

MSc Programme in International Public Policy and Public Management

Master Thesis

Lobbying and democracy

Can lobbying contribute to democracy in the EU?



Rotterdam, 11-08-2005

C.C. (Tinka) Bleijenberg (266439)

Noordmolenstraat 58

3035 RL Rotterdam

010-2650071

tinkableijenberg@hotmail.com

First reader: Dr. Daemen

Second reader: Prof.dr. Van Schendelen

28.932 words

Foreword

In the last couple of years, my academic education has provided me with several modules in European Union politics and governance. These modules have interested me due to the fact that EU politics and policy is such a delicate and (structurally) complicated process to understand and study. Another of my interests is democracy and how countries and organizations try to become more democratic. I have written several papers on the topic over the last years, and I wanted to combine my interest for the EU with my interest for democracy in the project that concludes my academic studies at the Erasmus University Rotterdam.

It is common knowledge that lobby groups are active at EU level. How does this influence the process of democratizing the EU and its decision-making? Some scholars argue that lobbying affects this process negatively because of its lack of transparency and accountability, while others highlight its positive contributions towards output legitimacy and efficiency. The problem to be investigated is thus the fact that there are different perceptions of lobbying activities in the EU.

I would like to explore these views more deeply in my project. That is why I decided to link lobbying in the EU with democracy. Of course, it is impossible to cover the whole lobby circuit in Brussels or the meaning of democracy for that matter, since they are both so vast and encompassing. This means that there are clear restrictions to the findings and outcomes of this project, and the conclusions will not be widely applicable. This project should be seen as an exploration of the lobby field and how its activities can be linked to the development of democracy in the EU.

The sector in which I want to conduct my research is the agricultural sector, one of the most important receivers of lobbying attention since its early beginnings. The policies coming from the DG AGRI have been controversial due to the preferential treatment of EU farmers affecting the whole world market. However, agricultural policy has been receiving a lot of attention from critics lately, and consumer and other interest groups outside the farm and industrial lobby are now getting involved in the process of agricultural decision-making. At the end of the project, I want to assess whether lobbying in the agricultural sector can contribute to EU democracy, since democracy has taken such a centre place in the goals for the EU in the present and future. My aim is to be able to formulate recommendations on the topic and to assess whether lobbies help the process of democratization in the EU.

Rotterdam, 11 August 2005

Table of contents

LIST OF FIGURES	10
LIST OF TABLES	10
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	11
ABSTRACT	13
1. INTRODUCTION.....	15
1.1 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE AND QUESTIONS.....	15
1.1.1 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE	15
1.1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	15
1.2 RELEVANCE AND AIMS.....	15
1.2.1 SCIENTIFIC AIM.....	15
1.2.2 PRACTICAL RELEVANCE	16
1.3 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS.....	17
1.4 OUTLINE OF THE THESIS.....	17
1.5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	17
2. LOBBYING IN THE EU	19
2.1 INTRODUCTION	19
2.1.1 BRIEF HISTORY OF EUROPEAN LOBBYING	19
2.1.2 TYPES OF INTEREST REPRESENTATION	21
2.2 REASONS FOR LOBBYING	23
2.3 THE EU INSTITUTIONS AND LOBBYING	24
2.3.1 DECISION-MAKING IN THE EU	24
2.3.2 THE COMMISSION	26
2.3.3 THE COUNCIL	27
2.3.4 THE PARLIAMENT	28
2.4 MAIN PLAYERS IN AGRICULTURAL LOBBYING.....	29
2.4.1 COPA-COGECA	29
2.4.2 CEJA	31
2.4.3 ETUC	31
2.4.4 BEUC	32
2.4.5 CIAA	32
2.4.6 SOME REMARKS	33
2.5 CONCLUSION	33
3. DEMOCRACY IN THE EU.....	35
3.1 INTRODUCTION	35
3.2 DEMOCRACY IN INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS	35
3.3 DEMOCRACY IN THE EU	37
3.3.1 DEMOCRATIC DEFICIT OR NOT?	38
3.3.2 PARTICIPATION VS. REPRESENTATION	41
3.4 DEFINING DEMOCRACY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EU.....	42

3.4.1 DISCUSSION	42
3.5 SELECTION OF THE CRITERIA	44
3.5.1 ACCESS	44
3.5.2 COMPETITION	44
3.5.3 CHANNELLING	44
3.5.4 REPRESENTATION	45
3.5.5 DELIBERATION	45
3.5.6 TRANSPARENCY	46
3.5.7 LEGITIMACY	46
3.5.8 RULE OF LAW	46
3.5.9 ACCOUNTABILITY.....	47
3.5.10 CITIZENSHIP.....	47
<u>4. METHODS OF FIELD WORK.....</u>	<u>49</u>
<u>5. INTERVIEWING STAKEHOLDERS.....</u>	<u>51</u>
5.1 INTRODUCTION	51
5.2 THE STAKEHOLDER VIEWS.....	51
5.2.1 MR. GARCIA-AZCARATE, EUROPEAN COMMISSION	51
5.2.2 MRS. HILKKA SUMMA, EUROPEAN COMMISSION	54
5.2.3 MR. DICK TOET, UNILEVER	56
5.2.4 MR. FONS SCHMID, AHOLD.....	57
5.2.5 MR. JIM DIXON, RSPB	58
5.3 CONCLUSIONS	61
<u>6. HOW DEMOCRATIC ARE LOBBIES?.....</u>	<u>63</u>
6.1 INTRODUCTION	63
6.2 LINKING LOBBIES TO THE CRITERIA	63
6.2.1 ACCESS	63
6.2.2 COMPETITION	64
6.2.3 CHANNELLING	64
6.2.4 REPRESENTATION	65
6.2.5 DELIBERATION	65
6.2.6 TRANSPARENCY	66
6.2.7 LEGITIMACY	66
6.2.8 RULE OF LAW.....	67
6.2.9 ACCOUNTABILITY.....	68
6.2.10 CITIZENSHIP.....	68
6.3 CONCLUSIONS	69
<u>7. CONCLUSIONS.....</u>	<u>71</u>
7.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	71
7.1.1 CENTRAL QUESTION	71
7.1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	71
7.2 GENERAL ASSESSMENT.....	72
7.3 REFLECTION ON THE PROJECT	73

7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS	74
7.4.1 EU INSTITUTIONS AND LOBBYING.....	74
7.4.2 LOBBY GROUPS.....	74
7.4.3 FURTHER RESEARCH.....	74
<u>8. LITERATURE</u>	<u>77</u>
<u>9. APPENDIX</u>	<u>85</u>
9.1 EU INTEREST GROUPS TIMELINE	85

List of figures

Figure 1: Structure of decision-making in pillar I (EP co-decision)	25
Figure 2: EU pressure groups timeline (Gray, 1996)	85

List of tables

Table 1: Organizational forms of interest representation (Source: Bouwen, 2001).....	23
Table 2: Layered figure of the Council	27
Table 3: Popular notions of democracy (Source: Van Schendelen, 2003).....	43
Table 4: Organizational forms of interest representation (Source: Bouwen, 2001).....	49
Table 5: List of participants in field research.....	50
Table 6: Contributions of lobbies to the democratic criteria.....	69
Table 7: Organizational forms of interest representation (Source: Bouwen, 2001).....	71

List of abbreviations

BEUC	European Bureau of Consumers' Unions
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CEFIC	European Chemical Industry Federation
CIAA	Confederation of Food and Drink Industries of the EEC
COGECA	General Committee for Agricultural Cooperation
COPA	Committee of Professional Agricultural Organizations in the European Community
COREG	Committee of the Regions
COREPER	Committee of Permanent Representatives
DG AGRI	Directorate-General for agriculture of the European Commission
DG ENVI	Directorate-General for the environment
DG SANCO	Directorate-General for health and consumer protection
EC	European Community
ECJ	European Court of Justice
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EP	European Parliament
ESC	Economic and Social Committee
ETUC	European Trade Unions Confederation
EU	European Union
Euratom	European Atomic Energy Agency
IGC	Intergovernmental Conference
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
QMV	Qualified Majority Voting
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (and wildlife)
SEA	Single European Act
UN	United Nations
UNICE	Industrial Union of the European Community
WTO	World Trade Organization
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

Abstract

The aim of this project was to assess in which way lobbying could contribute to democracy in the European Union. The research was focused on the agricultural sector in the EU, since this sector has had one of the richest lobbying traditions from its start.

