



The access of business interests to European Union institutions: notes towards a theory

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Abstract

The unequal access of interest organizations to the EU institutions is often associated with biased European politics. Nonetheless, systematic accounts of interest group access are rare. Rooted in the organizational theory of resource dependencies and drawing on a survey of 800 EU and national business associations, the article presents a broad conception of European political exchange to explain the contact patterns. Ordinal regressions indicate that three dimensions shape these patterns – organizational characteristics, sectoral-economic features, and national modes of interest intermediation. Nonetheless, EU interest intermediation displays only very few general traits – these are the division of labor among EU and national associations, the economic clout, the financial resources and the expertise of interest groups as well as their political mobilization when they face of EU regulation. Else, the interaction patterns vary along the EU institutions and their levels of decision-making underscoring the importance of the institutional opportunity structure.

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Introduction¹

Relations among European Union (EU) institutions and interest groups are a major element in the governance of the EU. Officials of the European Commission discuss European policies as often with interest organizations as with members of the European Parliament (EP) or the Council of the EU (Hooghe 2001: 64). EU scholars have repeatedly argued that interest group claims lead to biased politics (Coen 1998; Hueglin 1999; Schmidt 1999) and undermine the legitimacy of the EU institutions (Caporaso 1974). Nonetheless, systematic studies of these interactions are rare.² Most EU interest group scholars apply a case study approach looking at different EU institutions, interest organizations and issues. Hence, many studies center on narrow aspects of interest representation: EU interest organizations attracted always greater attention than national groups (Kirchner and Schwaiger 1981; Mazey and Richardson 1993; Greenwood 2002; Mahoney 2004). The few international comparisons tend to look at distinct issue areas or economic sectors (Cowles 2001; Grote and Lang 2003; Lehmkuhl 2000). Even most quantitative studies are limited in that they tend to analyze organizations from just one EU member state (Beyers 2002; Sidenius 1999), focus on specific issue areas (Bouwen 2002a, b; Pappi and Henning 1999) or look at the formation of national positions in EU policy-making (Baltz *et al.* 2005).

As a result, and despite the individual merits of many of these studies, no coherent picture has yet emerged as to what determines the access of interest groups to the EU institutions.³ It is therefore of little surprise that different studies emphasize very different factors. Vivien Schmidt (1999) highlights the importance of systemic factors, pointing especially to the mode of interest intermediation that is prevalent in a political system. By contrast, Gerda Falkner (2000) concentrates on sectoral characteristics. She maintains that EU interest intermediation needs to be studied sector by sector. Finally, Pieter Bouwen focuses on organizational features (2002a, b). Each of these studies has great merits in pointing out major elements of the political exchange among interest groups and EU institutions. But none of them controls for the other potentially important dimensions. To remedy

this shortcoming, I take all three dimensions into account. The explanation of the access patterns draws on the organizational theory of resource dependencies. A broad conception of political exchange in the EU highlights the relevance of policy information provided by interest groups, the political support they can give EU politicians and officials, the contribution they can make to the democratic legitimacy of the EU, and their role in the administration of EU policies. The empirical evidence is based on a survey of 800 German, British, French, and EU business associations.

The article is set up as follows: First, I outline the rationale to study the access of business interests to the EU institutions. Then, drawing on the comparative study of state-business relations, I discuss the impact of the organizational, sectoral, and national factors on the access of interest groups to the EU institutions. Thereafter, I present the data in more detail and test the hypotheses by means of ordinal regressions. The conclusion summarizes the main findings and the implications for the study of interest groups in the EU.

The principal conclusions are that indeed all three dimensions must be taken into account when studying interest group access so that state-group relations in the EU cannot be reduced to the exchange of political information. But EU interest intermediation displays only few general traits: These are the division of labor among European and national associations; the importance of the financial resources, the expertise, and the economic clout of business associations; and, finally, the impact EU regulation has on the mobilization of interests. Else, EU interest intermediation varies depending on the characteristics of the EU institutions highlighting the importance of the institutional opportunity structure.

Towards a theory of interest group access in the EU: political exchange and institutional opportunities

I define access as the frequency of contacts between EU institutions and interest organizations. This definition emphasizes that interest organizations obtain contacts with EU political institutions and do not just aim at them or forego their

access opportunities. The contacts range from informal *ad hoc* meetings to formal arrangements in the EU committees (European Commission 2002). Access is the outcome of either the successful attempt of an interest group to approach the EU institutions or of its incorporation into EU policy-making by the EU institutions. It results from resource dependencies of interest groups and political institutions, from the political opportunities that are enshrined in the *EU institutional structure*, and from the *interest groups' capacities* to access the EU institutions that are conditioned by their organizational characteristics as well as their embeddedness (see Granovetter 1992) in national-sectoral structures. In this section, I look at the resource dependencies and at the EU institutional opportunity structure. The impact of organizational, sectoral and national factors on the group capacities and the access patterns will later be discussed in more detail.

Political access, exchange theory, and resource dependencies

Political access is rooted in resource dependencies among state institutions and interest groups (see Wilson 1973). None of these actors has the ability to autonomously pursue and achieve political goals. Hence, access cannot be fully understood without having recourse to resource dependency theory and an exchange paradigm.

On the one hand, the EU institutions depend on external advice because they have only limited internal resources at their disposal. According to some authors, information is *the* currency of political exchange in the EU (Bouwen 2002a: 369, b; Crombez 2002). The EU institutions need external *information* to devise EU policies and assess their consequences. Apart from interest groups, international organizations, national administrations, think tanks, and scientific experts are important sources of information. However, the technical, economic and political information provided by firms and business associations can be of great value because many European policies are about the making, the policing and the correcting of markets. Moreover, information is not the only good that business interest groups can deliver. Coalitions with business interests can provide much-needed political support for EU policy initiatives.⁴ Furthermore, the

consultation of civil society groups enhances the democratic legitimacy of the EU (European Commission 2001, 2002). Finally, the aggregation of interests at the European level and the co-regulation of EU policies by business interest groups can make the EU more governable.⁵

On the other hand, business interests seek political access to receive information about the formulation and implementation of EU policies as well as to exert influence on them. In particular, they need access to EU politicians and officials whenever these do not take into account business interests because they don't know them, are unaware of the consequences of their policies for business, or pursue other goals than business. In general, business interests seek direct access to policy-makers rather than rely on mass mobilization and media campaigns to promote their political causes (Wilson 1973; Lindblom 1977; Balme *et al.* 2002; Imig and Tarrow 2001). However, as different parts of business may pursue different interests (Wilson 1973), political conflicts do not necessarily run between the EU institutions and business. More often than not, EU politics is about mobilizing competing coalitions that consist of both public and private actors (see Beyers 2002; Pollack 1997).

These contacts increase the policy knowledge of the actors, they can help establish shared policy goals and norms, and they can enhance the understanding of each other's position. But in the end, access does not imply that the course of events changes. Even many discussions with EU policy-makers may not bring about the desired results. To give an example: many large firms and trade associations in the network industries such as transport, gas, and electricity tried to prevent the regulatory reforms of these sectors (Héritier *et al.* 2001). Throughout the reform processes, they were closely in touch with the EU institutions but proved unable to prevent the liberalization of the sectors or to obtain major concessions that would have secured their market power. Moreover, even if EU policy-makers take business concerns into account, this need not be due to business pressures but can be the result of their autonomous preferences

(Moravcsik 1998). EU institutions may even co-opt business associations to pursue their own policy preferences.

In short, access is not equal to influence and may not always have an impact on EU policies even though, *ceteris paribus*, those interest organizations that are frequently in touch with EU policy-makers have better chances to influence EU policies (Meynaud and Sidjanski 1971: 465; Beyers 2002). They are not only experts in choosing the right contact partners and tabling the right kind of information at the right time, they are also well informed about EU policy developments. In contrast, those organizations that are only occasionally in touch with the EU institutions tend to lack information and depend for its delivery on other interest groups. At the very least, the analysis of the access patterns maps important elements of the communication structure in the European Union. It serves to identify the features of those organizations that are the crucial societal actors in EU policy-making as well as the criteria that the EU institutions apply when it comes to deciding whether and whom to consult in the making of European policies.

