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EU-focused knowledge and its potential for mobilization

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Abstract

After the accession to the European Union in 2004 and 2007, political actors of new member states are equally represented in all EU institutions. In addition to the political level, a huge body of medium to high-level administrative staff and lobbyists has moved to this specific European labour market. After a phase of asymmetrical power constellations during the accession process, how can, after 2004, the real participation in the policy-making process in the enlarged EU of 25 Member States (EU-25) be characterized? How do participants of Central and East European Member States (EU-8) act in the new surrounding, given that all EU-institutions themselves are much more heterogeneous and in a process of consolidation and adjustment? Given that newcomers could not yet fully exploit the possibilities of negotiations in the policy-making process and their style of lobbying, negotiating and bargaining still is in need of a necessary fine-tuning, the aim of this paper is to highlight constellations in the field of EU cohesion policy, in which actors of this Brussels scene were - although regarded as a peripheral group - able through formal and informal exchange of knowledge to act as promoters of the elaborated EU-inspired thinking and socio-economic positioning. Factors influencing the arena of negotiations are, firstly, whether participants are - at a societal-cultural level - able to react in an adequate manner. This personal disposition is based on working experience and the study background, thus the level of socialisation in an international and European-oriented context. The second vector of influence is based on the national background and on domestic politics: Which is the room of manoeuvre for participants to act as promoter or transmitter?

The analysis of this potential for mobilization is based on expert interviews with MEP, EU officials and lobbyists of new member states carried through in spring and autumn of 2007 in Brussels.

Keywords

Europeanization; new Member States; Poland; tacit knowledge, cohesion policy, Lisbon Strategy

Introduction

When you know how the EU machinery is working, then the process of policy-making increasingly becomes a creative process.

After the accession to the European Union in 2004 and 2007, political actors of former communist countries are equally represented in all EU institutions. In addition to the political level, a huge body of medium to high-level administrative staff and lobbyists has moved to this specific European labour market. While working as politicians, officials or lobbyists in the institutional structures of the EU, these actors get in dept acquainted with the Brussels style of working and the elaborated code of negotiation. At the same time, these experts maintain a frequent and regular exchange with actors on the national level, thus forming a specific "*Brussels scene*".

Since the beginning of accession negotiations at the end of the 1990s, all categories of actors have been familiarized with the Brussels administrative arena and the negotiating style. They were able to gain working experience in EU-related line ministries, organisations and political committees. After a phase of asymmetrical power constellations during the accession process, how can, after 2004, the real participation in the policy-making process in the enlarged EU of 25 Member States (EU-25) be characterized? How do the new participants of Central and East European Member States (EU-8)¹ act in the new surrounding, given that all EU-institutions themselves are much more heterogeneous and in a process of consolidation and adjustment? The year 2004 thus marked a new and at the same time unique situation for old and new Member States alike².

Starting in 2004, negotiations for the *Financial Perspective 2007-2013* with implications for the *EU Cohesion Policy* and the *Common Agricultural Policy* (CAP) have been on the agenda for two years. The results as to financial arrangements did not fully meet the expectations of delegations of new Member States. Nevertheless some financially minor, but innovative aspects forwarded by actors of the EU-8 (by single delegations, by the group of EU-8 or by the *Visegrád* group) were incorporated in the new regulations. So they were partially able to carve out creative niches.

In general, these lengthy negotiations were characterized by participants of the new Member States as a "real learning area" and a "healthy ferment"³. This means that inherent difficulties among the "newcomers" as well as misperceptions and non-acceptance among old Member States were part of the game: On the one hand, actors of the EU-8 did not yet possess of refined negotiation capacities and capabilities which include an openness to cooperate with different partners and to have a feeling for the necessary early mobilization and for active formal and

¹ To avoid repetition, the labels Central and Eastern Europe and EU-8 are used interchangeably for the new Member States of the accession round of 2004; the same applies to old Member States and EU-15.

² This means that the institutional and policy arrangements of the enlarged EU are not yet "locked in" (Goetz 2006: 13) and that the European project is inherently in flux (Taggart/Szczerbiak 2004: 23).