The main problem here was that there are different perceptions on lobbying; on the one hand, lobbying is seen as the lifeblood of any political system, on the other hand, lobbying is perceived as being secretive and non-transparent, bypassing the representative channels of the EU. To discover how people dealing with lobbies in the European agricultural sector on a daily basis thought of lobbying, several interviews were held with Commission officials, people working for major companies and one person formerly employed by an association. Their perceptions of lobbying proved to be positive in general.

On the basis of the work of Van Schendelen (2003) on the topic of democracy and lobbying in the EU, ten criteria were chosen to measure the contribution of lobby groups toward democracy. Lobbying activities were then held against these criteria, and were found to contribute positively toward most of them. Therefore, the conclusion of this project was that lobbying can certainly contribute positively toward democracy in the EU. It is however necessary for the EU institutions to build defence mechanisms to prevent lobbies from becoming too powerful and to stay open for all interests. Furthermore, lobby groups should strive to become more democratic and acting in a way that is in line with the democratic ambitions of the EU.

28.932 words

1. Introduction

1.1 Research objective and questions

1.1.1 Research objective

In this research, organizations in the Brussels agricultural lobbying circuit will be asked about their experience with specific lobbying cases in the EU. The focus of the research project is to gain insights into the effects of lobbying in the agricultural sector on the democracy level of the EU. After this, an assessment can be made on whether lobby groups in the agricultural sector improve or worsen democracy in the EU.

The objective of this research project is:

‘To improve our understanding of lobby groups in the agricultural sector and their effect on democracy in the European Union by making an assessment of how they contribute towards selected criteria of democracy.’

1.1.2 Research questions

From this research objective, the following research question has been formulated:

‘In which way does the lobbying of lobby groups in the EU agricultural sector contribute to democracy in the EU?’

Sub-questions that are relevant to answer this research question are:

- *‘How can democracy in the EU be defined and operationalized?’*
The solution will be found in chapter 3, paragraph 3.4.
- *‘Which types of interest groups are there in the agricultural sector in the European Union lobby circuit?’*
The solution will be found in chapter 2, paragraph 2.4.
- *‘How can the practice of lobbying in the EU be linked to criteria of democracy?’*
The answer will be found in chapter 5.
- *‘What are the possibilities for these interest groups to influence the EU policy-making?’*
The solution will be found in chapter 2, paragraph 2.3.
- *‘What does the practice of lobbying in the agricultural sector look like?’*
The solution will be found in chapter 4 on the interviews.

1.2 Relevance and aims

1.2.1 Scientific aim

It is important to keep in mind the higher goals in a project that symbolizes the end of academic studies. One of the greater lines is the scientific aim of the project, which reflects what the author wants to achieve and contribute to the scientific field in which the research takes place. This project is conducted for a Master programme in public administration. Therefore, its aim has to fit into the claims made in public administration:

- (1) Public administration is multidisciplinary
- (2) Public administration is descriptive but also prescriptive; the project should result in recommendations

The scientific aim of this project is to make statements regarding the contribution that lobby groups bring to democracy in the European Union. This is done from a multidisciplinary perspective by combining political science (lobbying in the EU), philosophy (democracy in the EU), business (interest representation at EU-level in the agricultural sector), and economics (with regard to the terms efficiency and effectiveness that lobbying can bring into the decision-making process). This covers the first claim that the project must be based on a multidisciplinary approach.

With regards to the second claim; the project will end in recommendations, both for lobby groups, EU institutions and further research. It will give advice to lobby groups on how to better contribute to democracy, which will be useful to them because they will be seen as more legitimate actors in the policy process if their activities contribute to democratizing the EU; to the EU institutions on how to deal better with lobby groups and on how to assess their contribution on democracy in the EU; and for further research on the topic of lobbying and democracy in the EU. It will be difficult to generalize findings since only a few stakeholders will be analyzed in just one sector – agriculture – of the many areas covered by the EU, but this risk will be taken into account in the results, conclusions and recommendations.

1.2.2 Practical relevance

An academic project must also be relevant. For a project like this one to be relevant, it must be timely and show a clear link with actual discussions. The topic of lobbying and democracy can be said to be very relevant and timely at the time that the EU is publishing more and more documents on its intents to democratize more and give more voice to its citizens as can be seen in its White Paper on governance or the Constitutional Treaty. In a broader context, there is a global discussion on democracy in international institutions such as the UN or the IMF, which shows the interest of the international community in the topic of democracy in international organizations (even if the EU is different from international organizations and can probably not be called that way, it is quite relevant to regard the democracy discussion in the EU as fitting into a wider context).

Furthermore, there is much research on lobbying in the EU. As the EU becomes involved in more areas, the lobbying community grows since groups of individuals and organizations see their chance at influencing policies that will affect their daily lives. This growth has not gone by unnoticed as can be seen from the regulations that were put into place by the European Parliament and the Commission in seeking to attach rules and good practices to lobbying. Many scholars have found a particular interest in the lobbying process, but there is not much literature that links the idea of lobbying in the EU and the contribution it can make towards democracy. Therefore, I want to contribute to the current and future research in this field by dedicating my project to the topic.

1.3 Definition of key concepts

- *Lobbying*: ‘the informal exchange of information with public authorities’ as minimal description on the one hand, and ‘trying informally to influence public authorities’ as maximal description on the other hand (Van Schendelen, 1993)
- *Interest group* (also: pressure group, lobby group): an organization that seeks to influence the policy process in order to see its positions regarding certain issues in the policy arena back in policy outputs and processes.
- *The EU agricultural sector*: for the aim of this project, it is relevant to define this as including all the areas covered by the DG Agriculture of the European Commission.
- *Influence*: A influences B, if B’s behaviour changes either in accordance with the wishes of A or in any other direction due to (the behaviour of) A (Dahl in Van Schendelen, 2002). I put ‘the behaviour of’ between brackets since A can also be responsible for the change in behaviour of B without any behavioural action.
- *Democracy*: this concept will be thoroughly explored and elaborated upon in chapter 3 to come to a good definition suitable for the EU.

1.4 Outline of the thesis

Chapter 2 will explore the history of lobbying in the EU. Chapter 3 deals with democracy in the EU and tries to define democracy and develop criteria that encompass its main characteristics. Chapter 4 presents the methods of fieldwork that are used for this project. Chapter 5 contains the interviews held with persons dealing with the EU agricultural lobbying activities. Chapter 6 links the democratic criteria selected in chapter 3 to the lobbying activities and assesses whether lobbying can contribute towards democracy based on those criteria. Chapter 7 draws conclusions and leaves room for self-reflection and recommendations.

1.5 Acknowledgements

Mr. Daemen, professor at the Erasmus University Rotterdam

Mr. Dixon, former policy officer at the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

Mr. Garcia-Azcarate, head of unit at DG AGRI of the European Commission

Mr. Van Schendelen, professor at the Erasmus University Rotterdam

Mr. Schmid, vice-president food safety and consumer health at Ahold

Mrs. Summa, head of unit at DG AGRI of the European Commission

Mr. Toet, senior regulatory adviser foods at Unilever

2. Lobbying in the EU

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Brief history of European lobbying

From the start of the integration process, interest groups have been active at EU-level. A simple explanation for this phenomenon is that these interest groups have as their goal to represent the interests of their constituency with the public authorities that have the power to take decisions in areas of concern to those specific groups (Bursens, 1996). Already before the signing of the first Treaties, 13 *groupes communautaires* were identified (Sidjanski, 1967). These were interest groups that were characterized by a loose structure and had as only goal to form an information channel between the economic sectors on the one hand and the European governments that lead the Marshall Plan on the other hand (Bursens, 1996).