The institutional opportunity structure at EU level

The *institutional* setting defines the *opportunities* of interest organizations to get in touch with the EU decision makers. Institutional task contingencies determine the 'target structure' of interest groups (Almond 1958; Meynaud and Sidjanski 1971: 468; Marks and McAdam 1996) and the choices of the EU institutions 'whether and whom' to consult (Lehmbruch 1991: 124).⁶ In particular, three elements of the EU institutional setting structure the access of interest groups: its segmentation into three pillars, the distinct allocation of powers to its legislative and executive institutions, and the vertical and functional differentiation of these institutions. In the first pillar of the EU, the European Community, interest groups enjoy relatively good access to the EU institutions. This is less so in the other two pillars which cover the common foreign and security policy and police and judicial co-operation in criminal matters. They operate more intergovernmentally and allow member governments to prevent interest groups

from gaining access to the policy process. For most interest groups, then, the EC pillar provides the greatest potential for access. As it comprises also the vast majority of the Union's policies, the subsequent analysis concentrates on the European Community.

Within this pillar, the European Commission is the most important contact partner of interest groups (Mazey and Richardson 2002). Its legal monopoly over policy initiation grants the Commission a crucial role in agenda setting and policy formulation. As the EU's 'guardian of treaties', it monitors also the compliance with Community law. However, the Commission is rarely approached as a collegiate body. Rather, interest groups tend to maintain relations with one or more of the Commission's Directorates-General (DGs) that have developed various standard operating procedures to incorporate interest groups into EU policy-making.

The European Parliament is often held to be less important for interest groups because it does not wield as much power as either the Commission or the EU Council, despite the much more important role it now plays in EU policy making. While the EP is likely to be more amenable to national pressures than the Commission, its influence varies according to the issue at hand and the decision-making procedure that applies. As its members commute between Strasbourg, Brussels and their electoral districts, interest groups don't find it easy to access the relevant actors in the EP. This is all the more true in view of the fact that EP parliamentary majorities are more unstable than those in the parliamentary democracies of the member states because the importance of territorial, institutional, party-political, and issue-specific decision criteria varies to a greater extent within the EP. In general, the heads of the Standing Committees and the *rapporteurs* who are responsible for the policy dossiers are the most important addressees for interest group demands.

Owing to its pivotal position, the EU Council would seem to be a highly relevant contact for interest groups. However, the Council of Ministers and its administrative machinery, the Committee of Permanent Representatives

(Coreper) and the Council Working Groups, are rarely lobbied in Brussels. Rather, domestic interest groups tend to address their concerns to particular government departments, representing their specific interests at national level. While the Council's policy positions evolve along national lines, in part as a consequence of pressure by domestic interests (Moravcsik 1998), the European Council is more removed from interest group pressure. Not only does it comprise the heads of state and government, thus representing the general interest to a greater degree, but it also meets formally only once every six months, lessening its impact on the minutiae of day-to-day politics in the EU. Therefore, the analysis concentrates on the EU Council.

In general, the interest organizations have more frequent interactions at the working level of the European Commission and the EU Council than with the Commission's or the Council's political leadership. European integration consists largely of technical details that are put in place by a technico-bureaucratic structure (Mazey and Richardson 2002: 136). The desk officers in the Commission, the Council working groups, and also the parliamentary committees are responsible for drafting the policy proposals and sorting out their details. Accordingly, they depend heavily on the information and support of the interest organizations. In contrast, the attention of the Commissioners and the Ministers is usually not directed towards all policy details but focuses on those aspects of an EU directive that are contested or that are considered to be particularly important. On the part of the interest groups, lobbying them aims either at establishing broad policy agendas or at revising decisions that were taken before in the policy process – such as the German Chancellor Schröder's well-known intervention in favor of the Volkswagen AG. Hence, less frequent access to the political leadership of the EU does not inevitably imply that these contacts are less important for interest groups than the interactions at the working level.

As the EU judiciary, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) monitors compliance with and interprets EU law which takes precedence over national law. The preliminary rulings procedure, which offers a channel for national courts to

refer questions of European law to the ECJ, allows interest groups to challenge the compatibility of domestic and EU law. However, in practice, to take a case to the European Court usually demands that a body of EU law already exists. And even where this is the case, the outcome of such action is uncertain, the financial costs heavy, and the duration of the case generally lengthy, which means that this avenue is not available to all interest groups, and will only be worthwhile when the stakes are felt to be especially high. The focus of this article is on legislative lobbying so that these legal strategies won't be considered in detail. Neither will the access to the Economic and Social Committee be analyzed in depth because it is only of marginal importance for the representation of interests within the EU.

Organizational, Sectoral, and National Factors

Besides the institutional setting and the resource dependencies, their organizational properties, sectoral characteristics, and national features account for the access of interest organizations to political institutions (Truman 1951; Shonfield 1965; Wilson 1973; Schmitter and Streeck 1981; Knoke 1990; Hollingsworth *et al.* 1994).

Organizational factors

Business interest associations are boundedly rational organizations that are specialized in defining, aggregating, and promoting the political interests of a distinct group of producers or employers (Schmitter and Streeck 1981: 33). The exchange of resources with their members and their political and economic environments serves to ensure their maintenance and to enhance their autonomy. Notwithstanding the relevance of informal factors, their organizational structures contain the core answers to the questions of how to deal with the demands of their members and of state institutions. Embodying a 'more or less permanent acceptance of the participants on the division of authority and organizational tasks' (Truman 1951: 113), these structures process 'the complex variety of motives and goals' existing in the membership and 'transform them into a ... set of political objectives' (Schmitter and Streeck 1981: 122). To a greater or lesser

extent, major interest group studies (Knoke 1990; Truman 1951; Walker 1981; Wilson 1973) have highlighted the importance of three organizational features: the organizational domain, the resources, and the strategies of interest representation.

The *organizational domain* has a strong impact on the collective activity of associations. Formal rules designate the types of actors that are eligible to join. The definition of potential members separates those ‘members and interests that are admitted into the association, from others that are excluded...’ (Schmitter and Streeck 1981: 122). More or less explicitly, such rules bear on the operating level of the association, its number of potential members, its interests, and the issues it needs to deal with (Coleman 1997: 130). The membership density indicates to what extent the association is able to recruit potential members.

Thus, the organizational domain delimits the sectoral scope of the association. The sectoral domain has ambiguous effects on the access to political institutions because it affects the range of issues the association deals with as well as the bandwidth of interests it must accommodate. A narrow, sub-sectoral domain leads to a small number of members and makes for homogeneous interests. It allows the association to pursue these interests vigorously without much need for internal compromise. However, an association that represents too narrow a domain may turn out to be irrelevant to policy-makers. In contrast, a broader sectoral or cross-sectoral domain increases the number of members and the heterogeneity of their interests which renders the definition of collective goals more difficult. Quite often, groups that represent broad domains resolve this problem by formulating comprehensive but also vague positions. Nonetheless, EU institutions have occasionally stated that they prefer to negotiate with more encompassing associations because this facilitates political reform processes and alleviates them of the task to deal with a vast array of narrow claims (see European Commission 2002).

H 1.1 A broader SECTORAL DOMAIN improves the access to EU institutions.

The organizational domain defines also the territorial scope of groups and the level of government at which they tend to represent interests. In general, EU associations represent member firms and associations that are located within various EU member states and other European countries at the EU level. This is important for the EU institutions that have repeatedly stated that they do not wish to negotiate separately with a large number of domestic interest organizations. In contrast, British, German, and French associations tend to organize members and represent interests at the national level. To them, EU-level activities are an additional task. As they must manage scarce resources (Constantelos 1996: 30-31), they tend to rely for the representation of interests at EU level on EU associations (Bennett 1997). Only if EU regulation has an important impact on the national groups and on their members, if the division of labor among them and those EU associations which represent them vis-à-vis the EU institutions appears to be less than perfect, or the terms of EU policy implementation at the national level must be worked out, will these groups extend their activities to the EU level. Hence, EU associations have more contacts with EU institutions than national associations. This assessment differs from another analysis: Justin Greenwood and Ruth Webster (2000: 13) argue that, due their internal heterogeneity and the institutional segmentation of the EU, European associations are unable to be 'routine governance partners with the institutions'. It follows that they do not necessarily have better access than national associations.

H 1.2 EU ASSOCIATIONS have more frequent access than national associations.