³ Expert interview with a representative of the Permanent Representation of Poland to the European Union, Brussels, March 2007.

informal modes of participation. In addition, the demonstration of a sometimes too strong self-confidence and self-assertion of outstanding actors of Central and East European Member States could be mentioned: The Polish delegation is blamed for an aggressive way of negotiating and of demonstrating a very national rhetoric as to the *Reform Treaty* (Lang 2006; Langenohl/Westphal 2007: 7ff.).

On the other hand, the nature of established negotiation structures and codes of conduct among old Member States made it difficult for newcomers to define and find trustworthy partners: in the different EU institutions defenders of the status quo were reluctant to open the structures of long-established “inner circles” based on and built upon long-shared experience to new groups and communities. This has effectively counteracted the smooth integration of newcomers and has complicated the effective participation in existing patterns of decision-making (Langenohl/Westphal 2006: 10). In consequence these factors have largely hindered the emergence of inclusive modes of policy-making within different EU Institutions.

Finally, this leads to the perception that even several years after the accession still asymmetrical forms of bargaining and negotiations can be seen and that, indirectly, power differentials among Member States are portrayed⁴. In addition the perception among EU-8 is that they see themselves as peripheral to their negotiation partners.

Now the Mid-term Evaluation of the *Financial Perspective 2007-2013* is on top of the agenda of actors of all EU-Institutions. This intergovernmental bargaining process has again implications for the future orientation of financially most significant policy fields such as the Common Agricultural Policy and Cohesion Policy⁵ as well as for areas such as environment and the enlargement policy. Therefore, the capacity for a clever and early positioning in these contexts has a high relevance for the socio-economic context of Central and Eastern European Member States of the EU.

Given that newcomers could not yet fully exploit the possibilities of negotiations in the policy-making process and their style of lobbying, negotiating and bargaining still is in need of a necessary fine-tuning, the aim of this paper is to highlight constellations, in which actors of this Brussels scene were - although regarded as a peripheral group - able through formal and informal exchange of knowledge to act as promoters of the elaborated EU-inspired thinking and socio-economic positioning. The analysis of this potential for mobilization is based on expert interviews with Polish (and Hungarian) lobbyists, EU officials and Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) carried through in spring and autumn of 2007 in

⁴ These structural mismatches are among other things expressed by hard facts such as by grouping newcomers differently with regard to official charts and statistics: In the context of the *ECOFIN-Council* there exist stability and convergence programmes for EU-15 (I) and EU-12 (II). This means that the 12 new Member States are dealt with in “stability and convergence programmes II”, although some of them are already part of the Euro zone (homepage of Council of Ministers, 7 March 2008).

⁵ The launch of the *Fourth Cohesion Report* in autumn of 2007 marked the starting point for a European-wide debate. At the same time, the national and regional absorption capacities of funding frame the possibility for financially important follow-up programmes.

Brussels. The empirical analysis focus the EU cohesion policy due to its cross-sector potential: This means that cohesion policy involves environmental aspects, enlargement and energy policy as well as the second pillar of CAP, the rural development.

Factors influencing the actual arena of negotiations are, firstly, whether participants are - at a societal-cultural level - able to react in an adequate manner. This personal disposition is based on working experience and the study background, thus the level of socialisation in an international and European-oriented context. To what extent does the new generation of staff already represent modern diplomats for Europe? The second vector of influence is based on the national background and on domestic politics: Which is the room of manoeuvre for participants to act as promoter or transmitter? In other words, when it comes to the contextualisation of actors' behaviour the level of independence is important: To which degree are persons involved able to speak in the name of the EU-Institution and thus to transmit the philosophy of the relevant EU institution⁶? To what extent does a general consensus among elites (and the public) exist that EU membership is beneficial in the long run? To combine the factors: What kind of coalitions are actors of the Brussels scene willing (personally) and able (externally dominated or influenced) to form? These questions are coupled with the necessary acceptance of the open-endedness of decision-making and the fact that benefits are long-termed and somewhat abstract (Taggart/Szczerbiak 2004).

