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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