With the founding of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), which was set up in 1952 in the need for a new structure to contain the resurgent heavy industries of the Ruhr and other areas within Europe, power in a restricted number of areas was shifted from the national member states – just six at the time – to a European body. A few dozen of new interest groups surged in those newly European-led areas, which were founded to actually attempt to influence European decision-making (Bursens, 1996). After the signing of the Treaties of Rome in 1957, a European Economic Community was set up. This Community attracted many more interest groups on all kinds of economic affairs, with as the most powerful and well-known interest groups COPA-COGECA (agriculture), UNICE (employers) and ETUC (trade unions). Other sectors joined in when the effects of the EEC became apparent in daily economic life. The Commission was actively involved in the creation of BEUC (consumers) in order to attract loyalty and forge alliances against the intergovernmental and national components of the EEC structure (Bursens, 1996).

Although the number of interest groups at European level has increased steadily over the years, there was one break in the growth in the 1960s, for which there are two sound arguments. The first sees the 1960s as the crisis years of the integration; the Accord of Luxemburg gave the intergovernmental part of the Community (and thus the Member States) more power, which made the necessity for groups to organize themselves at the European level less pressing (Bursens, 1996). The second explanation says that there was saturation within the formation of interest groups, since all the essential activities were unified at the European level (Sidjanski, 1982). In the 1970s, growth took over again, although during those years the main growth in the population of lobby groups came from specialized organizations that worked directly with individual companies. Disputes within sectors and the proliferation of SMEs that felt they did not belong to large organizations, have stimulated the establishment of these new organizations. Just before the Single European Act (SEA), research accounted for 659 interest groups that had set up an office in Brussels (Bursens, 1996).

The signing of the Single European Act was the start of an exponential growth of interest group activity at EC-level (Bursens, 1996; Gray, 1998; Andersen and Elliassen, 1991; Van Schendelen, 1993). This Act laid down the foundations of a single market in the EC for which all remaining physical, technical and fiscal barriers had to be removed before 31 December 1992. This would create 'an area without internal frontiers in which the free movement of goods, persons, services and capital is assured' (McCormick, 2002). Furthermore, the SEA gave the Community more responsibility in areas such as the environment, research and development, and regional policy. Also, it made economic and monetary union an EC objective and promoted cohesion (McCormick, 2002). Next to the lobbying of European federations, national federations became increasingly active at EC-level after the passage of the SEA, which can be related to the difficulties that European federations experienced in trying to get align all their members in reaching a standpoint. This led to the inability of European federations to produce more than just position papers, which were not very influential because they only represented the smallest agreement that could be reached, and did not provide the decision-makers with systematic information (Bursens, 1996). Since this was not perceived as a successful way to influence EC institutions, the members were granted more freedom to influence the institutions individually. Another new upcoming trend in interest representation was the so-called American lobbyism (Petite in Bursens, 1996). By this term, the surge of lobbying via specialized firms such as lawyers, PR consultants and other consultancy agencies is meant. Finally, the SEA also stimulated individual businesses to set up their own Brussels office next to other representation memberships (Bursens, 1996).

The recent picture with regard to who are the organized interests in Brussels was developed by Gray (1998). Using data from the Landmarks directory, he found that the largest category of interest representation by far was the trade associations' category with e.g. CEFIC, comprising about 32% of EU pressure groups in 1997. The largest number of trade associations exists for trade and products related to agriculture and textiles, both areas in which the Community has long held policies (Gray, 1998). Of the third-party representation possibilities, law firms are most present, followed by political consultants. US national associations account for the second largest number of pressure groups in Brussels behind France (25%) - a percentage of 16. Many of the US states most influenced by trade with Europe have followed their major companies to Brussels (Gray, 1998). With regard to the large presence of French national associations, it can be said that many of them were already established in the 1950s. The reason for this early involvement can be traced back to the French feelings of disaffection with the national environment at the time, which made many French associations decide to concentrate on the European level. This level created an opportunity not only to influence European policy, but also national policy (Gray, 1998).

Another important category of interest representation in Brussels is corporate. US companies are very present and accounted for 29% of the total corporate EU offices in 1997, followed at distance by the UK and France (7%) (Gray, 1998). The US and the UK are also accountable for the largest numbers of consultants present in Brussels. An explanation for this might be

the national political cultures of these two countries, which have experience in professional lobbying.

2.1.2 Types of interest representation

When deciding to develop interest representation at European level, actors find themselves confronted with several choices that have to be made. These have to do with the organizational form of their representation. Organizations can choose between three general strategies:

- 1) going alone, which means that it represents only its own interests without help from other organizations
- 2) joining an association that encompasses organizations from the same sector that have similar goals, either nationally or at European-level
- 3) hiring a public affairs consultant to represent its interests, either in cooperation with the organization or individually

There are a number of important variables that determine the choice of the organizational form of the lobbying activities (Bouwen, 2001). The first one is *the size of the organization*. Large organizations have more resources available to plan and undertake political action, which is especially expensive at EU-level because of the complex structure of the EU and its location. Only the larger firms will be able to set up a permanent representation in Brussels. Smaller actors often have to rely on collective action to take political action. This is in line with Coen's argument (1996) that during times of economic downturn, larger organizations downsize their individual lobbying activities and focus more on their participation in collective action. Participating in collective action is less resource-intensive, but the opinions and interests of more actors have to be taken into account, which can lead to a loss of influence and compromises in interest determination. The advantages of interest representation by a third party are that it allows political representation that is tailored to the needs of the organization (Bouwen, 2001), and that the resource-intensive permanent office in Brussels is not necessary (Bouwen, 2001). Moreover, this kind of representation is temporary and can be stopped when desired (Bouwen, 2001). However, the fees for the consultants are not to be neglected and only allow resourceful actors to make use of their services.

A second important variable in the choice for a form of representation is *the economic strategy of the organization* -if the actor is a firm- (Bouwen, 2001). Political strategies should be aligned with economic strategies. If the actor is a national niche player, it may not seem important to get involved at European level. However, with the establishment of the internal market, EU authorities' decisions have gained precedence over national legislation, which should raise the attention of national niche players as well.

For large internationally oriented firms, the EU has a very important role, since it is of high importance in the development of their international operations (Bouwen, 2001). These firms often decide to set up a Brussels-based office to be able to keep in touch with the relevant officials and other key players in the policy process of their interest.

The third important variable is *the domestic institutional environment* (Bouwen, 2001). Two factors are essential in this context; the degree of state administrative autonomy from private actors and the level of state control of the economy (Aspinwall and Greenwood in Bouwen, 2001). Repetitive interaction between the state and private interests gives no clear incentive to private interests to lobby in Brussels, since they believe that they can secure their interests with their national governments. High state control of the economy can make this lack of incentive worse. Furthermore, the domestic associational culture plays a crucial role in the domestic institutional environment (Bouwen, 2001). A strong national associational culture can prevent interests from going to Brussels individually, because there is such a stable collective possibility at home. Moreover, when there is a positive national lobby culture, organizations can be encouraged to undertake political action EU-level as well.

It is of course possible for large resourceful organizations to opt for several possibilities in interest representation. They can for example set up a permanent representation in Brussels while at the same time belonging to a European or national association or federation active in political influencing. The main factors influencing use of the Brussels strategy according to Greenwood (2003) are: (1) the degree of competence of the EU and investment of powers in supranational institutions, (2) the role of the Commission in initiating policy, and in developing the landscape of Brussels-based European interest groups, (3) the presence of formal, institutionalized structures of interest representation such as advisory committees; the need to influence Euro groups strategies and (4) the need to network and gather intelligence. Organizations are also dependent on resources as tools for survival (Van Schendelen, 2003). These resources can vary from expertise and networks to external positions and financial means.

With the Council 'losing' power in the years and the Commission and the European Parliament becoming stronger, it is clear why many actors may decide to switch from influencing national governments to influencing the EU institutions in order to defend their interests. However, the national route is not superfluous, since the Council still is powerful in many domains and the national governments profit from the subsidiarity principle which is highly regarded in Europe. In a survey of UK business associations conducted by Bennett (1997), it was found that 42% chose the national strategy, 27% chose to use a European association, 17% chose to lobby Brussels directly and 11% emphasized individual company activity. The available resources, in this study, appeared to be the most significant influence upon the adoption of a strategy, with the Brussels route most developed among larger and richer organizations and also those from more concentrated sectors (Bennett, 1997). Greenwood (2003) expects the issue of choosing a route to become a non-debate as most interests significantly affected by EU policy develop both national and European route strategies.