The expected outcome is the application of refined negotiation capacities which include an openness for mutual dialogue and the ability to create incentives for a consensual behaviour (in order to form coalitions), while being flexible and dynamic. Thus a feeling for different, soft steering methods is needed, while "having fun" to convince and to persuade. In addition, the willingness and ability to argue out of the philosophy of the relevant EU institution is needed and part of the game. In the context of transferring normative aspects, the capacity of actors to easily intertwine policy fields and topics in a clever way is requested. In the field of EU Cohesion Policy the willingness to promote instruments related to the *Lisbon Strategy* is necessary. By using soft diplomacy, the EU personnel is able to multi-varietly adopt to the situation, to grasp the opportunities and finally to carve out creative niches. Thereby, an increasingly European-oriented motivation of promoters is manifesting both horizontally (among EU institutions) as well as in vertical administrative contexts.

Conceptual lenses

Discussions in political science and sociology focus the consolidation phase of the transformation process in combination with Europeanization or EU-ization (Langenohl/Westphal 2007; Kutter/Trappmann 2006). These debates are also applicable for the work in the new institutional structures of the European Union. In addition, *multi-level governance* is the new game in town, which entails formal and informal lobbying and negotiation mechanisms as well as soft forms of steering. Actual fields of applications are the *Lisbon Strategy* including concepts such as the

⁶ Normative aspects e.g. of the EU Cohesion policy are embedded in the philosophy of EU institutions and find expression in drafts and reports of cohesion policy's regulations.

Open Method of Coordination (Tömmel 2006; Leiber 2007) as well as urban governance (Marshall 2005).

Sociological approaches refer to the notion of “tacit knowledge”, which goes back to the work of Polanyi (1985): a “canon of knowledge” is forming an integral part of the individual and social life. This canon not only entails explicit forms of knowledge to be learnt, but also deep-rooted and prevailing forms of implicit knowledge. This knowledge has the function to be an essential cultural frame in the context of daily working and acting.

“It is not only instrumental in helping finding one’s way through the labyrinth of modern, differentiated and pluralized societies, but also implies understandings of a certain moral order that cannot be reduced to its functionality in steering social practices. Usually the implied reference of the pursuing of social practices to social imaginaries and their normative taint goes without saying. Under conditions of societal transformation, however, practices become transparent as to their moral references, and thus questionable and criticisable on the grounds of their normative embeddedness and their moral implications” (Langenohl/Westphal 2007: 9).

With regard to normative socio-economic aspects underlying European policy fields, the relevant philosophy of EU institutions towards that policy field has been formed over a long period of time. It finds expression in the policy content as well as in the promotion of certain procedures, by which the policy is carried through. Nevertheless these underlying norms and rules are a dynamic explanans; they are thus susceptible to processes of adaptations and changes over time.

Moreover, the relevant codes of communication and codes of bargaining, applicable in the daily administrative and political work as well as in the internal decision-making processes of EU institutions, have been internalized by the EU personnel, the national delegations, the lobbyists and the MEPs, respectively⁷. The enlargement of the European Union entails a kind of societal transformation within EU institutions: While internal and external rules of the game become transparent, this implicit knowledge has to be incorporated and habitualized by members of the group of EU-8. While the foundation of this knowledge is a dynamic one that allows for continuity as well as for changes, this special transformation phase might entail a recomposition or a reconfiguration of formalized knowledge and of principle frameworks⁸ to be applicable in the enlarged EU of now 27 Member States. The circulation of ideas and values as well as the application of new strategies and innovative approaches can be described as cognitive Europeanization, in which personal and institutionalized aspects are interwoven (Langenohl/Westphal 2007: 2). In general, concepts with reference to “implicit knowledge”, social capital or “common sense” enable to put an academic gloss on insights of social practice that seem obvious, and at other times yield surprising results.

⁷ Implicit knowledge can be realized inter-subjectively by socialization. Thereby, knowledge either retains its implicit form or it will be externalized, and thus transformed into explicit knowledge. This happens through the process of articulation and codification.

⁸ While the knowledge is subject to different traditions, it is changeable and flexible through daily action and experience. In the long run, also rules of institutions are considered as being permeable and are thus considered to be possibly reconstructed.

The actual dilemmas and difficulties of the societies of new Member States in the phase of consolidation are conceptually underpinned by political culture, cultural legacies, traditions of election and euro-scepticism (Taggart/Szczerbiak 2004) as well as by aspects of collective identity (Ademczyk/Gostmann 2007).

