parliamentarians obtaining greater independence from the national government in assessing supranational negotiation and decision making processes.<sup>18</sup> In respect of the subnational regions, which are also increasingly represented in Brussels, the European assistance programmes and cooperations (partly coordinated in the Council of European Municipalities and Regions) present a clear motivation to position themselves at supranational level.

Let us now shift our focus of attention more towards the sociological dimension of the EU lobbying landscape and to the relationship of business and labour in particular. Just like Weßels (2004) before, Platzer (2010) points out that the traditional focus of integration research on the vertical conflict axis of the multi-level system is less relevant for the analysis of societal actors in Brussels. Apart from the well-known left-right conflict scheme, in particular environmental interests at European level carry so much weight that Weßels (2004) establishes a three-dimension conflict scheme “Work, Capital, Environment”. This finding is also confirmed in an expert discussion by the perception of the employers’ representative, if in particular the focus is directed towards large resources and the public effectiveness of eco-political players (such as Greenpeace) (however, compare opposite assessments in Paragraph 4.3). If in more recent studies a distinction has been made between two significant major camps of EU policy - a growth coalition and a sustainability coalition - (Beyers/Kerremans 2004), the respective order of business, employer and environmental-policy interests in these major camps is not always clear. If in some places

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would rise to 4. However, it is very likely that the number of professional associations would also increase if the details contained in the Transparency Register would be supplemented. In the case of Austria, this allocation would have to be corrected by the Chamber of Labour, as Wonka et al 2007/08 have not recorded these as lobby organisation of employees.

<sup>17</sup> Traditionally, the U.S. trade unions regard the International Trade Union Confederation as an organisation, which represents their interests in the EU.

<sup>18</sup> [www.bundestag.de/bundestag/europa\\_internationales/eu/verbindungsbuero/index.html](http://www.bundestag.de/bundestag/europa_internationales/eu/verbindungsbuero/index.html), Access 10.9.2011

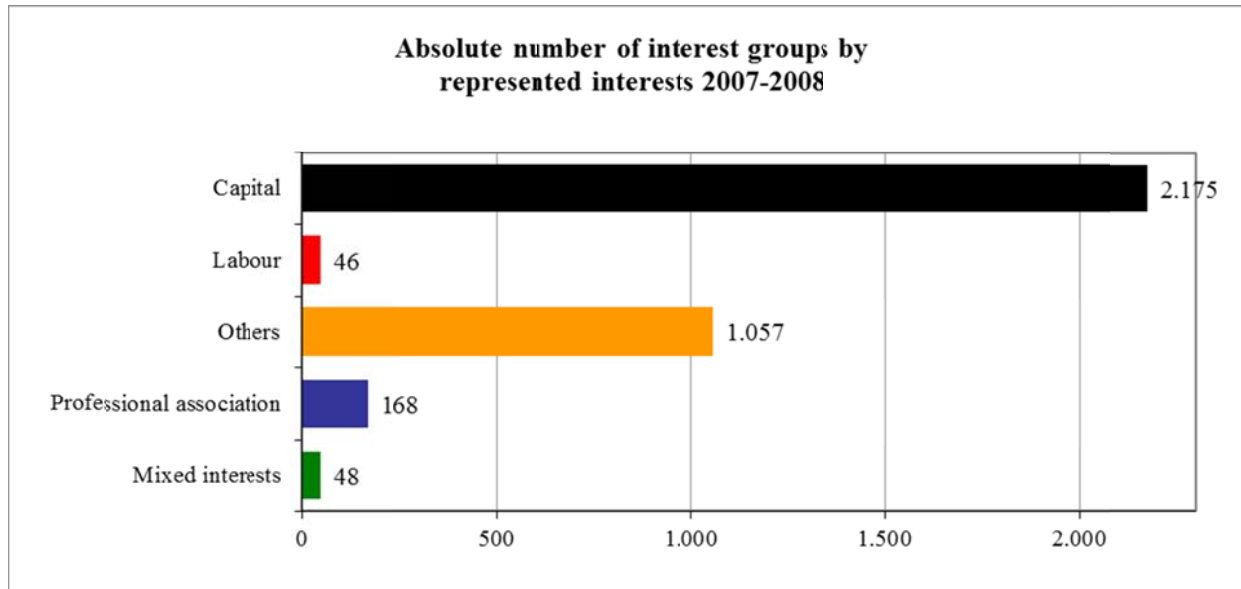
and in respect of some issues trade unions and environmental associations are confronted with economic interests, there are also business and trade union coalitions opposing environmental policy interests as well as business and environmental policy interests, which are able to position themselves opposite employee interests. Quite frequently, employers' associations claim wage-dependent interests citing jobs generally as economic interests compared to eco-politically motivated growth criteria, as much as economic and growth critical alliances formulate a combination of trade union and eco-political interests. Even though the formation and the interpretation of interests are subject to genuine political processes, the structural patterns and organisational relationships resulting from this can nevertheless be described at the general level.