From all this information, an overview can be made with the routes open to interest groups:

	Individual action	Collective action	Third party
National level	Individual national action	National association	National consultant
European level	Individual EU action	European association	Brussels consultant

Table 1: Organizational forms of interest representation (Source: Bouwen, 2001)

With regards to democracy, different styles may have different consequences in the lobbying circuit. Collective action is seen as being more legitimate since it is a form of consensus building between interests within the same field, which makes it easier for the administrators to formulate policies that have sufficient support. Individual action is chosen mostly by companies, which are by definition not democratic. However, the EU will be keen on cooperating with the private sector because of its expertise and the fact that it provides employment to EU citizens. Third-party representation is the odd one out here, and its level of democracy depends mostly on the represented.

2.2 Reasons for lobbying

‘Lobbying is the lifeblood of any political system. Without lobbies, politics is either irrelevant or dead. Lobbies indicate that the outcome of a political process is taken seriously enough to justify the investment of energy in trying to influence the outcome.’ (Van Schendelen, 1993).

In line with this thinking, the lobbying activities from the interest groups in Brussels indicate that they take the outcomes of the EU political process seriously, and feel that the attempts to influence the decision-making are relevant and worth dedicating energy and workforce to influencing. But what are the more specific reasons for lobbying? Van Schendelen (1993) has highlighted three main reasons that explain why lobbying at EU level is important for interest groups:

1. The choice to participate in the influencing process or not is a decision with major consequences, because the outcomes can be of great value to the non-participants and participants alike. The most important of these outcomes is legislation. European law takes precedence over national legislation, which means that groups that believe that there are some flaws in national law regarding their interests can go to Brussels and try to change this legislation in their favour. Moreover, there can be financial benefits if the outcomes lead to standardization, a competitive advantage, harmonization etc. Other benefits can come in the form of subsidies, procurement, and others. Summarizing, it can be very costly to lose a ‘battle’ at EU level, and this risk of losing does not become smaller if groups choose to abstain from the influencing process.
2. The highly dynamic environment actors find themselves in at EU level is another reason to become involved in lobbying. The latest of these developments must be the fourth enlargement to include ten other countries in the EU, and the Constitutional Treaty. The level playing field is in constant motion, and the EU attracts an increasing amount of

responsibilities and policy fields in which it is involved. Over the years, the union has moved from being purely economic to becoming more social and environmentally-aware, also wanting to have a common foreign security policy and looking forward to even more members. Reason enough for interest groups to get organized in Europe and monitoring dossiers to see whether there are any decisions to be made that could possibly affect their interests. There are not many domains that are left out of the reach of the EU.

3. The third reason to get involved in influencing the EU policy process has to do with the complex environment in which the decision-making takes place. Even though it may seem as a labyrinth to amateurs, professional lobbyists seem to find their way at always discovering an alternative access channel that will help them with influencing the decision-making. For professionals then, the EU provides many routes to success.

The stakes are high for interest groups, since the EU has become a powerful actor in European and international legislation. Abstaining from the influencing process in areas that are of concern to the groups can lead to negative and most of the times very costly outcomes. In order to win – or in any case, not to lose – favourable outcomes, interest groups thus have sound reasons to get involved in the influencing process.

2.3 The EU institutions and lobbying

2.3.1 Decision-making in the EU

The EU has been organized around three so-called pillars since the Treaty of Amsterdam, representing three different domains in which the EU takes decisions; market policies, foreign and security policy, and justice and home affairs.

The first pillar is concerned with market policies and can be called the European Community pillar, since it represents the policies dealt with by the EC. In this pillar, the Commission is the sole body that can propose legislation, and it is also the body that is in charge of the implementation and monitoring of the policies. After the Commission has produced a draft proposal, this draft goes to the European Parliament (EP) and the appropriate Council. The EP has consultation and co-decision powers (veto or amendment power), and the Council has to decide by qualified majority voting (QMV). This system makes it easier to pass legislation since it is not necessary to reach unanimity, which used to be the common decision-making rule. Other bodies that are consulted are the Economic and Social Committee (ESC) and the Committee of the Regions (COREG), who have more influence than power. The EP, ESC and COREG downsize themselves to review and decide on drafts into smaller committees or working groups with a rapporteur as head of the group. This way, decisions can be reached more easily and they will be able to participate in a better way in the decision-making process. If an agreement is reached between the Council and the EP, and the other bodies have been consulted, the draft is accepted and becomes law. The Commission is then in charge of overseeing the implementation by the affected actors, e.g. Member States, and of monitoring progress and whether the policy fits. If changes need to be made, the cycle restarts from the beginning. The European Court of Justice (ECJ) also plays an important role in this pillar as it is responsible for making rulings on misunderstandings about the policies. It is seen

as one of the most active players in promoting integration for the way in which its rulings have increased the speed of integration in the EU.

The first pillar accounts for approximately 95% of the total policy outputs (EUR Syllabus on European Politics, 2003). The figure is the model that is valid under the co-decision procedure, with the cooperation procedure as variation on this model.

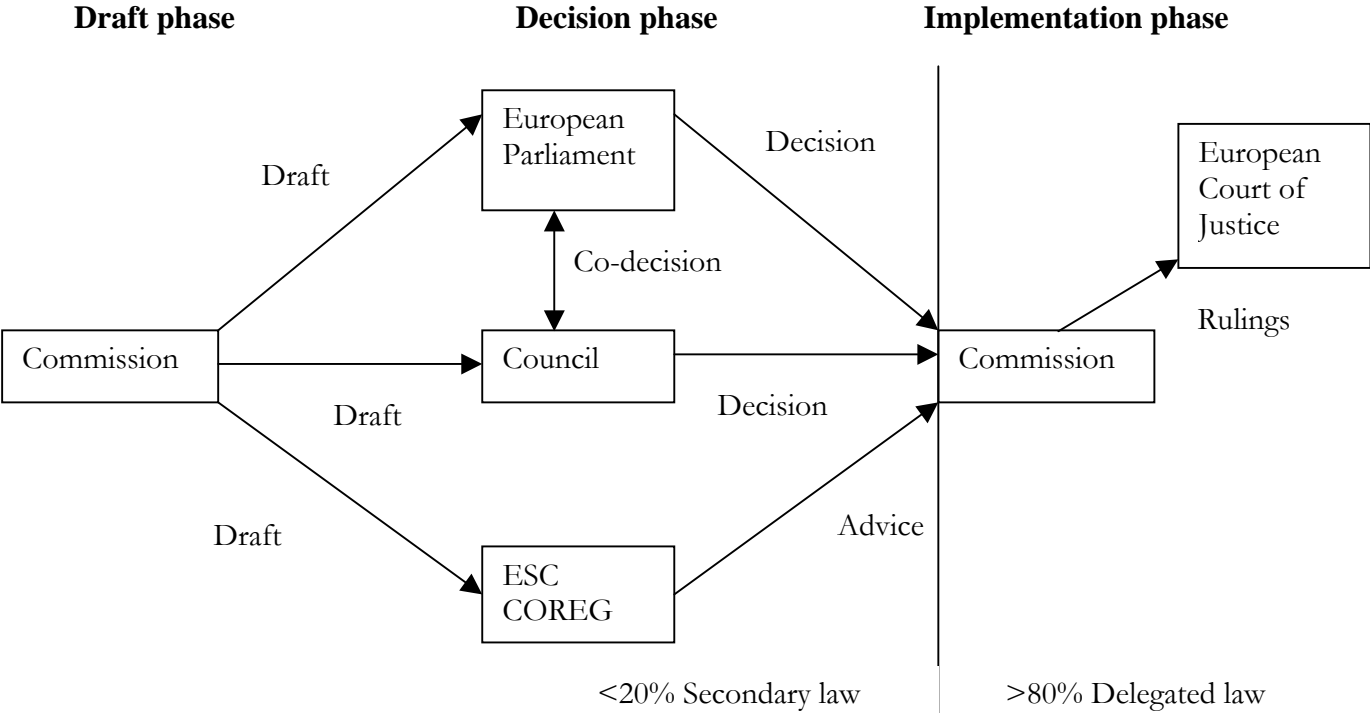


Figure 1: Structure of decision-making in pillar I (EP co-decision)

When looking at the figure above, one needs to know that this process is part of the secondary lawmaking in the EU, which comes after the Treaties (which are primary law). Secondary law accounts for less than 20% of total lawmaking; most of the legislation comes from the delegated law, where powers are formally transmitted from the Council to the Commission and particularly its comitology, comprising approximately 450 special committees (Van Schendelen, 2003). This part of lawmaking produces the other 80% of legislation (Van Schendelen, 2003).