Vectors of Influence

The first factors influencing the degree of socialization and embeddedness in the internal negotiation structures of relevant EU institution as well as the frames of perception, are skills and training of actors of the EU-8: The highly skilled staff of the Brussels scene might have benefited from traineeships or preparatory administrative programmes such as *Twinning*⁹, the observer status in EU institutions such as the *Committee of Regions* and the *European Parliament*. This has enabled the participants of the Candidate States to already getting a feeling for the setting and the internal (explicit and implicit) rules of each institution.

Moreover, in the field of training and education actors might have participated in European-focused study programmes and language courses before the accession in 2004. Through multi-lingual interdisciplinary education and training there is an indirectly growing elite consensus over Europe: "One has to bear in mind that throughout the region there is a relatively high degree of consensus among (political) elites about the positive nature of European integration" (Taggart/Szczerbiak 2004: 3). While the quality of human capital in the European-centred administration is improving, a re-formation or a refining of knowledge takes place: The capacity of this elite-circle enables for a differentiated EU-focused thinking within line ministries and back-offices to support the Brussels actors in a qualified way.

From the perspective of new East and Central European Member States the year of accession 2004 marked a rapid and dense flow of EU-focused expertise to the Brussels arena. At the same time it is clear that a great number of EU administrative staff is allotted from national line ministries for a period of three to five years. Within the group of EU-8 the potential to nominate high-qualified EU personnel from line ministries and from political parties for posts in the Brussels scene varies. A characteristic of these newly formed networks is that they are composed of relatively young, dynamic and flexible professionals. This means that they are likely to regard the period of election, delegation or allotment in the Brussels arena as a further step of underlying carrier opportunities in the national context.

With respect to Cohesion Policy the Polish side was able to send and to nominate (much more intensively than e.g. the Hungarian side) experts in the field of regionalisation and strong advocates of an integrated regional policy: They possess technical and administrative expertise and they are personalities with a European mission (personal expertise). Consequently, they were allotted high ranking posts such as *Commissioner for Regional Policy* within the European Commission or (Vice-)Chairmen of Committees in the European Parliament such

⁹ On the basis of *Twinning* programmes bilateral administrative contacts between administrative staff of old and new Member States which proved valuable might be continued on a regular basis. These networks which represent a form of transnational openness, are informal training areas.

as the *Committee for Regional Development*. These persons have in common that they have an international academic background in combination with formerly high-ranking posts within the national administration and the political scene respectively¹⁰. While they are using the Brussels experience to shape their respective home career, they are supposed to have strong connections to the national part of the Brussels scene.

The second factor refers to the political background in East and Central European Member States to allow for a relative independence and support which also implies a close, trustworthy and open correspondence with national actors of the Brussels scene. That means that there must be congruence between the content of European-inspired thinking and the national elite's positioning on the transnational European integration process. Moreover, optimal chains of communication to transfer the European-inspired knowledge adequately have to be guaranteed.

This European-inspired thinking affects questions of economic redistribution, welfare and governmental regulation of the economy. These modes of distribution are combined with several non-economic issues such as ecologist, gender and lifestyle (Marks et al 2006: 157). In other words this implies norms and rules set by EU institutions to handle e.g. EU Cohesion Policy and the European employment policy, thus the *Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs*, and cross-sections such as the urban dimension, innovation policy, environmental protection, sustainable growth and even enlargement and energy policy. These consolidated ideals of Western civilization also affect procedural aspects such as participatory decision-making. In this logic e.g. the *European Parliament* is the embodiment of issues such as regionalization, culture, support of cultural and linguistic diversity as well as social and territorial cohesion, which is now even codified in the *Treaty of Lisbon*.