Furthermore, different kinds of actors may be eligible to join the association. The type of members indicates to some extent the position that business interest organizations assume in the multi-layered associational system. Associations that allow for the membership of individual entrepreneurs, business-related organizations, and firms form the bottom layer. These direct membership groups

have quite narrow domains and aggregate interests at a relatively low level. Federations organize other associations and are located at the higher echelons of the associational population. They may not have the right to give orders to their members but aggregating their interests and co-ordinating their activities should improve the access of federations to EU policy-makers. In addition, several associations allow for the membership of both firms and associations. Thereby, the firms avoid the filtering of their interests in lower-order associations and have a say in the positions taken by mixed-membership groups. In turn, these obtain additional resources from the firms. Therefore, and provided they are placed on the same layer of the associational system, mixed-membership associations have better access to EU policy-makers than federations.

H 1.3 MIXED MEMBERSHIP associations have better access to the EU institutions than FEDERATIONS, and these enjoy better access than direct membership groups.

Finally, the membership density indicates to what extent an association mobilizes its potential members. A greater membership density does not only indicate organizational success in the mobilization of an association's constituency. The more of its potential members an association organizes, the more it can claim to be representative of its domain. This should improve its access to the EU institutions because incorporating all stakeholders' points of view in the political process increases the democratic legitimacy of EU policies (European Commission 2001, 2002).

H 1.4 A higher membership density improves the access to EU institutions.

To ensure their survival and maintenance, associations need a more or less stable supply of *resources* from their members and their environment (Wilson 1973: 30). As voluntary organizations, associations draw on the time, the money, and the effort of their members. Financial resources are a major prerequisite for their

activities. A larger income allows them to build up an elaborated division of labor with a permanent staff (Knoke 1990: 76). In turn, bureaucratization and specialization enable them to pursue internal and external objectives more effectively. They make also for greater longevity and an orientation towards long-term objectives which is conducive to the built-up of continuous relations with state authorities.

H 1.5 A greater BUDGET improves the access to the EU institutions.

To extract resources from their members, associations offer incentives to them (Olson 1965; Wilson 1973; Schmitter and Streeck 1981; Knoke 1990). While these incentives may be of various kinds, business associations usually provide a certain amount of collective goods, i.e. they seek to affect public policy-making or govern market exchanges, and a certain amount of selective goods, i.e. services, to their members. However, previous studies found that selective goods are far less important in EU interest intermediation than collective goods (Greenwood and Aspinwall 1998). Hence, it is the specialization on interest representation that should equip trade associations with greater capacities to deal with the demands of their members and political institutions.

H 1.6 Specialization on INTEREST REPRESENTATION improves the access to EU institutions.

As already discussed, a crucial resource of business associations is their policy-relevant information. Their expert knowledge may comprise information about the likely economic effects of EU programs, their repercussions on domestic law, or the likely political responses of their members to these EU initiatives. The frequency with which associations are able to provide such economic, legal or political expertise to political institutions serves as an indicator for their ability to provide policy information.⁷

H 1.7 The more EXPERTISE associations can deliver, the better is their access.

Even though their activities are in part determined by their membership domain, their location in the associational system, and their resources, associations have some latitude left in the choice of their *strategy of interest representation*. Here, many studies distinguish among insider and outsider strategies (Walker 1991). According to several analyses (see Wilson 1973), business interests seek direct access to policy-makers rather than rally in the streets. However, the empirical analysis indicates that business associations in the European Union rely on three strategies to represent their interests: To different degrees, they pursue insider, outsider, and nationalistic strategies.⁸

Many business associations regard close relations with EU officials and parliamentarians as important assets. They seek to ensure that their objectives are deemed a proper subject for public action and that they are accepted as legitimate spokesmen in the political discussions (Wilson 1973: 314–316). These associations regard administrative responsibilities, personal contacts, and position papers as particularly important selecting their contact partners and representing their interests at EU level. Their insider strategy matches the need of the EU institutions for their expertise.

H 1.8.1 An INSIDER STRATEGY raises the number of interactions with the EU institutions.

Other associations resort to the media and to the public in order to represent their interests. Occasionally, well-timed public pressure may improve their access and influence. But regular public campaigns against the EU institutions are incompatible with an insider strategy. It is not likely that business associations resort to this outsider strategy if they attach great value to close relationships with state institutions (Wilson 1973: 285) because such campaigns, e.g. about the usefulness of genetically modified food, tend to be value loaded. The positions taken by the actors are not really negotiable if these do not want to risk their credibility. Moreover, the success of the campaigns depends on the support of the

public which implies a reduced control over the outcome. The campaign effects can also depend on whether they are led by EU associations or by national groups. As the European public is structured along national borders, national associations tend to mobilize distinct national publics. Their efforts are directed at national institutions even if they result from EU policies (Imig and Tarrow 2001; Balme *et al.* 2002). In contrast, EU associations seek to mobilize a wider ‘European public’ or at least audiences from several member states which should have a more favorable effect on their access to the EU institutions.

H 1.8.2. An OUTSIDER STRATEGY reduces the number of contacts with the EU institutions. But EU associations that pursue an OUTSIDER STRATEGY have better access than national associations with such a strategy.

Finally, some associations thrive on the heterogeneity of the EU member states and national cleavages. To them, the nationality of EU officials and politicians as well as their language is of utmost importance in selecting contact partners. To a lesser extent, they select their contact partners on the basis of party affiliation and on the basis of personal acquaintance. This nationalistic strategy should limit the number of contact partners in the EU because it relies on coalition building with “likes” and is rooted in deeply engrained national differences among politicians and officials that are not conducive to EU problem-solving.

H 1.8.3 A NATIONALISTIC STRATEGY reduces the access to the EU institutions.

Sectoral factors

Business associations act within sectoral structures. Sectoral approaches to interest intermediation such as meso corporatism, sectoral governance, or policy networks stress that relationships between interest organizations and government vary between economic sectors (or policy areas) (see Hollingsworth *et al.* 1994). They explain that state-business relations vary across sectors within the same polity and for organizations with similar properties. This argument rests on two foundations.

First, the technical and economic features of products or production processes (e.g. capital or knowledge intensity, bulk or diversified quality production, durability of products) give rise to lasting business structures and persistent patterns of interaction within a sector. The sectoral exchanges among producers, suppliers, and consumers impact also on state-business relations (Hollingsworth *et al.* 1994). Second, such sectoral features may be at the heart of state organization if certain regulatory problems are related to specific sectors. Accordingly, three Directorates-General of the Commission are responsible for distinct sectors: agriculture, fisheries, and transport and energy. Since Directorates-General enjoy some discretion in deciding whether and whom to consult, the involvement in EU policy-making of sectoral interest groups may vary to some extent.

I concentrate on three crucial sectoral features: internationalization, economic weight, and political regulation. These have been measured at the level of each association (or its membership). Shifting the measurement level from sector to association yields more precise estimates because these sectoral-economic features affect associations through the properties of their members or their organization.

The degree of internationalization indicates the orientation of producers towards international markets. Internationalization should increase access to EU institutions for two reasons: First, producers operating in international markets can more credibly threaten to shift investments to other locations than producers that are oriented towards domestic markets. Accordingly, the former should have more political clout and easier access than the latter. Second, the more internationalized a sector is, the more are firms affected by international regulation and the more must they deal with different national and international political authorities. Hence, they are more experienced in international interest representation.

H 2.1 A higher degree of INTERNATIONALIZATION increases the number of contacts with the EU institutions.

Measuring sectoral employment, economic weight is an indicator of sectoral size and a proxy for its relevance in the economy. The greater the *economic weight*, the greater are ‘the public consequences of discretionary decisions in the market’ (Lindblom 1977: 171) and the more must political institutions be interested in the functioning of the domain organized by the association. Needless to say, economic clout, investment decisions, and employment effects cannot be invoked in each and every policy issue (Vogel 1987).

H 2.2 Greater ECONOMIC WEIGHT secures better access to the EU institutions.

Political regulation leads firms and associations to establish contacts with political institutions. But EU sectoral regulation cannot be specified without a detailed policy analysis.⁹ Instead, the importance associations ascribe to the EU institutions for the representation of their interests shall serve as a proxy measure for their political authority in sectoral regulation. I assume that these assessments reflect how the associations perceive EU regulation.¹⁰ In case that the associations or their members are exposed to a high degree of EU regulation, they are likely to attach great relevance to the EU institutions for the representation of their interests and will undertake efforts to access them.

H 2.3 A higher degree of EU REGULATION increases the number of contacts between business associations and EU institutions.