The second pillar is the pillar for foreign and security policies. It is more difficult to advance integration in this pillar since the Council has a powerful role as start and finish of legislation and decides by unanimity. The EP and the Commission have limited roles, which makes this pillar an intergovernmental structure as opposed to the supranational character of the first pillar. The ECJ plays no role in this field. The reason why the Council has such an important role is that the field of external security, foreign policy and defence are very delicate national matters from origin, and that it will take a lot of time before governments are willing to hand the matters over to the Commission and the EP, which actually would take these policy areas out of their direct reach and control.

The third pillar deals with justice and home affairs. Similar to pillar two, this pillar also gives most power to the Council as it decides by unanimity, and therefore there is little output. However, one should not overlook the fact that matters of civil law are already placed under pillar one, which leaves only penalty law in this pillar. Again, the EP and Commission play a smaller role, as does the ECJ. Reasons for the unanimity voting in the third pillar can be linked to the reasons for unanimity voting in the second pillar; penalty law is a very national issue, and governments find it difficult to hand over the jurisdiction over their citizens to foreign bodies.

Now that the functions of the different actors in the EU have been reviewed, the actors can be analyzed individually with regards to their behaviour towards lobbying, which is different according to the EU body concerned.

2.3.2 The Commission

The Commission is very much a *sui generis* institution; there is nothing like it in any nation state or any other international organization. It consists of a College of Commissioners, who are regarded as the political arm although they are not directly elected, but appointed by the national Member States. The College is headed by a President, and each Commissioner has its own cabinet, which can be interpreted as private office. The College is supported by approximately 30 directorate-generals, which deal with sector-specific issues. The main source of the Commission's power is its monopoly right to initiate legislation within the first pillar. It also has considerable power within the CAP and on external trade and competition policy. Generally, however, the Commission is closely scrutinized by EU member governments.

The most important role of the Commission is that of manager of policy, as head supervisor of implementation and evaluation. All these tasks are performed by approximately 14.000 civil servants, which is less than for example the city of Rotterdam (Van Schendelen, lecture EIP 2004). Evidently, the Commission is understaffed and therefore is in need of outsiders to help it perform its tasks. The Commission is in great search for expertise during the drafting phase of legislation. It has set up approximately 1800 expert committees with 80.000 experts for this purpose, of which half is public and coming from the Member States (2/3rd from central and 1/3rd from decentralized government) and the other half of the experts comes from the private sector (2/3rd is formed by companies and trade associations and 1/3rd by NGOs) (Van Schendelen, lecture EIP 2004). For filling the expert committees, the Commission relies heavily on the input from interest groups, which are able to provide them with important information on their sector for the decision-making. The more interests are represented in such committees, the more sides to the story the Commission will get, and the more informed it will be. This will lead to better decisions based on sound arguments, evidence and data.

The Commission is also responsible for the implementation process, which usually is carried out by the Member States or, in some occasions, by interest groups when the policies affect their sector. This is another reason why the Commission wants to cooperate with interest

groups. It makes use of approximately 550 comitology committees, which have formal powers, to delegate the implementation tasks. These comitology committees also have members from interest groups.

Peter Koepl (2000) has performed a research study in the acceptance of lobbying in the Commission. He concluded that many Commission officials had a positive attitude towards lobby groups. They assessed written information previously received from lobbies as good and useful (73 %), and 67% believed that lobbying was important. Koepl (2000) also found that the more specific and factual the lobbying information, the higher the acceptance as well as the agreed relevance. 66% of the interviewed officials thought that the strong presence of lobbies in Brussels was necessary. All this shows the willingness of the Commission to work with (information provided by) interest groups and its need for support and expertise. This makes the Commission an important target for lobby activities.

2.3.3 The Council

‘The Council (...) is difficult to get in touch with due to its inter-governmental and international composition. Interest groups not only must try to convince their own national government of the legitimacy and appropriateness of their demands, they also have to make sure that their interests are supported by a sufficient number of states (...).’ Kohler-Koch & Quittkat (1999)

The Council can be portrayed as a layered figure with the European Council formed by the heads of state of the national governments accompanied by their foreign ministers at the top, followed by the Council of Ministers -which meets in sixteen different formations according to the issue at hand-, Coreper (the committee of permanent representatives) and other senior preparatory groups, and at the base the multiple working groups (Hayes-Renshaw, 2002).

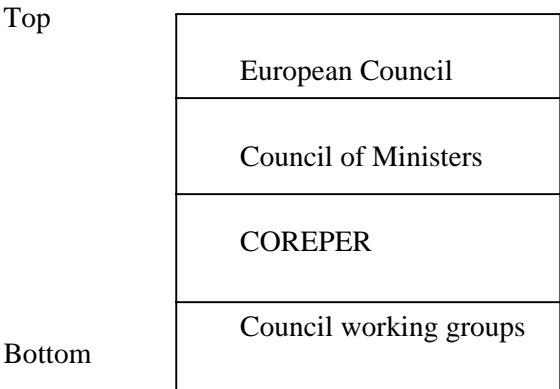


Table 2: Layered figure of the Council

Heading each of these levels is the presidency which is held by a Member State for six months according to a rotation in an established order, and the entire ladder is supported by a Secretariat-General (Hayes-Renshaw, 2002).

The Council's main power is that of decision-making, and it is the EU's principal legislative institution. Its work is prepared by Coreper. The Council is dependent on the Commission to provide it with legislative proposals and on the EP as co-decider on legislation in many areas, but no legislative decisions can be adopted without a ministerial agreement (Hayes-Renshaw, 2002).

The Council is probably the hardest institution to get into because of its intergovernmental character and the many opposing interests that may already have come up at national level; some countries send more than one minister to a Council meeting because they were unable to draw one line nationally. For interest groups, it will be a challenge to influence decision-making through the Council, since they have to make sure that their position is supported by a sufficient number of states. Furthermore, because of the very formal and intergovernmental character of the institution, the officials are less open to outside inputs because they are less in need for information than for example the understaffed Commission and EP. Only interest groups with large resources find it useful to invest time in influencing the Council, which has been proved by research conducted by Kohler-Koch and Quittkat (1999). The findings show that the smaller actors in terms of budget orient themselves toward the Commission, whilst actors with large budgets also invest their relations with the Parliament and Council.

2.3.4 The Parliament

'The EP is very interested in the communication with interest groups as this is a good opportunity to interact with the electorate and to become a "spokesman" for the voters' concerns, although this applies more to NGOs than to business interests'. Kohler-Koch & Quittkat (1999)

The European Parliament is the only EU body that is chosen directly by the European electorate. It consists of Member State nationals who were elected in national elections. The EP has several political groups and works with a committee system. These committees are policy-specialized, and they reflect the political composition of the EP as a whole. They are quite independent and autonomous. All legislative proposals are referred directly, without debate, from the plenary to the committees, which then organize the examination of a proposal before it returns to the plenary for a vote (Shackleton, 2002). The responsible committee appoints a *rapporteur* who follows a legislative proposal from its inception to the conclusion of the procedure. These rapporteurs are the main subjects of lobbying activities. Normally, the opinion of the committee is taken on by the plenary during the voting process.

