

Interest groups and policy-making in the European Union

Lecture 3

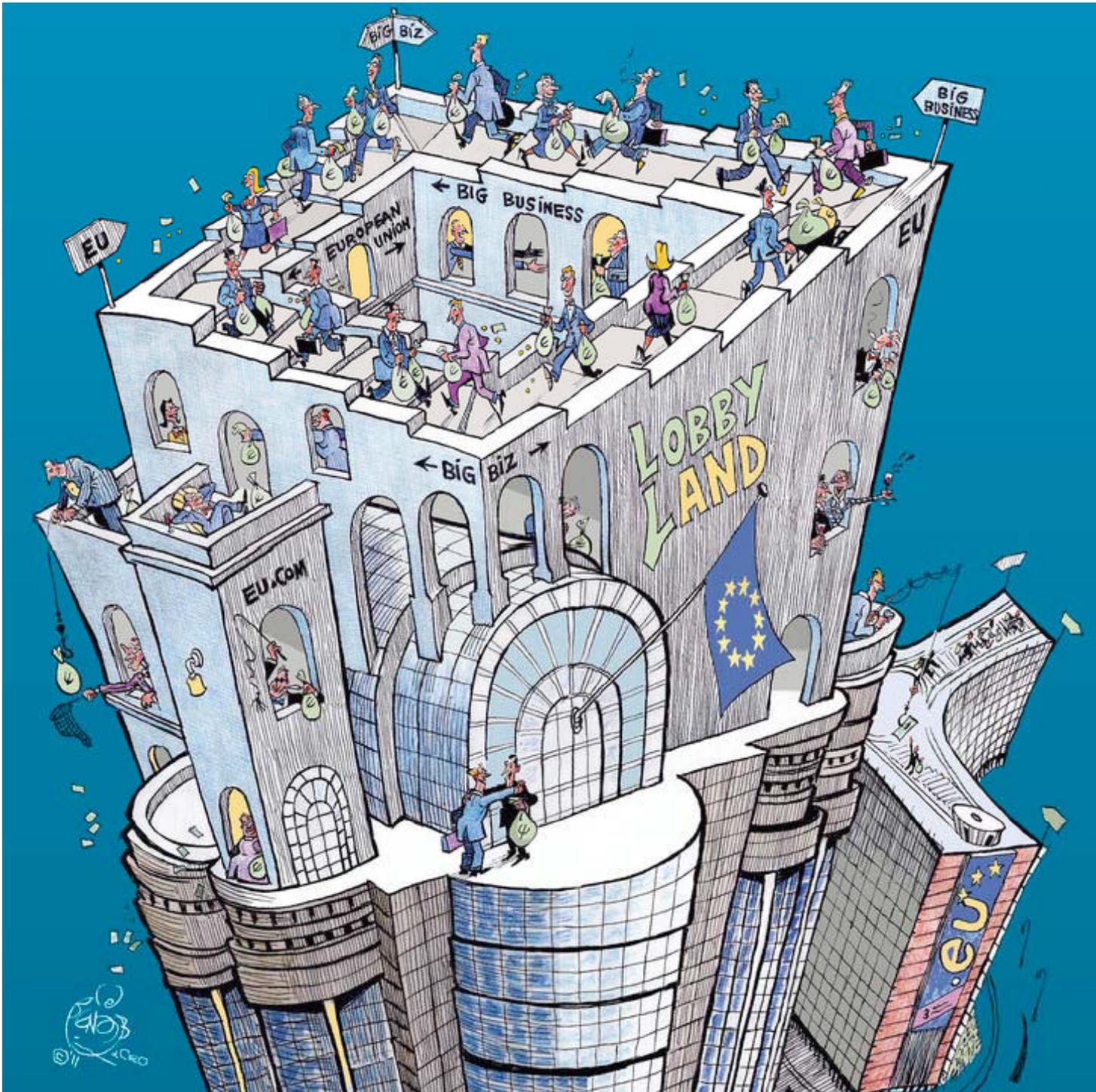
Definitions

- Interest group
- Lobby
- Lobbying
- Interest groups representation

- **Interest group:** A group of persons working on behalf of or strongly supporting a particular cause, such as an item of legislation, an industry, or a special segment of society.
- **Lobby:** A group of persons engaged in trying to influence legislators or other public officials in favor of a specific cause: the banking lobby; the labor lobby.
- **Lobbying:** Activity consisting in influencing the thinking of legislators or other public officials for or against a specific cause.
- **Interest groups representation:** Activity consisting in defending a specific cause for a group you belong to or for a client.