National modes of interest intermediation

In his seminal study on ‘modern capitalism’, Andrew Shonfield (1965) identified the importance of *national factors* for state–business relations. Even in the era of economic globalization, many authors find that these factors do not simply fade away (e.g. Hollingsworth and Boyer 1997; Hall and Soskice 2001) but continue to explain national capitalisms across sectors and organizations. Therefore, I discuss now the national state–business relations that are prevalent in France,

Britain, and Germany. The modes of interest intermediation in these countries are the outcome of ‘collective historical experiences’ that have come to shape the design of inter-organizational relations (Lehmbruch 1991: 148). They are relatively stable over time and change only due to crucial events and important new demands. They are reflected in the access of interest organizations to national institutions and can facilitate or hinder the access to the EU institutions.

Time and again, *France* has been labeled *étatiste* (see Schmidt 1999). A high degree of centralization enables and encourages state actors to impose their decisions on private parties in a non-cooperative fashion. State-group relations are more antagonistic than elsewhere. Associations do not play a major role when policies are formulated even though they may come back in when policies are implemented. The United Kingdom is as centralized as is France but is not rooted in the same statist tradition (Dyson 1980). The British government generally strives for consensus with interest groups but has a strong capacity to exclude them from political processes. Thus, being sometimes subject to stop-go consultation in the *UK’s informal pluralism*, British interest groups enjoy relatively good access to their government. In Germany, state powers are more dispersed and interlocked than in France or the UK (Katzenstein 1987) so that German associations have more access opportunities. State institutions have also a distinct preference for associational self-regulation. In *Germany’s corporatism*, a substantial number of associations has developed negotiation capacities and co-regulatory skills. They have routine access to the government and are regarded as legitimate spokesmen for their domains (Streeck 1999). Translating these patterns to the EU level means:

H 3.1 CORPORATISM supports a better access to the EU institutions than PLURALISM, and pluralism leads to a better access than statism.¹¹

However, so far the relation among domestic modes of interest representation and political activities in the EU is not well understood so that there are three contending propositions to H 3.1. First, some authors argue that the *embeddedness*

of business interest organizations in domestic policy networks is decisive for their adaptation to the EU. On the one hand, those associations that enjoy excellent access to domestic institutions are expected to continue to rely on their established national channels of communication and influence. On the other hand, those associations that are excluded from domestic policy networks are expected to seek compensation at EU level (Beyers 2002). Accordingly, the correlation among national and EU level contacts should be negative.

Second, Vivien Schmidt (1999) and Maria Green Cowles (2001) claim that it is the *degree of fit* among the EU mode and the national modes of interest intermediation that matters most. According to this logic, those associations that are well acquainted with the EU mode find it easier to adapt to EU level interest representation than associations that have been socialized in a different setting. Both find that pluralism prevails in the EU so that associations socialized in a pluralistic context should find it easier to extend their practices to the EU level than associations from corporatist or statist countries.

Finally, neofunctionalist studies expected that national interest organizations would gradually turn to the EU institutions in order to satisfy their political demands – regardless of their position in domestic policy networks and their acquaintance with the EU mode of interest intermediation. Ernst Haas' well known definition of political integration stresses this point: 'Political integration is the process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities toward a new centre ...' (1958: 16).

Table 1 summarizes these hypotheses and presents the definitions of the variables.

ABOUT HERE Table 1 Summary of hypotheses and variables

The empirical analysis

Research design and data

These hypotheses shall be tested in a study that combines Lijphart's comparable cases research strategy (1975) with statistical methods. Important context variables are controlled by focusing on a *particular category of collective actors in EU member states with several common features*. The cross-sectional analysis is based on a survey which was conducted between June 1998 and March 1999.¹² The survey focused on two classes of actors. It addressed 1,998 German, French, British, and EU *business associations* and asked them to specify their patterns of interest intermediation. In addition, 68 *large firms* in these countries have been questioned. Due to its large size and broad sectoral coverage,¹³ the analysis gives a good indication of the cumulative responses of business interests to European integration after almost 50 years of the integration process. But note that there is no time series data available (yet) on this topic and that only few questions in the questionnaire cover the time dimension. Overall, 834 responses were received (see table 2). Excluding international associations, the rate of return was 40.9 per cent, and the return rates for the different sub-groups ranged from 32.3 per cent in the case of the French associations to 50.0 per cent in the case of the large firms.

ABOUT HERE: TABLE 2 The rate of return of the survey

The sample excludes public interest groups because their organizational logic differs to some extent from that of business interest groups (Offe and Wiesenthal 1985; Olson 1965). Instead, the study focuses on producer and employer associations. This means that the largest family of interest organizations active at the EU level is covered: about 80 per cent of the EU associations are business interest associations (see European Commission. General Secretariat 2002).

The focus on the large member states - France, Germany and the United Kingdom - holds important background conditions fairly constant: these are the country size, the level of economic and technical development, the relevance of these countries in EU decision-making, their formal decision rights, and their long duration of EU membership. Therefore, the findings presented here cannot be easily translated into the contexts of the worse-off member states (Portugal, Spain, and Greece) whose economic structures diverge somewhat or into the contexts of those member states that entered the European Union only in 1995 (Sweden, Finland, Austria) because these were only recently exposed to the full influence of the European Union. Evidently, this holds all the more for the new member states of the Eastern enlargement.

The regression analysis

I analyze the impact of the organizational, sectoral and national factors by means of ordinal logit regressions because the access to the EU institutions has been measured in six categories on an ordinal scale: no, annual, half yearly, quarter yearly, monthly, and weekly contacts. To obtain greater insight into the logic of EU political exchange, I check also whether the interest organizations or the EU institutions initiated the contacts. Hence, these regressions serve to identify the exchange goods that are crucial to the EU institutions and the factors that shape the associations' capacities to act on the EU level. To concentrate on the structural factors shaping EU level initiatives, they leave out the assessments of the importance of the EU institutions for the representation of interests.

ABOUT HERE Table 3 Access patterns to the EU institutions

Table 3 describes the access of the business associations to the EU institutions. As discussed, the groups maintain more contacts with the Commission than with the Parliament, and slightly more contacts with the EP than with the EU Council. They are more frequently in touch with the working levels of the Commission and the Council than with the political leadership of these institutions. However,

their access to the members and committees of the European Parliament is fairly similar. Hence, the vertical structures of the Commission and the Council account for major differences in the access patterns whereas the horizontal division of labor among committee and plenary work in the Parliament does not cause tremendous variation. Table 4 illustrates who initiated these contacts. Interest organizations are more likely to seek contacts with the EU policy-makers than the other way round. More than 57 per cent of the associations claim to establish frequently contacts with the EU institutions. Among the EU institutions, the EU Council and the EP rarely initiate contacts themselves. But it is more common for the European Commission to incorporate interest organizations in EU policy-making. It draws more than 54 per cent of the associations at least occasionally and more than 17 per cent frequently into the policy-making process.

ABOUT HERE: TABLE 4 Who mostly initiates the contacts?

Table 5 presents the summary statistics of the maximum likelihood estimations.¹⁴ The first two rows indicate the number of cases and regressors in each model. The next two rows present the log-likelihood of a model with only an intercept and that of the full model. G^2 is a likelihood ratio test of the hypothesis that all coefficients apart from the intercept are zero. It indicates that, in none of the models, the coefficients are simultaneously equal to zero. The next three rows present pseudo R^2 measures. McFadden's R^2 compares the log likelihood of the intercept model with that of the full model. McFadden's adjusted R^2 includes an adjustment for the number of regressors. McKelvey and Zavoina's R^2 has been developed for models with a latent dependent variable. For ordinal outcomes, it approximates the R^2 that would be obtained from running a linear regression on an underlying interval scaled variable that measured the contact patterns. The Akaike Information criterion AIK and the Bayesian information criterion BIC are measures of overall fit. Finally, the count R^2 indicates the proportion of correct predictions. The adjusted count R^2 is the proportion of correct predictions

beyond the figure that would be obtained by choosing that category with the largest percentage of observed cases.

ABOUT HERE: TABLE 5 Fit Measures for Maximum Likelihood Estimation

These measures indicate that the models explain the access to the EU institutions satisfactorily. According to McKelvey and Zavoina's R^2 they explain between 46 percent (Council of Ministers) and 59 percent (Commission working level) of the variance if one transformed the ordinal data in an underlying interval scaled measure. According to the Count R^2 , they predict between 46 percent (Commission working level) and 70 percent (Council of Ministers) of the cases correctly. The adjusted Count R^2 indicates that the model for the supranational bureaucracy improves the number of correct predictions compared to a guess based on the marginal category by 27 percent. However, the models for the Council and COREPER do not do very well on that measure because the great majority of the associations do not maintain contacts with them. Thus, a prediction based on that category does already a quite good job.