The EP has budget and co-decision powers together with the Council. Historically, it has not played a very important role, but over the last years, it has gained more and more powers as a consequence of the new legislative procedures introduced in the Single European Act and the Maastricht Treaty. In order to be able to perform its functions as consultant and co-decision maker, it needs information about what the electorate wants. It is open to associations that can present a shared view of a large number of the electorate on specific issues. It is important to know that certain MEPs will be more open to lobbying than others. Especially in the Anglo-

Saxon countries, lobbying is a widely-accepted phenomenon, and MEPs originating from these countries will probably be more willing to listen to interest groups than MEPs that do not come from a lobbying-accepting culture.

The EP attracts many social, environmental and consumer interests and is eager to take up those issues which attract a lot of public attention and where it can show itself as the “real” representative of the European public and as the democratic and legitimate element representing not capitalist but consumer interests (Mazey and Richardson 1993:12). The Parliamentarians are understaffed and are not always up-to-date on the effects proposals can have on their constituency. They therefore need information and are thus open to lobbying. The close relationship between the EP and special interest groups can sometimes be portrayed as advocacy coalition, in which the “weak” parties come together to stand up against the more powerful corporate and sectoral lobbies and institutions.

2.4 Main players in agricultural lobbying

The purpose of this paragraph is to map the playing field of lobby groups in the agricultural sector in the EU. The most well-known players with an important history will be presented to get an idea of what kind of players can be found in this sector. These were found by consulting the CONECCS database¹ and literature on the history of the EU (e.g. Pinder 1998 and McCormick 2002), where the most influential players were mentioned in an historical view. Of course, this paragraph does not cover the whole agricultural lobbying sector, and it is quite possible that many influential players are not mentioned. The idea here is to present the kind of players one could find when researching the lobbying process, and giving an idea of their background, organizational form and objectives. In paragraph 2.4.7, some suggestions are made for other potential influential players in agricultural lobbying.

2.4.1 COPA-COGECA²

COPA-COGECA is composed of two elements; COPA (the Committee of Agricultural Organizations) and COGECA (General Committee for Agricultural Cooperation).

COPA was established in 1958 by farmers as the first European representative organization. Its establishment is linked to the Treaty of Rome containing the most important framework provisions for the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The relationship between the Community authorities and the representatives of the agricultural sector were not clearly defined at the time, but the Commission was very willing to cooperate closely at an early stage, and it invited representatives of agricultural organizations to the 1958 Stresa conference as observers to see for themselves what the EC was planning in the agricultural field. The farmers saw the importance of the work of the Commission and decided to establish a European representative organization covering their interests. COPA’s secretariat opened in Brussels in 1959, and merged with the COGECA secretariat in 1962.

¹ CONECCS; Consultation, the European Commission and Civil Society
(www.europa.eu.int/comm/civil_society/coneccs)

² Based on information from the COPA-COGECA website (accessed on 4 April 2005)

COPA's objectives as stated in its website (4 April 2005) are the following:

- 'To examine any matters related to the development of the Community's agricultural policy
- To represent the interests of the agricultural sector as a whole
- To seek solutions which are of common interest
- To maintain and develop relations with the Community authorities and with any other representative organization or social partner established at European level'

COPA is organized around several bodies³:

The Assembly consists of representatives delegated by the member organizations and is responsible for formulating the general policy guidelines of COPA.

The Praesidium is constituted by one representative by member organization. Next to these national representatives, the following additional persons take part in Praesidium meetings: the president of COGECA, the president of CEJA, the chairman of the COPA women's committee, and the chairman of COPA's general experts group. The COPA president, chairman of the Praesidium meetings, may also invite any additional persons whose presence is regarded as useful (e.g. chairmen of working parties and specialist sections of COPA). The Praesidium meets once a month, and its function is to represent COPA and to take all necessary decisions within the general guidelines laid down by the Assembly.

The Presidency is formed by a president and four vice-presidents and is elected by the Praesidium from among its members for a period of two years. The Presidency of COPA and COGECA together form a Coordination Committee which tries to reach an agreement on the jointly concerned activities.

The group of general experts has the task of preparing the work of the COPA Praesidium, and consists of senior staff of the member organizations. It meets together with COGECA's CAP working party.

The working parties and specialist sections, which are approximately 50 in number, are established either for specific commodity sectors or for general questions. Most of them are constituted jointly with COGECA.

COPA has contact with the European institutions at different stages in the policy process. Its Praesidium regularly meets with the Commissioner for agriculture and rural development to discuss the general development of the CAP and the market situation, as well as specific issues of particular importance. Moreover, regular contact takes place between COPA experts and the experts of the working and standing group meeting, and there is also personal contact at staff level, attendance of Commission officials at COPA meetings, transmission of letters and written positions.

Regular contacts take place between COPA and Council officials, where indirect representations are more frequent, and between COPA and the European Parliament, particularly with the members of the Committee on Agriculture and the secretariats of the political groups. Furthermore, contacts between COPA and the Economic and Social

³ Source: COPA-COGECA website, accessed on 4 April 2005

Committee (ESC) are very close since a number of representatives of the COPA member organizations are members of the ESC.

COGECA is the representative body for all agricultural and fishery cooperatives in the EU, and it represents their interests vis-à-vis the Community authorities. COGECA takes part in the preparation and development of all Community policies which set out the framework for cooperatives. COGECA's lobbying work is carried out as a complement to COPA, in over 50 working groups and in approximately 300 meetings a year.

2.4.2 CEJA⁴

CEJA (European Council of Young Farmers) was founded in Rome in 1958 and represents the interests of European young farmers and young people interested in a future in farming. CEJA is an international organization governed by a General Assembly, a Presidium (the main decision-making body), and a Presidency (which is made up of one president and four vice-presidents, elected for a two-year term). This structure is quite similar to that of COPA. Its office is based in Brussels and employs two staff members.

CEJA's objectives as stated on its website⁵ are the following:

- 'To promote the development of agriculture and rural areas within the EU
- To facilitate conditions for young people to establish a career in agriculture
- To act as a forum for communication and dialogue between young farmers in Europe
- To inform, train, organize and represent young farmers in Europe
- To inform society about the roles of agriculture'

CEJA's efforts focus on the installation of young farmers, monitoring changes in the agricultural sector, the CAP, dialogue with the public, and the enlargement.

2.4.3 ETUC⁶

The European Trade Union Federation (ETUC) was set up in 1973 to promote the interests of working people at European level and to represent them in the EU institutions. The ETUC's prime objective is to promote the European Social Model (a society combining sustainable economic growth with ever-improving living and working standards) and to work for the development of a united Europe of peace and stability where working people and their families can enjoy full human and civil rights and high living standards.

The ETUC has a structure consisting of elected representatives. The *Congress* is the overall policy-making body, meets every four years and elects the *general secretary*. The *Executive committee* and smaller *Steering committee* are responsible for implementing policy between Congresses, while the Brussels-based *Secretariat* runs the ETUC's daily activities.

⁴ Based on information from the CEJA website, accessed on 4 April 2005

⁵ Source: CEJA website, accessed on 4 April 2005

⁶ Based on information from the ETUC website, accessed on 4 April 2005

The ETUC is involved in economic and social decision-making at the highest level, working with all European institutions.

2.4.4 BEUC⁷

The European Bureau of Consumers' Unions (BEUC) aims to defend and promote the interests of European consumers in the EU policy process. Its activities are centred on the so-called core consumer rights:

- The consumer's right to safety
- The consumer's right to information
- The consumer's right to choice
- The consumer's right to representation
- The consumer's right to redress
- The consumer's right to education
- The consumer's right to satisfaction of basic needs
- The consumer's right to a clean environment

The BEUC contributes expertise on issues that have direct economic or legal consequences for consumers or that impact consumers' health, safety and environment. It seeks to maximize the benefits of the Single Market and minimize potential risks for the consumer.

BEUC is managed by an Executive composed of eight representatives from the member organizations, who are elected for two years and meet at regular intervals throughout the year. The BEUC Executive proposes policy objectives and a work programme to be approved by the General Assembly, co-ordinates General Assembly meetings, and appoints the BEUC director.