Given the political and economic transnationalization, which European integration implies, it has to be reflected that the state is still a central agent and a centre stage for transnational processes as well as a vehicle for transnational democratization (Langenohl/Westphal 2007: 8ff.). Moreover, it is important to understand the domestic context of party competition in order to gain a full picture of the context for national elite positions on European integration (Taggart/Szczerbiak 2004: 17f.). In other words, parties can be considered as gatekeepers for European interaction: European argumentation is closely related to positions in their party systems (Taggart/Szczerbiak 2004: 2). Consequently, actors of the Brussels scene are through direct or indirect party affinity embedded in different frames of political thinking, which implies understandings of a certain moral order and based on different regulatory ideas as to wealth distribution within a given society (Langenohl/Westphal 2007: 8). Actors have thus to adequately articulate political-societal projects to react to developments such as fragmenting,

¹⁰ Apart from Commissioner Mrs. Danuta Hübner, the MEPs Mr. Janowski (Civic Platform - *Platforma Obywatelska* (PO)) and Mr. Olbrycht (PO) and Mr. Sariusz-Wolski (PO) can be mentioned. While from 2004 onwards, e.g. the latter has been (Vice-) Chairman of the Committee for External Affairs, he used to be Minister for European Affairs 1991-1996 and 2000-2001 and Councillor for the Prime Minister for questions relating to European Integration. In addition, he was Vice-Director of the European-oriented University of Natolin, Poland.

disintegrative and exclusionary dynamics within societies. It is a discernible pattern that it is easier for actors of oppositional parties to support pro-European views and of having an increased interest to demonstrate leadership (Taggart/Szczerbiak 2004). The capacity for strategic thinking and the addressee-orientation among politicians and administrative staff of the Brussels scene also depends on the frequency of governmental changes: Political changes might be coupled with a shuffling of personnel and thematic reorientations as well as with necessary changing loyalties¹¹.

As to the second factor it can be stated that Polish political activists for regional policy of the Brussels scene are predominately pro-market libertarian oriented. This means that their party affiliation allows them - as concerns EU issues - to support so-called new politics dimensions such as environment and participatory decision-making (Henderson 2001: 10 in Marks et al 2006: 168). While parties aiming at a pro-market libertarian orientation were in opposition since the Polish parliamentary elections of 2005 e.g. MEPs belonging to the *PO* were still in a position to argue more quality than quantity-oriented, together with a view on side-policy fields: Given that opposition party members were nationally not directly responsible for the negotiation outcomes of the *Councils of Ministers*, they have had the freedom to think in different categories and to carve out creative niches while articulating political-societal projects. In this logic they could use the moral embeddedness and integrational power of the relevant EU institution (and the party family) for their transnational argumentation, while demonstrating an openness for different regulatory ideas and an abandoning of nationally embedded practices of norm- and rule-setting. This tendency is supported by the Polish personnel of EU institutions such as the *European Commission* and the *Council of Ministers*, which has been selected through big parties already in 2004.

The negotiation potential of actors of the New Member States

In the empirical part three examples are highlighted to illuminate the power of the alleged peripheral group of EU-8. That means that the management of structural mismatches might be beneficial for the so called outsiders. This inferior position enables actors of this *inner circle* vis-à-vis their negotiation partners to

- be taken as an example because they have an openness for new thematic fields (e.g. eco-tourism in the field of agriculture);
- introduce or suggest new and creative ways of thinking;
- have the "right" to act in a contra-factual way, which might at first sight suggest a naïve way of behaving.

Due to the similar authoritarian legacy, the commonly shared accession process, thus the experience of "Europeanization from scratch" there is less diversity and more bunching among the EU-8. Seen from the socio-economic angle, the group of EU-8 formed net recipients with high expectations as to the volume and the intensity of structural funds and CAP allowances. Within this new embeddedness, some communities or clusters might again take the leadership: This might be true for the Polish delegation due to the size of the delegation and the respective

¹¹ In contrast to possible changes in the national context, which might happen at a quicker pace, the seven political core fractions of the *European Parliament* are forming kind of an established pool.

administrative potential or for the *Visegrád group* as a special form of *inner circle*, which goes back to geographic and historical-cultural proximity.

Based on the advantage of a small number of interlocuters, already in 2004, Working Groups among officials from the *Permanent Representations of Member States* in Brussels were formed. To compensate for uncertainties regular, weekly meetings and exchanges of additional information were organized on the basis of the EU-8.

To gain an insight into the potential of the EU-8, three examples are highlighted in the following. These small case studies are based on increasingly popular themes.