Table 6 presents the regression results. Raw coefficients indicate the change in the logarithm of the ratio between the probability of being in a higher category of the dependent variable than m (e.g. weekly contacts) and that of being in m (monthly contacts) for a unit increase of the independent variable. In other words, they indicate the change in the logged odds for a unit increase of the independent variable. Figures in brackets are z-scores, and the reported significance levels are based on two-tailed tests. Missing values were estimated by multiple imputation (Honaker *et al.* 2001; King *et al.* 2001).

ABOUT HERE: TABLE 6 The Ordinal Regressions: Political Access and Political Initiatives

The empirical results: access, initiatives, and explanations

The empirical results confirm that all three dimensions must be taken into account when analyzing the access of business interest organizations to the EU institutions. It is insufficient to focus only on organizational, sectoral, or national factors. However, only few factors have a consistent impact on the access to the three EU institutions. This means that the access patterns are highly contingent upon the institutional characteristics. Let us now take a closer look at how the three dimensions shape the interaction patterns.

The organization of business associations

Several organizational features influence the access of business associations to the EU institutions. One element of the *organizational domain*, namely the task level of the organizations, shapes the access to all EU institutions: EU associations have significantly better access than national groups which supports H 1.2. This gap is most pronounced with regard to the European Commission at working level and less pronounced with regard to the Parliament and the Council whose members represent national interests to a greater extent than the Commission does. Indeed, note that EU associations do not have more frequent contacts with the Council of Ministers than national associations. Nonetheless, it is clear that the associations act primarily on their main level of operation so that the EU associations are routine interlocuters of EU institutions whereas national associations are only occasionally in touch with them.

Contrary to expectations, the impact of the other elements of the membership domain varies greatly across the EU institutions. Thus, a greater sectoral domain improves only the access to the EU Council (H 1.1). This is not due to the fact that the Council prefers to deal with sectoral or cross-sectoral associations rather than sub-sectoral groups (regression 9). Rather, the former initiate contacts with the EU institutions more frequently than the latter. To the Commission and the EP, a large sectoral domain is not relevant at all: When designing detailed policy proposals or amendments, they also need the input of

more specialized associations so that they tend to include these into EU policy-making.

The type of members that business associations represent affects their access patterns in the following way: Federations are more frequently in touch with the European Commission and Coreper than associations with a direct membership. But there is no difference among groups with a mixed membership and those with a direct membership which invalidates H 1.3. Hence, associations located at the higher echelons of the associational population tend to enjoy better access than other groups.

A greater membership density actually decreases the odds to have contacts with the EP while not impacting on the number of contacts with the Commission or the Council. Certainly, this invalidates H 1.4: There is no real pull from the EU institutions to consult associations that are broadly representative of their domains. While it is interesting to note that organizing ‘marginal members’ does not necessarily reduce the efforts to initiate contacts with the EU institutions (regression 8), to the EU institutions, it is far more important that associations represent European interests, have expertise and economic clout and pursue an insider strategy – their membership density is clearly less relevant. In sum, apart from the division of labor that has emerged among EU associations and national interest groups, the effects of the membership domain are rather limited and vary along the EU institutions.

In contrast, the control of *organizational resources* has a consistent positive impact on the access to EU institutions. Those associations that have sound financial resources are far more likely to have frequent contacts with the EU institutions than have-nots which supports H 1.5. Specializing on the representation of interests improves the ability of groups to address the relevant contact partners within the EU institutions and raises the number of these contacts (with the exception of Coreper) (H 1.6). Hence, the representation of interests at the EU level requires some professionalism. But note that the Commission is wary to consult only business associations that are fully specialized

on representing interests. It seeks to involve also some organizations into EU policy-making that are less professional. As expected, the ability to provide policy information to EU politicians and officials greatly improves the access of associations, corroborating that such information is a vital exchange good (H 1.7).

Finally, the *strategies* that interest organizations pursue matter even though two major caveats are in order: First, their strategic choices do not have any effect on the impermeable EU Council. Second, nationalist strategies neither increase nor reduce the number of interactions with the EU institutions invalidating H 1.8.3. Hence, the real choice is between insider and outsider strategies: As expected (H 1.8.1), an insider strategy improves the access to both the Parliament and the Commission (at working level). The reason is that this strategy leads associations to establish informal contacts with the institutions. As they play by the rules of the game, this strategy is an efficient means to communicate their expert information to EU policy-makers. The outsider strategy uncovers a few differences between the Parliament and the Commission. Other than expected (H 1.8.2), this strategy does not reduce the access to the EP. Under pressures for reelection, MEP must take the media coverage and the public scrutiny of EU policy in the member states into account. As expected, EU associations with an outsider strategy have better access to that institution national associations pursuing that strategy. The bureaucratic rationality of the European Commission departs from the responsiveness of the MEP to national publics. Consequently, the outsider strategy reduces the access to the desk officers in the Directorates General. However, it does not have a negative impact on the number of interactions with the Commissioners. Being nominated by national governments, these are more responsive to national publics than the European bureaucrats.

The sectoral factors

Among the sectoral factors, the degree of regulation has a very strong positive impact on the access to all EU institutions. Evidently, EU regulatory efforts trigger substantial lobbying activities as was expected in H 2.3. Those associations that ascribe greater importance to the EU institutions because of the EU regulatory activities increase their lobbying activities seeking to establish

contacts with them. To some extent, these efforts can offset the division of labor that has emerged among EU and national associations and the logic of resource-driven political exchanges.

Other economic features are also important influences on the access patterns. Confirming H 2.2, a greater economic weight certainly increases the frequencies of interactions with the EU institutions because these cannot neglect the employment effects of European policies. Evidently, all EU institutions prefer to deal with associations that have great rather than a little economic clout (regressions 8-10). As expected (H 2.1), a higher degree of internationalization propels and enables interest organizations to establish more contacts with the EU Council and the Commission. However, associations whose members are active in international markets do not have significantly better access to the European Parliament. Apparently, the parliamentarians pay less attention to the economic logic of business interest representation than the Commission or the Council do.

National patterns of interest intermediation

The empirical relation among the national modes of interest intermediation and the contact patterns at EU level is ambiguous and does not support H 3.1. Pluralism supports a better access to the EU Council and to the European Parliament than statism, but the pluralistic British associations are not more frequently in touch with the Commission than the statist French associations. Corporatist practices at home enable German associations to establish more contacts with the Commission (at working level) than French associations. However, there is no significant difference with respect to the other institutions. These findings are only partially consistent with the expectation that corporatist and also pluralist practices provide a better training ground than statism for the representation of interests at EU level. Neither are they fully-fledged support for the expectation that the degree of fit determines the adaptation of domestic interest groups to the European Union. The differences among the national modes seem smaller and show more varied effects than expected.

Therefore, the competing hypothesis about the embeddedness of domestic actors in national policy networks needs to be investigated. A correlation analysis

(Appendix Table A 3) indicates moderate to strong correlations among the contacts German, British and French associations maintain with national institutions and those they maintain with EU institutions. In general, this rules out that well positioned associations stick to their national policy networks and that domestic 'policy outsiders' invariably choose the EU option. It also invalidates the neo-functional hypothesis that national associations generally turn to the EU institutions to satisfy their political demands. Rather, domestic embeddedness tends to support access at the EU level even if this does not hold for each and every association.

The relationship among national and European activities are stronger for the German groups than for the British and French associations. The former translate the corporatist division of labor onto the EU level whereas there is greater turmoil in pluralist and statist regimes. But note that British and French associations incorporate the European Parliament to a greater extent into their European lobbying strategies than German associations. These concentrate their efforts on the European Commission transferring their focus on the federal government rather than parliament (see Lehbruch 1991; Dyson 1980) to the EU level.