Brussels: first place for IG representation after Washington

- 5527 different groups in Brussels in 2014
- 15 000 people involved in IGs' business
- National representatives (double channel)
- Non EU: American Chamber of Commerce
- Increase with the Single Market Program (1988)
- Informal negotiation which is part of the decision - making
- Need to regulate activities in the 1990s





A typology of Brussels-based actors

- Europeanization of IGs:** process by which national IGs pool their resources in Brussels to create a new EU IG.
- Eurogroups:** Business Europe, ETUC, BEUC
- Offices of the regions and subnational authorities**
- Professional lobbyists:** law firms, consultancy firms, political and public relations



Objectives of the IGs

- Regulatory and distributional policies (CAP; structural funds)
- Co-management in some sectors like agriculture (COPA-COGECA: yearly decision on agricultural prices)
- Provide expertise or counter-expertise (Amnesty International)
- Support European institutions vs. States (Europêche/Commission)

- **A regulatory policy:** A policy whose objective is to control a social activity through a law or a rule
- **A distributional policy:** A policy whose objective is to guarantee equity through a distribution of resources (mostly budgetary)

Main targets of the IGs

- **Commission: influencing proposals**
 - Small administration
 - Huge national diversity
 - Before formal proposals (right of initiative)
- **Council of ministers: the double channel**
 - Capital but also 28 Perm Reps in Brussels
 - Legislative work: negotiations (DMV = more difficult to veto a decision)
- **European Parliament: a place for the social interests**
 - Circulation of information: public hearings
 - Sectoral intergroups (sustainable hunting, welfare and conservation of animals, anti-racism and diversity)
 - Legislative work: committees, plenaries (esp. when codecision)





REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
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Case study: the Chocolate Directive

- Directive 73/241, 24 July 1973: Cacao butter and chocolate are the products to be used to make “chocolate”. Vegetal fats can be used in the limit of 5%
- Exemptions: new MS which produce chocolate with more than 5% vegetal fats (chocolate bars)
- End of 1990s: lobbying on the Commission from big lobbies (Cadbury; Unilever) using the argument of mutual recognition (Cassis de Dijon).
- Strong opposition from SMEs (Belgium, NL, France), consumer organizations and countries which are cacao producers.
- New institutional context: QMV in the Council of ministers; European Parliament’s legislative power
- 4 years of negotiation: 2000 Directive confirming 5% use of vegetal fats. B voted against. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:32000L0036>. 8 years to be implemented
- Not the end of the story: conflicts at the Court of Justice: Italy condemned





Only products manufactured according to the compositional rules

cocoa butter;

cocoa powder, cocoa;

fat-reduced cocoa powder, fat-reduced

cocoa;

powdered chocolate;

powdered drinking chocolate;

sweetened cocoa;

sweetened cocoa powder (possibly
supplemented by the term fat-reduced);

chocolate (possibly supplemented by the
terms vermicelli or flakes, couverture, and
gianduja);

milk, cream or skimmed milk chocolate
(possibly supplemented by the terms
vermicelli or flakes, couverture and
gianduja);

family milk chocolate;

white chocolate;

filled chocolate;

chocolate a la taza;

chocolate familiar a la taza;

chocolates or pralines.

Meeting with a pro-chocolate lobby at the EP



Main techniques of IGs

« lobbying »

- The « meta game of Triple P » (Renatus van Schendelen)
- Persons: network
- Positions: all levels of hierarchy
- Procedures: good knowledge of EU law; writing techniques (short briefs)



**GMO Industry
profits before people**

EUROPA 

**A bas la science
et la loi européenne**

**Danke, für's Ignorieren
der öffentlichen Meinung**

**Thank you for
ignoring public
opinion**
GREENPEACE

Rules

- Less regulated in Brussels than in Washington (first *Lobbying Act* in the US: 1946; *Lobbying and Disclosure Act*: 1995)
- No tradition of regulation laws in Europe: only Hungary, Lithuania and Poland (« new » democracies)
- 2005: European Initiative on Transparency (Commission + NGO Alter EU): registration + code of conduct
- Creation of a register for IGs: 1996 in the EP; 2008 in the Commission. Joint register European institutions 2011
- 2011: 3152 representatives on the Commission's register; 3156 permanent passes in the EP (40 per cent)
- Declaration of interests from higher officials and Commissioners

Example: Page 1 EP Register 2012 (ec.europa.eu)

- Aalto-korkeakoulusäätiö / Aalto University
- Aarhus University
- Arbeitsgemeinschaft für betriebliche Altersversorgung
- ABB Europe
- ABDA-Bundesvereinigung Deutscher Apothekerverbände
- ABM Analytics Ltd
- ABRIL S.r.l.
- ABSOLUCE
- The Travel Association
- Academia Brasileira de Medalhística Militar
- Academia dos Cavaleiros de Cristóvão Colombo
- Académie Diplomatique Africaine / African Diplomatic Academy
- Academy of European Law
- Academy Of Universal Global Peace
- acatech-Deutsche Akademie der Technikwissenschaften/ National Academy of Science and Engineering
- ACCADEMIA INTERNAZIONALE UMANITARIA OPERE
- Acceleration Management Solutions S.a.m.

- Control of corruption: difficult in diffuse decision-making
- European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF): 335 staff; internal inquiries
- No European Prosecutor. It goes through the national judiciary systems of the MS
- Cases of corruption: Santer Commission 1999; 3 MEPs in 2011 after a trap from three journalists of the Sunday Times
- 67% of the European citizens think that corruption exist in the EU institutions (Eurobarometer Special Survey 397)
- Problem for citizens in their acceptance of politics





Conclusion: IGs representation and democracy

- No « pluralist » mode of access to EU institutions (P. Schmitter and W. Streeck)
- No « corporatist » model of decision-making (Ecosoc; CofR weak)
- Which democratic legitimacy for IGs ?
- Economic issues: high interest representation
- Are the IGs replacing the role of a lacking European-wide political representation?