New legal instrument: *European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation* (EGTC)

The main input for the introduction of this framework legal instrument and thus the upgrade of the goal of territorial cohesion stems from the *European Parliament* in close cooperation with the *DG Regio* of the *European Commission*. The underlying assumption, which reflects the philosophy of the European Parliament, is to incorporate the territorial dimension into Community policies, given the real impact of sectoral policies – such as transport, environment, competition and research policy – on the territory of the European Union. The initial draft, which included a thematically broad arrangement and combined interregional, intraregional and transnational dimensions was strongly supported by the Polish rapporteur, nominated by the *Committee on Regional Development* in the EP, Mr Jan Olbrycht (PO). The former president of *Upper Silesia* is a strong advocate for a far-reaching regionalization. It is remarkable that - in the context of EU cohesion policy - he was the only politician out of MEPs of the EU-8 to be nominated as rapporteur for a draft regulation under the procedure of co-decision. Moreover, as a member of the *European People's Party* he has the standing and the openness to bargain with other national delegations and to closely co-operate with other EU-institutions. In this context, he could benefit from close and long-lasting personal contacts with the Commissioner Mrs Danuta Hübner and with the *Committee of the Regions* (CoR)¹². Although the draft first met with resistance from various old Member States based on a fear of loss of national sovereignty and of a too strong local or regional level, finally the Council's Common Position supported key elements of the initial draft to manage cross-border projects more effectively. In addition, an institutionalized integration of the *CoR* on the procedural side could be initiated for the first time: This indirect instrumentalization of the *CoR* throws new lines into the division of work of EU institutions and is an example of an – up to date – unusual inter-institutional cooperation.

It has to be admitted that the introduction of this legal instrument was possible also due to its relatively cost-free stance. When it comes to the application, regionally elected Polish MEPs such as Mr. Mieczyslaw Edmund Janowski (PO) were again strong advocates for the introduction of diverse cross-border projects in the

¹² As a member of the board on the *Association of European Regions* and his former activities for the regionalization of Poland during the 1990s Mr. Olbrycht is already well-recognized in the Brussels scene and known as a smooth cooperation partner. Expert interview with a representative of the Permanent Representation of Poland to the European Union, Brussels, March 2007 and expert interview with a lobbyist of a Polish region, Brussels, September 2007.

Regional Operational Programmes of their constituencies. In addition, members of the group of EU-8 might benefit from additional money from the title for External Policy for the support of cross-border projects along EU's external borders. This means that although the Polish delegation was said to play the nationalistic card (as to the *Reform Treaty*), the enthusiastic advocacy for the introduction of the *EGTC* underlines a liberal stance.

To sum up, the notion of territorial cohesion not only respects the principle of the *Lisbon Strategy* by strengthening the cluster and network approach together with a focus on the urban dimension, but it is now also fixed in the *Lisbon Treaty*.

Policy framing through the introduction of *Housing*

The second example scrutinizes the policy-making process for the introduction of a new theme within the financially most important goal *convergence*. With regard to policy framing the stress on the theme of *housing* underlines the importance of the urban dimension and could be interpreted as a contribution to discussions of the newly launched energy efficiency debate and the energy productivity discussion. In addition, it implied aspects of social inclusion, thus another principle underlying the European project.

Based on the family of nation's argument the introduction of this theme has been promoted by representatives of former *Visegrád* countries¹³: Based on shared problems with the conversion of unused industrial buildings, beneficiaries should be exclusively new Member States. The final introduction of this policy strand in the *General Provision* of EU cohesion policy in mid-2006 was remarkable, since the financing of housing aspects happens for the first time ever. In general, it follows the actual European-wide tendency that the urban dimension is strengthened by a separate *Communication of the European Commission* in autumn of 2006. In addition, energy efficiency aspects have become increasingly important during the last years, reflected in the agenda of the *Summit of G-8*. In sum, the group of EU-8 has proved to be forerunners and has carved out a creative niche.

New modes of governance: the politics of new financial instruments

The third example reflects the introduction of new financial instruments and the application of new procedures. The underlying assumption is that a set of new instruments is used as a vehicle to support the goals of the updated *Lisbon Strategy* of 2005: The main aim is to ensure an integrated approach to the enhancement of competitiveness and growth in Europe which includes active labour market instruments such as training and retraining, but also focus the urban dimension, innovation policy, energy policy as well as rural development.