2.4.5 CIAA⁸

The CIAA was created in 1982 in Brussels as the Confederation of Food and Drink Industries of the EEC, replacing the Commission of Food and Drink Industries which had existed within UNICE (Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe). The creation of CIAA in 1982 provided the F&D industry with an independent organization. Since then, CIAA has been registered as an international association under Belgian law.

The CIAA is the voice of the European food and drink (F&D) producers, first industrial sector, a major employer and exporter in the European Union. The CIAA represents the interests of the European F&D industry towards European and international institutions. Its goal is to contribute to the development of a European and international regulatory and economic framework addressing industry's competitiveness, food quality and safety, consumer protection and respect for the environment.

The CIAA's mission is to express the F&D industry's position on a large range of topics of interest to all its members. It is closely following all developments of European policies with

⁷ Based in information from BEUC website, accessed on 4 April 2005

⁸ Based on information from the CIAA website (accessed on 1 August 2005)

respect to food hygiene, food safety, health and foodstuffs, labeling, environment, the common agricultural policy, as well as issues linked to international trade and enlargement.

The CIAA's permanent secretariat, based in Brussels, is a key mediator as regards European and international institutions. It co-ordinates the work of about 450 experts, grouped in committees and working groups around the three following themes:

- Food and consumer policy
- Trade and competitiveness
- Environment

CIAA experts prepare an opinion on the priority dossiers, which, once approved by all members, are sent to the politicians involved. CIAA's positions are subject to a large consensus within the F&D sector. Thus, the CIAA works in direct co-operation with other organizations in the F&D sector along with representatives from other links in the food chain.

CIAA does everything it can to contribute to:

- Creating a regulatory framework, both at Community and at international level, which responds to the needs of the F&D industry
- Avoiding and removing barriers to trade within the internal market
- Ensuring the industry be supplied with raw materials of adequate quality and quantity and at a reasonable price
- Ensuring the best possible competitive conditions for exports outside the European Union

2.4.6 Some remarks

This paragraph has been an exploration of the agricultural lobbying playing field. The literature consulted sees the organizations presented above as some of the most influential players in an historical sense. However, one should keep in mind that individual companies, national associations, international organizations such as the WTO, other DG's of the Commission such as the DG Environment and the DG for Regional Policy, NGO's looking after the interests of people affected by EU agricultural policy and third-party consultants play important roles here as well. This will be researched during the fieldwork, where people dealing with the agricultural sector in the EU will be asked about the key players in their field.

2.5 Conclusion

Interest groups have been present in Brussels from the day the European project started. With the coming of the Internal Market, their numbers have grown exponentially. This is understandable since many of them see the costs of adapting to the legislation as higher than the costs of attempting to influence decision-making.

There are many organizational forms that can be used by interests. Some are more resource-intensive than others, and some may generate more support from EU institutions than others. Organizational form is an essential factor to think about, because influence is linked to the

form under which interests are represented. Choices that have to be made are: the national route versus the European route and individual versus collective action. Organizations can also ask a third party to lobby for them, which has several advantages but is also resource-intensive and thus more convenient for larger players. Smaller players often cannot afford to hire consultants or set up a Brussels permanent representation, and therefore decide to join larger associations.

The Commission and the European Parliament are understaffed institutions and in need of information and expertise. A research conducted under Commission officials revealed that a majority of the people interviewed thought that lobbying was necessary for them to be able to perform their tasks. The Parliament on the other hand needs to form coalitions with interest groups in order to gain power and profile itself as the sole legitimate body of the EU, but it is also in need of information. The Council is the most difficult institution to lobby, because there are so many players to convince of the interest.

It can be said that the growth of lobby groups in the EU is an acknowledgement of the increased importance of the decision-making process in Brussels. Organizations that cannot win at the national level can now turn to the EU to put their interests through. The institutions are not always open to those interest groups, but if they can provide them with accurate and timely expert knowledge, it will make their job easier. It looks like an interaction in which both parties need each other to progress individually, and it does not look like this will change in the future.

3. Democracy in the EU

3.1 Introduction

The objective of this paragraph is to explore the term democracy in different settings by looking at how it has taken form in international organizations and the EU over time. The final aim will be to draw up a list of democratic criteria by which the contribution of lobby groups to democracy in the EU can be 'measured'. This will be done by consulting relevant authors in the field of democracy in the EU and selecting the operationalized concepts that are most applicable to the activities of lobby groups.

3.2 Democracy in international institutions

Many international institutions are nowadays facing democratic demands by the citizens and organizations that are subject to its tasks. They do not want to accept decisions that affect their interests made by undemocratic bodies. The United Nations, the World Bank and the IMF are three major international institutions that are facing democratic demands. The UN for example has become a very large organization since its establishment. The General Assembly in which each nation, no matter how powerful, populous or large it is, has 1 vote, while contributions are based on economic power cannot be called very democratic if democracy is seen as equality of votes. This can also explain why the UN is not a very powerful institution; there is no incentive for big players such as the USA to listen to the UN. It affects the effectiveness of the institution, and there are many demands for reforms of the bureaucracy and the decision-making structure. It is reasonable to believe that these reforms will take a long time to be implemented, since a whole new distribution of voting points will be necessary, and small countries will not be enthusiastic about losing power.

-The next 5 paragraphs are based on the work of Robert Dahl in Hacker-Cordón and Shapiro (1999) and Dahl (1999)-

In an essay on democracy's edges that appeared in a book edited by Shapiro and Hacker-Cordón (1999), Robert Dahl is sceptic about the potential for the European Union –and all other international institutions for that matter- to become democratic, because according to him, international policy decisions will not ordinarily be made democratically. Citizens in democratic countries (polyarchies) have notorious difficulties to exercise effective control over many key decisions on foreign affairs. How then can they be expected to have influence and control over decisions in international systems? Furthermore, among a large group of persons with varied and conflicting interests, ends, goals and purposes, unanimity is unattainable. Disagreement on the best policy is to be expected, and civic virtue is too weak a force to override individual and group interests.

Dahl has analyzed the problem of democracy in international institutions. He believes that a smaller democratic unit provides an ordinary citizen with greater opportunities to participate in governing. However, a problem soon arises; the smaller the unit the more likely that some matters of importance to the citizen are beyond the capacity of the government to deal with

effectively. In order to handle these broader matters, the democratic unit might be enlarged, but by doing so the capacity of the citizen to participate effectively in governing would be diminished. Although the government gains more control over the problem, the capacity of the citizen to influence that government is diminished.

In Europe, questions about a country's relations with the EU, have led to the political activation of a large part of the electorate, and produced divisions within the population, sometimes in opposition to the predominant views of the political leaders and activists. Joining the EU assures long-run and somewhat abstract gains for some Europeans against more specific and understandable losses perceived by others. To achieve a level of control that is anywhere near the levels already existing within democratic countries, international organizations would have to solve several problems about as well as they are now dealt with in democratic countries. Political leaders would have to create political institutions that would provide citizens with opportunities for political participation, influence and control roughly equivalent in effectiveness to those already existing in democratic countries. To take advantage of these opportunities, citizens would need to be about as concerned and informed about the policy decisions of international organizations as they are about government decisions in their own countries. In order for citizens to be informed, political and communication elites would have to engage in public debate and discussion of the alternatives in ways that would engage the attention and emotions of the public. To insure public debate, it would be necessary to create an international equivalent to national political competition by parties and individuals seeking office. Elected representatives, or functional equivalents to them, would need to exercise control over important international bureaucracies about as well as legislatures and executives now do in democratic countries.

Given very significant differences in the scale of the populations of different countries, no system of representation could give equal weight to the vote of each citizen and yet prevent small countries from being steadily outvoted by large countries; thus all solutions acceptable to the smaller democracies will deny political equality among the members of the larger demos. Whatever compromise is reached, it could easily be a source of internal strain, particularly in the absence of a strong common identity. To survive, specific institutions might indeed be necessary. But developing a political culture takes time, perhaps many generations.