Finally, the table A 1 indicates that German associations maintain slightly more contacts with the European Commission at all levels than British or French associations. And, surprisingly, they maintain as many contacts with the EU Council or the European Parliament as British associations do. According to the regression results, British associations could be expected to have better access to them than the German groups. Here, the domestic sectoral and organizational structures come into play (see table A 2) outweighing the effects of the modes of interest intermediation. German associations tend to have greater sectoral domains and more financial resources than British associations, they specialize more on interest representation and are more likely to pursue insider strategies, they have more expertise to offer and perceive greater EU regulatory pressures which tends to increase their number of contacts with the EU institutions over that of their

British counterparts. That these have greater economic clout does not offset the impact of the other characteristics.

Conclusion

Business associations rely on their contacts with EU institutions to influence EU policies. Their political exchange is not just about giving and taking policy information, it is as much about political support. Democratic legitimacy may be an overall criterion in the dealings of the EU institutions with interest groups, but it does not show in the dealings with business interests. National modes of interest intermediation, sectoral factors and organizational features all shape the political exchange. However, there are only few general determinants of interest group access in the EU. The consequences of most factors are conditional upon the characteristics of each EU institution.

EU interest intermediation displays some general characteristics. EU associations and national associations have developed a division of labor which extends also to different phases of the political process: EU associations concentrate their activities on the early stages of the policy-making cycle whereas many national associations come only in when European policies are implemented in the member states. The division of labor is more blurred when it comes to lobbying the EU institutions that are more responsive to national interests, namely the EU Council and the European Parliament. Nonetheless, in the EU multi-level system, associations act primarily on their main level of operation, and EU associations have evolved into routine interlocutors of the EU institutions, mediating between them and their national members even if this does not preclude troublesome relations at certain times. To say the least, they have turned into important negotiation arenas, and in some cases even into actors in their own right.

Furthermore, the resources that are at the disposal of interest groups matter greatly in EU politics. Well endowed associations have much better access than have-nots. They can afford to employ specialized and entrepreneurial staff which deals with EU issues. They are also able to generate more policy relevant

information than other associations which further improves their standing in EU politics. However, political exchange with the EU institutions is not just about policy information. The economic clout of business associations and their members is as important as their expert advice because the EU institutions need to take into account the economic effects of EU policies. Those interest organizations that can bring in expert information and have economic clout are important coalition partners in EU policy networks, not least because their word carries also some weight in the member states.

Interest organizations can only partially compensate for the lack of such resources: Associations that have a keen interest in EU regulation intensify their lobbying efforts and are able to obtain moderately more contacts with EU institutions. The EU Council and the European Parliament are also attentive to those organizations that are able to mobilize the media and the public. However, so far, the openness of the EU institutions and their own initiatives to draw interest organizations into the European political process does not offset the division of labor among EU and national associations and the imbalance among resourceful and less well-off actors. In fact, all EU institutions appreciate to deal with groups that have expertise, that are economically relevant and that pursue insider strategies. Hence, it is doubtful that Article 46 in the EU constitutional treaty on the political participation of civil society in EU politics and the Commission's and the Parliament's efforts to regulate consultation to a greater extent will significantly reduce the structural bias in the access patterns – unless the EU institutions are prepared to introduce substantial changes to their established criteria for consulting interest groups.

Other than that, decision making logics vary among EU institutions and to some extent also across their decision making levels. With their members being subjected to reelection pressures in the member states, the Parliament and also the Council take the ability of associations to initiate public campaigns and the public debate of EU policies notably more into account than the Commission. The European Parliament pays less attention to the internationalization of interest

groups than the other two institutions, perhaps because its members feel the need to be more responsive to national voters than to footloose industries. The vertical differentiation in the Council and in the Commission is important in that interest groups have clearly less access to the political leadership than to the working level. However, the criteria for obtaining access to each level do not differ much. To some extent, encompassing federations have better access to the working level than to the political leaders. But most notably, the strategic choices of interest groups have no impact on their access to the rather impermeable political leadership whereas they have an impact on their relations with the EU bureaucrats: an insider strategy increases the frequency of contacts with the Commission bureaucracy whereas an outsider strategy tends to reduce their number. Therefore, the fact that the EU Council and the European Parliament are slightly more receptive to outsider strategies places the associations in a dilemma: it is difficult to target public campaigns only at the Council and the Parliament but not at the Commission.

Finally, there is no clear-cut relationship among national modes of interest intermediation and the access to EU institutions. While some general hypotheses about this relationship could indeed be refuted, there are several explanations for the remaining uncertainty: First, factors other than these national modes may be more important in EU interest intermediation: in part, sectoral and organizational factors outweigh their impact. Second, the domestic modes of interest intermediation may be less different than is often said. It is likely that, after fifty years, European integration has leveled out some of these national differences. Moreover, these modes are rarely found in their pure form, rather often they are blurred. Some countries even end up in more than one type: the United Kingdom is often considered a case of pluralism (Cowles 2001) but sometimes also depicted as statist (Schmidt 1999). Finally, the studies on modes of interest intermediation do not pay much attention to institutional differentiation which is of great importance in this study. It may therefore be more useful to rephrase the notion of domestic embeddedness in institutional terms as German associations translated

a focus on administrative interest intermediation onto the EU level and as national associations that incorporate the domestic parliament into their lobbying strategy incorporate also the European Parliament into it.

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Tables and Figures

Table 1: Summary of hypotheses and definitions of variables

H	Variable	Effect	Operational Definition
<i>Organizational variables</i>			
1.1	Sectoral domain	+	1 Sub-sector 2 Sector 3 Cross-sectoral
1.2	Task level: EU association	+	0 (French associations), 1 EU associations
1.3.1	Federation	+	0 (Other members) 1 Members: associations
	Mixed membership group	+	0 (Other members), 1 Members: associations and firms
1.4	Membership density	+	Percentage of potential members organized by the association
1.5	Budget	+	Revenue of the association in 10,000 EURO
1.6	Interest representation	+	Share of revenues for interest representation in per cent
1.7	Expertise	+	Scale of providing political, legal, technical or economic expertise: 1 never 2 sometimes 3 often
1.8.1	Insider strategy	+	Factor scores indicating the importance of personal contacts, position papers, administrative responsibilities
1.8.2	Outsider strategy	-	Factor scores indicating the importance of media, public mobilization, presence in committees
	EU outsider strategy	+	EU associations: Factor scores indicating the importance of media, public mobilization, presence in committees
1.8.3	Nationalistic strategy	-	Factor scores indicating the importance of nationality, language, and party affiliation
<i>Sectoral variables</i>			
2.1	Internationalization	+	Foreign turnover as a share of total turnover in per cent
2.2	Economic weight	+	Employees of member firms in 1,000.
2.3	Degree of regulation / Importance of institution	+	Importance of the institution for interest representation (Commission, EP, or EU Council) from 1 (not important at all) to 6 (very important)
<i>National modes of interest intermediation</i>			
3.1	Corporatism	+	0 (French associations), 1 German associations
3.1	Pluralism	+	0 (French associations), 1 British associations

Table 2: The rate of return of the survey

	EU asso- ciations	D asso- ciations	UK asso- ciations	F asso- ciations	Firms	Total
Trade associations addressed (N)	420	727	501	350	68	2,066
Questionnaires returned (N)	185	322	206	113	34	860
Questionnaires ex- cluding international associations (N)	162	321	204	113	34	834
Rate of return (%)	40.8	44.2	40.9	32.3	50.0	40.9

Table 3: The access of business associations to the EU institutions

Institutions	Contacts of associations (in per cent, N = 800)					
	No	Annual	Half yearly	Quarter yearly.	Month- ly	Weekly
European Commission pol. leadership	46.3	21.4	15.0	9.4	5.4	2.6
European Commission working level	25.8	9.9	14.3	19.5	16.1	14.5
Council of Ministers	68.6	13.3	8.4	5.8	3.8	0.3
Coreper	61.0	10.6	10.4	9.9	6.0	2.1
Members of the European Parliament	38.0	17.4	13.4	12.9	12.8	5.6
European Parliament committees	45.4	15.6	13.0	13.0	9.4	3.6

Table 4: Who mostly initiates the contacts with the political actors on the EU level?
(in percent, N = 800).