In the negotiation phase actors of the group of EU-8 showed an affinity for the introduction and the application of new financial instruments such as *Jaspers*, *Jeremie* and *Jessica*. As to e.g. *Jeremie* the application of *Public Private Partnership* under the financially most attractive goal *convergence* is to improve

¹³ The Hungarian delegation has taken the lead when massive lobbying activities were launched. Expert Interview, European Commission, GD Regio, March 2007.

the business environment and to promote employment growth among small and medium-sized enterprises (SME). Priority projects might focus the creation of the knowledge-based (innovative) economy, the improvement of access to capital of the SME sector and the development of industrial and logistics parks.

In practice, the stress on this dimension was beneficial for the five socio-economically poorest regions in Poland. At the end of the financial negotiations in mid-2006, additional money is granted to five *vojevodships* with the obligation to stress and to support the innovation capacity. At the same time, the notion of public private partnership refers to a process-orientation with the involvement and commitments of local partners. These arrangements include alliances of knowledge between universities and enterprises and thus narrow nationally embedded practices of norms and rule-setting.

In the context of lobbying for a regionally based innovation-orientation the strong input from the Polish MEP Mr Mieczyslaw Edmund Janowski¹⁴ (PO) should be mentioned. He is the author of an *Initiative Report* on „the contribution of the future regional policy to the innovative capacity of the EU”, adopted in the spring of 2007. During the redaction of the report he has closely cooperated with a Dutch MEP of the same political fraction, sharing the affinity of the principle of “open innovation”. Moreover, Mr Janowski is a regionally based advocate for the necessary information campaign as to the broad application of instruments such as *Jeremie* and *Jaspers*. In consequence, Poland was among the first to open a liaison office in Warsaw in 2007 for *Jaspers*: While showing a great amount of goodwill, the Polish authorities’ part of the Brussels scene are regarded as forerunners. Moreover, based on the *Twinning* experience, regular networking conferences focusing the innovation capacity are organized with Dutch partners. While bilaterally exchanging experience, promoting increased cooperation and improving the coordination between relevant actors at all levels, the potential for *best practice* under the *Open Method of Coordination* is used.

These newly launched instruments can be financially more or less ignored. Nevertheless, they are quality-oriented and they might thus entail long-lasting, wide-spread effects on the procedural side. It can be stated that the Polish MEPs were able to benefit from the vectors of opportunity based on the internal philosophy of the European Parliament. Moreover, possessing of the necessary political background, they were able to fulfil their role as transmitter of the European-inspired approach as to the innovation and cross-border orientation into the national and regional socio-economic contexts.

Conclusions

The aim of this paper was to nuance the understanding of bargaining from the perspective of newcomers. This paper has provided a preliminary mapping of negotiation tactics and strategies of actors of the EU-8. In presenting three case studies it has become clear that there exists a potential for successful negotiations, which yielded surprising results on the policy, politics and even polity

¹⁴ Mr Janowski was a mayor of *Rzeszów* and a former Senator to represent *Torún*. Since the beginning of the 1990s he is interested in the regionalization of Poland and he is a founding member of the *Polish Association of Cities*.

level. Actors of the group of EU-8 could successfully use their outsider status and the semi-optimal integration as an instrument to reinforce their negotiation possibilities. The newcomers were thus able to positively “play the card of underdogs”.

It remains an open question whether participants now better know how to cope with the knowledge of increased - by definition multilateral - possibilities of negotiations in the concert of now 27 Member States, while being alert to the *Reform Treaty* as a future basis of conduct. Are actors of the EU-8 now fully incorporated into the internal structures of supranational institutions of the EU? In addition, it remains to be seen, whether regional formations or clusterings such as the *Visegrád Group* will pertain as new inner circles, based on smooth cooperation during the last years.

In a medium term perspective actors of the EU-8, which are socialized and embedded in the internal structures, might increasingly be able to argue out of the corpus of the respective EU institution. This dynamic and somewhat transformed knowledge might be incorporated in the working agenda or the philosophy of a department of the European Institution or in the work of the national context of the Brussels scene.

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