As expected, the organisational figures send a clear signal in view of the balance of power of capital and labour. At 2,176 European lobby groups, we have coded 63 per cent of all organisations as business interests,<sup>19</sup> to which another 168 lobby groups of professional groups may be added, because the majority of their work is carried out as self-employed work in SMEs. Overall, 68 per cent of organisations would therefore have to be allocated to the camp of business interests. Compared to this, the share of 47 trade unions (or 100 according to the Transparency Register) counts for just one or two per cent of the European lobby groups. Apart from the trade union organisations, trade unions play a role in some lobby groups, which have been coded as multiple interest organisations as their membership combines different interests (e.g. business and employee). The following Diagrams 2 and 3 show the distribution in accordance with the analysed dataset of Wonka et al. (2007/08).

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<sup>19</sup> Compared to the types of groups by Wonka et al. (2010, 5) businesses, chambers of commerce, consulting firms, national employers' associations, and national chamber associations have been combined as economic interests. In addition, the large categories "Professional associations and Interest groups" (n=1.848) as well as "International Organisations" (n= 118) and "National trade and professional organizations" (n=252) have been recoded. Thereby a distinction has been made between economic interests (members are Businesses, usually private, but also a small number of commercial public businesses and cooperatives), occupational interests, trade unions and interests. Of course, we will be pleased to make our revised dataset available on request, to examine coding-related decisions. Still required is the research of the rather large number of cases we were unable to classify (n=254 corresponds to almost 7 per cent).

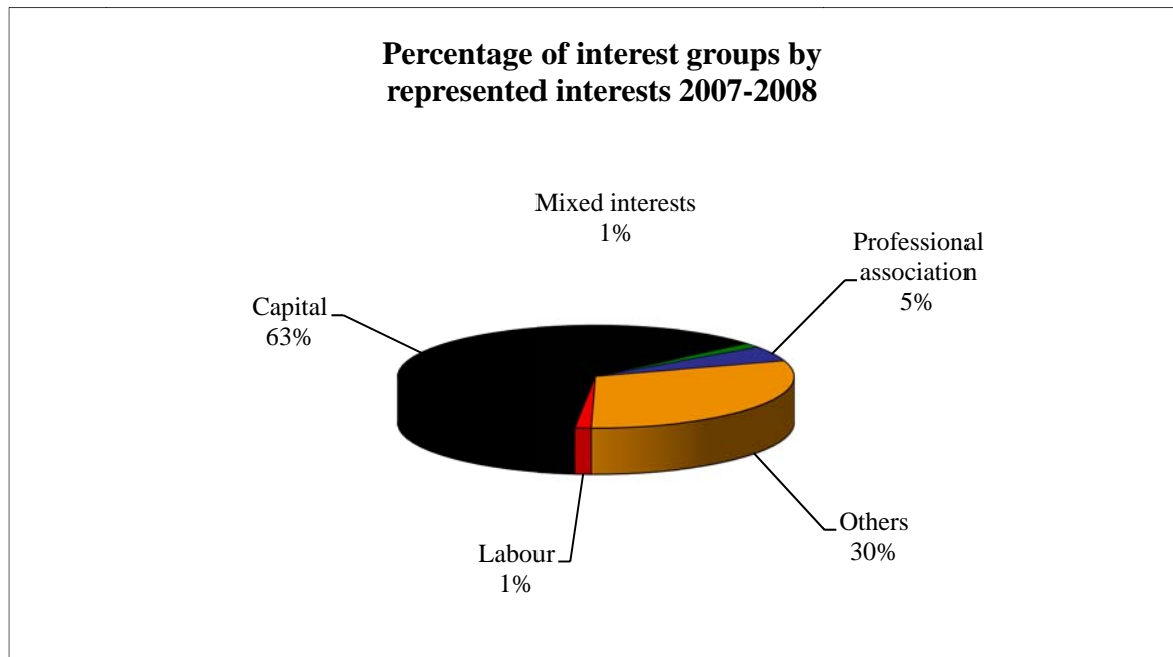
Diagram 2: Absolute distribution of lobby groups in Europe (2007/08)



Source: Wonka et al. 2007/08, own calculation. N=3.673, n=3494, cases, where values are missing =179.

If one looks at the distribution in percentage terms, one sees - besides the overwhelming share of economic interests - a considerable share of “other interests”. These include apart from civil society lobby groups (NGOs, social associations) confessional lobby groups, but also a strong block of regional authorities and some other (supranational) governmental organisations. About a third of all other interests can be allocated to governmental organisations. We have used the example of Austria to illustrate - further down - this rather large group of other interests, consisting of 1,057 organisations (compare Table 2).

Diagram 3: Distribution of lobby groups in Europa (2007/08) in percentage terms



Source: Wonka et al. 2007/08, own calculation. N=3673, n=3494, cases, where values are missing =179.

The following breakdowns of the lobby groups for Austria in Table 2 and 3 are for the better understanding as to which groups have been referred to. Table 2 depicts the groups from Austria, which have been used by Wonka et al. (2007/08).