Initiative taken by:	Never	Sometimes	Often
Business association	9.3	33.6	57.1
European Commission	28.5	54.4	17.1
EU Council	65.4	30.8	3.9
European Parliament	53.0	40.8	6.3

Table 5: Fit measures for maximum likelihood estimation

	EC political leadership	EC working level	Council of Ministers	Coreper	MEP	EP committees	Initiative: Association	Initiative: Eur. Com.	Initiative EU Council	Initiative: EP
N	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	800
K	17	17	17	17	17	17	16	16	16	16
LL Intercept	-1156.49	-1398.92	-828.97	-1003.26	-1303.40	-1216.99	-725.23	-792.99	-613.16	-700.47
LL Full model	-923.52	-1062.60	-667.84	-807.78	-1020.09	-925.78	-540.44	-684.81	-567.14	-600.44
G2 (p)	465.95 (.000)	672.65 (.000)	322.26 (.000)	390.97 (.000)	566.63 (.000)	582.42 (.000)	369.58 (.000)	216.36 (.000)	92.05	200.07
McFadden R ²	0.20	0.24	0.19	0.20	0.22	0.24	0.26	0.14	0.08	0.14
McFad. adj. R ²	0.18	0.23	0.17	0.17	0.20	0.22	0.23	0.11	0.05	0.12
McKelvey and Zavoina's R ²	0.49	0.59	0.46	0.49	0.54	0.57	0.47	0.28	0.16	0.29
AIC	2.36	2.71	1.73	2.07	2.61	2.37	1.40	1.76	1.46	1.55
BIC	-3353.60	-3075.43	-3864.96	-3585.08	-3160.45	-3349.07	-4146.48	-3857.76	-4093.09	-4026.49
Count R ²	0.52	0.46	0.70	0.63	0.47	0.55	0.70	0.60	0.68	0.66
Adj. Count R ²	0.11	0.27	0.03	0.06	0.15	0.17	0.29	0.13	0.08	0.29

Table 6: The Ordinal logit regressions: political access and political initiatives

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
	EC political leadership	EC working level	Council of Ministers	Coreper	MEP	EP committees	Initiative: Association	Initiative: Eur. Com.	Initiative: EU Council	Initiative: EP
ORGANIZATION										
<i>Organizational domain</i>										
Sectoral domain	0.049 (0.43)	-0.001 (0.01)	0.337 (2.52)**	-0.053 (0.43)	0.071 (0.67)	0.013 (0.12)	0.430 (3.41)***	-0.234 (2.06)**	-0.201 (1.64)	-0.196 (1.64)
Task level: EU Association	1.369 (4.69)***	2.027 (7.21)***	0.475 (1.42)	1.487 (4.99)***	1.005 (3.70)***	1.272 (4.46)***	1.134 (3.36)***	0.971 (3.35)***	0.164 (0.53)	1.282 (4.18)***
Federation	0.349 (1.95)*	0.344 (2.03)**	0.312 (1.50)	0.502 (2.60)***	0.157 (0.91)	0.176 (0.99)	0.222 (1.09)	0.076 (0.43)	0.190 (1.00)	0.185 (0.98)
Mixed membership	0.162 (0.77)	0.096 (0.45)	0.270 (1.11)	0.136 (0.59)	0.090 (0.43)	0.092 (0.43)	0.032 (0.12)	-0.067 (0.30)	0.390 (1.67)*	0.265 (1.16)
Membership Density	-0.006 (1.77)*	-0.003 (1.07)	-0.003 (0.81)	0.006 (1.61)	-0.006 (1.72)*	-0.007 (2.10)**	0.007 (2.18)**	0.006 (1.72)*	-0.000 (0.00)	0.002 (0.60)
<i>Organizational resources</i>										
Budget	0.003 (7.26)***	0.003 (8.26)***	0.002 (5.91)***	0.002 (6.00)***	0.003 (7.40)***	0.003 (8.47)***	0.002 (4.02)***	0.001 (2.25)**	0.000 (0.28)	0.001 (3.91)***
Interest representation	0.007 (2.55)**	0.006 (2.16)**	0.008 (2.22)**	-0.003 (0.97)	0.006 (2.08)**	0.013 (4.46)***	0.007 (1.99)**	-0.007 (2.51)**	-0.001 (0.40)	0.003 (0.86)
Expertise	0.888 (5.63)***	0.584 (4.02)***	0.625 (3.27)***	0.481 (2.76)***	0.719 (4.81)***	0.764 (4.88)***	0.862 (5.03)***	0.443 (2.88)***	0.633 (3.77)***	0.465 (2.90)***
<i>Organizational strategy</i>										
Insider strategy	0.084 (0.74)	0.418 (4.16)***	0.172 (1.24)	0.139 (1.13)	0.236 (2.37)**	0.316 (2.88)***	0.843 (8.52)***	0.607 (6.41)***	0.210 (1.98)**	0.263 (2.54)**
Nationalistic strategy	0.070 (0.89)	-0.117 (1.63)	0.113 (1.30)	0.139 (1.69)*	-0.055 (0.75)	-0.138 (1.77)*	-0.010 (0.11)	0.031 (0.40)	0.139 (1.69)*	0.189 (2.33)**
Outsider strategy	-0.123 (1.30)	-0.284 (3.32)***	0.086 (0.77)	-0.095 (0.92)	-0.080 (0.89)	-0.043 (0.45)	-0.042 (0.43)	0.148 (1.66)*	0.320 (3.25)***	0.515 (5.20)***
EU outsider strategy	0.246 (1.33)	0.306 (1.57)	0.350 (1.48)	0.184 (0.94)	0.363 (1.96)**	0.351 (1.84)*	0.445 (1.66)*	-0.021 (0.10)	-0.041 (0.19)	-0.031 (0.15)

Table 6 cont.

	EC political leadership	EC working level	Council of Ministers	Coreper	MEP	EP committees	Initiative: Association	Initiative: Eur. Com.	Initiative EU Council	Initiative: EP
SECTOR										
Internationalization	0.010 (2.86)***	0.019 (5.92)***	0.008 (1.98)**	0.009 (2.54)**	0.005 (1.59)	0.002 (0.67)	0.004 (1.10)	0.008 (2.34)**	0.003 (0.72)	0.004 (1.28)
Economic weight	0.001 (4.37)***	0.001 (2.69)***	0.000 (2.22)**	0.001 (2.74)***	0.001 (3.55)***	0.000 (2.17)**	0.000 (0.78)	0.001 (3.59)***	0.000 (2.21)**	0.000 (1.96)**
EU regulation	0.649 (7.75)***	0.807 (10.70)***	0.591 (7.47)***	0.749 (9.97)***	0.780 (11.73)***	0.744 (10.80)***				
NATIONAL MODE OF INTEREST INTERMEDIATION										
Corporatism	0.131 (0.54)	0.614 (2.82)***	0.151 (0.54)	0.405 (1.56)	-0.047 (0.21)	-0.129 (0.55)	0.343 (1.36)	0.116 (0.51)	-0.135 (0.53)	0.567 (2.24)**
Pluralism	0.237 (0.89)	0.408 (1.73)*	0.796 (2.59)***	0.708 (2.51)**	0.482 (2.02)**	0.485 (1.88)*	0.027 (0.10)	0.328 (1.33)	0.800 (2.98)***	0.939 (3.46)***

Note: Absolute value of z statistics in parentheses; * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%.

Table A 1: Access to the EU institutions by country

	Contacts (Associations in percent)						N
	No	Annual	Half yearly	Quarter yearly.	Monthly	Weekly	
<i>Panel a) Access to European Commission political leadership</i>							
EU associations	14.2	26.5	17.9	23.5	9.9	8.2	162
D associations	49.2	22.4	16.2	6.5	4.4	8.0	321
UK associations	60.3	18.6	11.8	3.9	3.9	1.5	204
F associations	58.4	15.9	13.3	7.1	4.4	0.9	113
<i>Panel b) Access to European Commission working level</i>							
EU associations	3.1	4.9	6.8	19.1	23.5	42.6	162
D associations	25.9	10.9	17.1	19.3	16.8	10.0	321
UK associations	39.2	9.3	17.2	19.1	10.3	4.9	204
F associations	33.6	15.0	11.5	21.2	14.2	4.4	113
<i>Panel c) Access to the Council of Ministers</i>							
EU associations	50.6	25.3	11.1	5.6	7.4	0.0	162
D associations	72.0	11.2	8.1	5.6	2.5	0.6	321
UK associations	75.5	8.8	5.9	5.9	3.9	0.0	204
F associations	72.6	9.7	9.7	6.2	1.8	0.0	113
<i>Panel d) Access to Coreper</i>							
EU associations	32.7	14.8	18.5	17.3	11.1	5.6	162
D associations	67.0	9.4	7.5	9.0	5.6	1.6	321
UK associations	70.6	8.8	8.3	5.9	4.9	1.5	204
F associations	67.3	11.5	10.6	8.9	1.8	0.0	113
<i>Panel e) Access to the members of the European Parliament</i>							
EU associations	16.1	14.2	14.2	19.1	22.2	14.2	162
D associations	42.1	17.8	13.7	12.2	10.3	4.1	321
UK associations	48.0	13.7	12.8	10.8	10.8	3.9	204
F associations	39.8	27.4	12.4	9.7	9.7	0.9	113
<i>Panel f) Access to the EP committees</i>							
EU associations	16.7	16.1	13.6	25.3	19.1	9.3	162
D associations	49.2	19.6	12.5	8.7	6.9	3.1	321
UK associations	57.8	8.3	12.8	11.8	7.4	2.0	204
F associations	53.1	16.8	14.2	9.7	6.2	0.0	113