Table 2: Composition of European lobby groups: Austria (2007)

<i>Lobby groups</i>	<i>Number</i>
<b>Employee interests</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Economic interests</b>	<b>25</b>
Individual enterprise	6
Bank	3
Market regulation and control	1
Chamber of Commerce	4
Consultant	3
Industry, trade and branch association	3
Professional association	5
<b>Other Interests</b>	<b>31</b>
Old people	1
Sport	2
Nature	3
Development aid	2
Institute/Science	3
Women	1
Youth/Cultural exchange	1
Educational promotion	1
Central government	2
Regions	15
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>58</b>

Source: Wonka et al. 2007/08

In comparison, in August 2011, 89 organisations from Austria had already been registered in the European Transparency Register. According to this source, 44 business lobby organisations and 43 organisations, which represent other interests (compare details in Annex II), are registered in Brussels in addition to the lobby organisations representing employees (ÖGB and Chamber of Labour).

Table 3: Composition of European lobby groups: Austria (2011)

<i>Lobby groups</i>	<i>Number</i>
<b>Employee interests</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Economic interests</b>	<b>44</b>
Individual enterprises	16
Chambers/Professions	10
Associations	18
<b>Other Interests</b>	<b>43</b>
Social	6
Nature	13
Development	2
Women	1
Institute/Science	10
Culture	6
Transport	2
Region	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>89</b>

Source: EU Transparency Register, as at: 8 August 2011

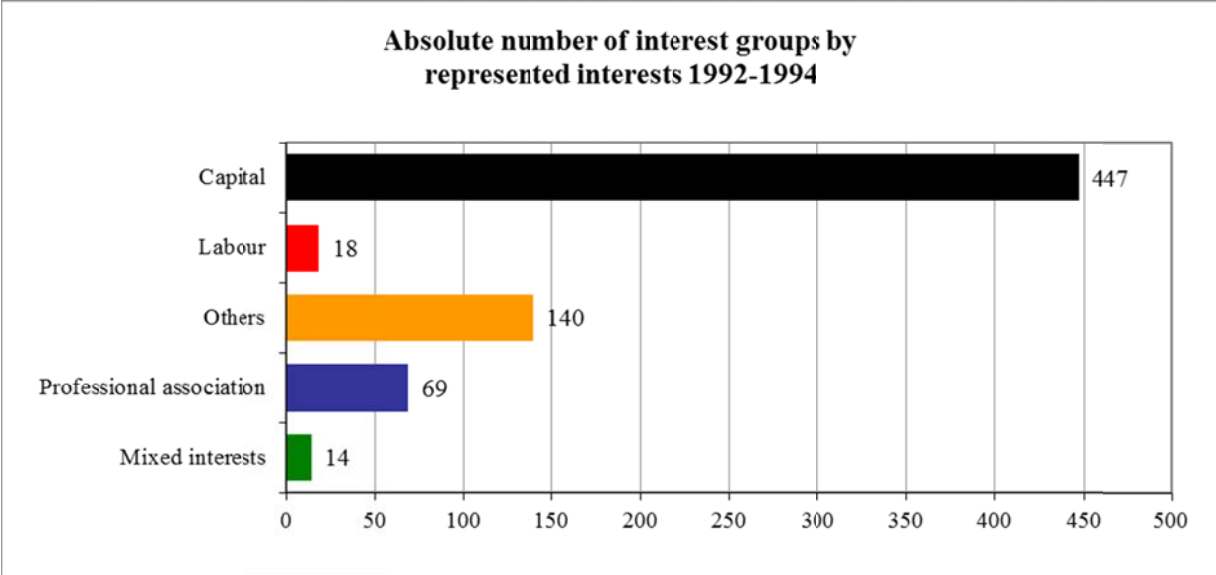
The establishment of the Transparency Register has obviously inspired many organisations to make their presence in Brussels public. The country-based extract of the two datasets

again emphasises the problematic data situation. One can only hope that the maintenance and the further development of the Transparency Register will provide a higher level of reliable statements in future.

Some organisations of the category “Other Interests” could at least in respect of some issues be a partner of the trade unions. For example, both ATTAC and the Austrian trade unions support the lobby organisation Finance Watch, which is critical of the financial market or the Alter EU movement for a more democratic and transparent EU. Depending on their focus, it is highly likely that organisations from the category “Other Interests” can also be found in alliances with business interests (e.g. motor industry and Automobile Association). Taking a closer look at “Other Interests”, it becomes clear that they normally concentrate on one issue. Hence, businesses and specific organisations with particular interest grow faster than interest groups, which combine a broad range of interests, and which are present in many different policy areas.

Back to the EU as a whole: what did the distribution of lobby groups look like about 20 years ago? Although, there are no really complete comparable datasets, the information researched by Greenwood (1997) allows for an approximation. Hereinafter, we show again the absolute distribution of lobby groups (1992-1994), followed by the distribution in percentage terms.

Diagram 4: Absolute distribution of lobby groups in Europe (1992-1994)



Source: Greenwood 1997, 59, own calculation. N=688.