Table A 2 Descriptive statistics by country

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
<i>Panel a) EU associations (N = 162)</i>				
Sectoral domain	1.75	0.67	1	3
Membership density (%)	79.47	16.07	13	100
Budget (10,000 Euro)	128.08	196.90	0	750
Resources for Interest representation (%)	57.58	26.44	5	100
Expertise (Scale)	2.01	.53	1	3
Insider strategy (Factor scores)	.34	.61	-2.33	1.20
Nationalistic strategy (Factor scores)	-.39	.95	-1.61	2.87
Outsider strategy (Factor scores)	.35	.88	-2.65	2.07
Economic weight (1,000 employees)	448.91	489.12	0	1500
Internationalization (%)	40.07	23.45	0	88
EC regulation	5.55	.92	1	6
EP regulation	4.77	.29	1	6
Council regulation	4.35	1.43	1	7.12

Table A 2 cont.

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Panel b) German associations (N = 321)				
Sectoral domain	1.76	0.62	1	3
Membership density (%)	70.20	24.20	13	99.98
Budget (10,000 Euro)	177.05	222.07	0	750
Resources for Interest representation (%)	49.95	25.15	0	100
Expertise (Scale)	2.28	.58	.307	3
Insider strategy (Factor scores)	-.09	1.11	-4.06	2.32
Nationalistic strategy (Factor scores)	.06	.98	-1.42	3.08
Outsider strategy (Factor scores)	-.20	1.01	-2.73	2.15
Economic weight (1,000 employees)	191.86	322.05	0	1500
Internationalization (%)	25.35	20.11	0	88
EC regulation	4.61	1.26	1.18	6.10
EP regulation	3.94	1.49	.52	6.88
Council regulation	3.68	1.47	.15	6.60
Panel c) UK associations (N = 204)				
Sectoral domain	1.67	0.74	1	3
Membership density (%)	61.31	26.78	0	100
Budget (10,000 Euro)	151.22	214.70	0	750
Res. for Interest representation (%)	42.53	26.19	0	100
Expertise (Scale)	1.72	.51	1	3.17
Insider strategy (Factor scores)	-.54	1.08	-4.15	1.18
Nationalistic strategy (Factor scores)	.08	.94	-2.83	2.82
Outsider strategy (Factor scores)	-.24	1.01	-2.61	2.09
Economic weight (1,000 employees)	240.30	370.21	0	1500
Internationalization (%)	24.85	22.89	0	88
EC regulation	4.39	1.35	1	6.01
EP regulation	3.69	1.43	.13	6
Council regulation	3.45	1.45	.057	6.45
Panel d) French associations (N = 113)				
Sectoral domain	1.81	0.69	1	3
Membership density (%)	68.96	23.82	13	88
Budget (10,000 Euro)	167.46	205.72	0	750
Resources for Interest representation (%)	46.20	25.72	0	100
Expertise (Scale)	2.02	.49	1	3
Insider strategy (Factor scores)	.08	.78	-3.01	1.13
Nationalistic strategy (Factor scores)	.25	.98	-1.85	2.80
Outsider strategy (Factor scores)	.16	.93	-2.41	3.10
Economic weight (1,000 employees)	187.91	304.92	0	1500
Internationalization (%)	26.44	21.49	0	88
EC regulation (Scale)	4.74	1.14	1	6
EP regulation (Scale)	3.83	1.26	.78	6.88
Council regulation (Scale)	4.12	1.38	.15	6.05

Note: In the multiple imputation, variables measuring percentages have been bound to values between 0 and 100. The lowest value of other variables has been bound to 0 when negative values were meaningless on these variables.

Table A 3: Rank correlations among national and EU-level contacts

	German associations	British associations	French associations	EU associations
Nat. government pol. leadership – EC political leadership	0.630	0.389	0.454	0.233
Nat. government working level – EC working level	0.580	0.503	0.531	0.128
Nat. government pol. leadership – Council of Ministers	0.465	0.427	0.525	0.429
Nat. government working level – Coreper	0.383	0.363	0.387	0.293
Nat. parliament members – EP members	0.676	0.657	0.504	0.239
Nat. parliament committees – EP committees	0.670	0.568	0.414	0.247

Note. All rank correlations (Spearman's r) are significant at 0.05.

Notes

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² Exceptions are Bouwen 2002a, b and Beyers 2002.

³ The situation parallels that in U.S. interest group studies (see Baumgartner and Leech 1998).

⁴ See Maria Green Cowles' study on the role of the European Roundtable of Industrialists during the formulation and implementation of the Internal Market Program (1997).

⁵ In the social dialogue, the social partners have been accorded the rights to develop EU policy proposals and to implement these policies in the member states (Martin and Ross 1999)

⁶ For different theoretical lenses on the EU institutions, see Tsebelis and Garrett 2001, Moravcsik 1998; Stone Sweet *et al.* 2001.

⁷ The expertise scale is based on three variables that indicate how often (never, sometimes, or often) associations provide legal, economic, or political expertise to political institutions. (Cronbach's alpha: 0.68).

⁸ The three strategy factors presented in H 4.9 to H 4.11 have been extracted from eleven variables by means of a principal components analysis. The original variables indicate either the *importance* of different criteria for selecting contact partners (nationality, language, administrative responsibility, party membership) on a scale from 1 (not at all important) to 6 (very important) or the *usefulness* of different ways of representing interests (position papers, personal contacts, regular contacts and background information, targeted contacts and information, presence in committees and hearings, scientific expertise, mobilization of public and media) at EU level. The three factors cover 62 percent of the variance of these variables. ‚Insider strategy‘ has an Eigenvalue of 4.0 and extracts 36 percent of the variance, ‚nationalistic strategy‘ has an Eigenvalue of 1.7 and extracts 16 percent, and ‚outsider strategy‘ has an Eigenvalue of 1.0 and extracts 9 percent. Since these strategies need not be mutually exclusive, an oblique rotation was performed. ‚Insider‘ loads highly on administrative responsibilities and personal contacts and moderately on committee presence and scientific expertise. ‚Nationalism‘ loads highly on nationality and language and to a lesser extent on party membership. ‚Outsider‘ loads highly on presence in committees, scientific expertise, and mobilization of media and public and is moderately correlated with ‘insider’ (Pearson’s r: 0.40).

⁹ Readily available breakdowns of EU political regulation in different issue areas are highly aggregated (see the attempt in Stone-Sweet et al. 2001).

¹⁰ The counter-argument runs as follows: These assessments are highly subjective. Associations consider only those institutions as important with whom they maintain contacts. However, this begs the question why they maintain these contacts in the first place. Conceiving of business associations as boundedly rational organizations whose survival depends on the extraction of resources from both their members and state institutions, it is plausible to assume that they maintain contacts with those EU institutions that provide crucial resources to them – i.e. information about EU policies and influence on EU decision-making.

¹¹ Corporatism is measured by a dummy variable for German associations, and pluralism is measured by a dummy variable for UK associations. French associations are the reference category. As a result of this operationalization, French associations are also the reference category for the effect of the task level which compares EU associations to national associations. To assess the difference among EU and national associations, I also take into account the size of the three regression coefficients.

¹² The sample is based on the following sources: Oeckl 1996, Conseil National du Patronat Francais (1997), Henderson and Henderson (1995), European Commission (1996).

¹³ Economic branches from agriculture, industry, and services are included. The largest branch is trade with a share of 13.8% of all associations.

¹⁴ I used SPost (Long and Freese 2001) to calculate these measures.