To say that international organizations are not and probably will never be democratic does not mean that they are undesirable. In the current world there are not many alternatives to democracy as a source of legitimacy. Governments of international organizations are bureaucratic bargaining systems. To weight their desirability, the costs to democracy should be clearly indicated and taken into account. The democratic deficit of the EU should be seen as a likely cost of all international organizations. If we judge that important human needs require an international organization, despite its costs to democracy, we should not only subject its undemocratic aspects to scrutiny and criticism, but also try to create proposals for greater democratization and insist that they be adopted (Dahl, 1999).

When reading Dahl's arguments, a grey area between national versus international organizations is missing. Other forms of organization such as confederations and federations are left out of the line of thought. Although the term 'federation' can be the basis of passionate debates in the EU – there are clearly very different perceptions of the organization of the EU – it should be acknowledged that the EU is a very special case in the international scene; there are no other cases of cooperation that resemble it. At the very least, it can be seen as a confederation if this is defined as 'a group of organizations, countries, regions, etc. that have joined together to form a larger organization or government'. Now Dahl does not speak about the possibilities of democracy in confederations or federations for that matter, and they deserve to be analyzed separately with regards to democratic processes. However, as long as there is no clear consensus on what the EU actually *is*, a proper analysis of its democratic potential based on its form (federation? confederation? international organization?) can hardly take place without encountering severe criticism from people holding a different view in this regard.

3.3 Democracy in the EU

In the White Paper on European Governance published in July 2001 by the European Commission, the need to reform European governance against the background of a mismatch between, on the one hand, the concrete achievements of European integration and on the other hand, the disappointment and alienation of 'Europeans' is identified (Armstrong, 2002). The accomplishments of the European integration have predominantly been the product of the political and technocratic elite that does not have much connection with the population, and act without feeling the issues raised by lack of democracy and legitimacy. Even though the EU has proved to be able to deliver stability, peace and economic wealth, the people that are governed do not feel connected to and do not have influence upon the system by which they are governed. The challenge for European governance is how to close this normative gap (Armstrong, 2002).

At its meeting in Laeken in December 2001, the European Council announced that it had opted for the creation of a Convention to bring about reform. The establishment of the Convention was an institutional innovation. This new type of body was charged with preparing the subsequent IGC in as transparent and open a manner as possible by involving the main stakeholders in the debate: representatives of the governments of the Member States and the candidate countries, representatives of national parliaments, representatives of the European Parliament and the European Commission, and observers from the Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European social partners. The Laeken Declaration also defined the substance of the debate in the form of 60 questions relating to the future of the Union, grouped together under four major themes (EU online, 2004):

- better division and definition of competences;
- simplification of the instruments;

- *more democracy, transparency and efficiency in the European Union (democratic legitimacy and transparency of the institutions, role of national parliaments, decision-making and the functioning of the institutions in an enlarged Union); and*
- paving the way for a constitution for the people of Europe (simplification and reorganization of the Treaties, inclusion of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the possible adoption of a constitutional text)

Democracy can be said to be an issue in the current debates on the European Union. There are different views on the state of democracy in the EU and about the presence of a so-called democratic deficit, and whether something needs to be done to improve democracy in the EU. There is also tension in the confrontation of participation and representation in the EU; some people claim that the participation of lobby groups in the policy process is harmful to the system of representation, while others say that participation is an important addition to representation and helps with the inclusion of more interests and the public awareness of the works of the EU. In the next paragraphs, these topics will be explored in more detail.

3.3.1 Democratic deficit or not?

The term democratic deficit generally signifies that the flow of influence from the people to government is disturbed in some way. In general terms, this indicates that the institutional mechanisms prescribed by a particular democratic model are either absent or fail to function correctly.

Arguments for the presence of a democratic deficit

Most politicians, scholarly commentators and members of the European public appear to agree that the EU suffers from a severe democratic deficit. There are many reasons why this perception is so widespread. An organization of continental scope will appear rather distant from the individual European citizen. As a multinational body, moreover, it lacks the grounding in a common history, culture, discourse and symbolism on which most individual polities can draw (Moravcsik, 2002). The legitimacy deficiencies are not only linked to aspects of its structural and institutional make-up, but also to the normative justifications that the EU can readily draw upon (Eriksen and Fossum, 2002). The EU officials seem to be aware of the issue; one of the main objectives of the Single European Act of 1986 was to ‘rectify the democratic deficit in the Community’s decision-making process’ (Zweifel, 2002). In a communiqué of the EU summit which launched the Convention, European leaders designated the EU’s lack of democratic legitimacy as the ‘first challenge facing Europe’ (Moravcsik, 2003).

According to Zweifel (2002), there are two sorts of deficit in the EU; a structural one and a normative one. The *structural* deficit can be found in the institutional setup and procedures of the EU. This can be formulated as the lack of transparency, consensus, accountability and redistribution. The *normative* deficit entails the lack of a common identity and the lack of a public sphere. This can be formulated as the lack of legitimacy.

Lack of transparency

The EU institutions have been criticized for suffering from too much secrecy. Meetings of the Council and the permanent representatives in Brussels are closed, despite the fact that many of the most important decisions on the content of new laws and policies, and on their acceptance or rejection, are taken there. Ministers and representatives take the kinds of decisions that – at the national level – are taken by the members of elected assemblies, who are held accountable for their actions at elections and in the court of public opinion (McCormick, 2002).

Lack of consensus

Prospective enlargement creates fears that new member states will reduce the voting weight of existing ones. These fears are fuelled by the declining unanimity principle (Weiler in Zweifel, 2002). The Nice Treaty of 2002 reinforced the trend toward majoritarian qualified majority voting (QMV) by changing voting rights in the Council.

Lack of accountability

The Commission, the European Central Bank and the Court of Justice are agents unaccountable to their principal, the European electorate. The European Parliament, the only directly elected institution, lacks several of the powers of a true legislature (McCormick, 2002) and lacks the powers to compensate for the democratic deficit of the other supranational institutions (Zweifel, 2002). This can be formulated as the loss of parliamentary control over European decision-making (Coultrap, 1999) and the absence of European wide parties (Eriksen, 2004).

Lack of redistribution

Some claim that both globalization and the EU structure favour negative integration – taking down national barriers – and reduce the capacity and accountability of national governments for redistribution at home (Scharpf in Zweifel, 2002). According to Lehning (1999), an empirical requirement for ‘European citizenship’ or a ‘social Europe’ should be a positive mode of integration: an integration that is much more ambitious and complete than a pure and simple common market goal, one that only removes obstacles, and is concerned with national deregulation. Positive integration implies solidarity, or ‘social rights’ on a European level. This requires, in turn, at least shared European citizenship identity (Lehning, 1999).

Lack of legitimacy

Eurobarometer polls and low voting turnouts (see appendix 1) indicate insufficient trust in the EU institutions (Zweifel, 2002). Structural preconditions for democracies are still lacking; there are no European parties or political leaders, no European media and no Europe-wide competition for government offices (Scharpf in Zweifel, 2002). Furthermore, there is no European demos, and the increase of the power of the EU is not being matched by a like increase in legitimization through the consent of the citizens of the member states (Lehning, 1999). Moreover, the EU lacks the grounding in a common history, culture, discourse and

symbolism on which individual polities can draw (Moravcsik, 2002) and a public sphere based on a symbolically constructed people (Eriksen, 2004).

Arguments for the absence of a democratic deficit

An author who thinks there is no democratic deficit is Andrew Moravcsik. His central argument is that if reasonable criteria for judging democratic governance are applied, then the criticism of the EU as democratically illegitimate is unsupported by the existing evidence (Moravcsik, 2002). Constitutional checks and balances, indirect democratic control via national governments, and the increasing powers of the European Parliament are sufficient to ensure that EU policy-making is, in nearly all cases, clean, transparent, effective and politically responsive to the demands of European citizens. Moravcsik believes that there is no point in comparing the EU and utopian forms of deliberative democracies, because no modern government can meet these idealistic standards.

The EU's ability to act, even in those areas where it enjoys clear competence, is constrained by institutional checks and balances; the separation of powers, a multi-level structure of decision-making and a plural executive. The EU is not a system of parliamentary sovereignty but a system of separation of powers. Power is divided among the Commission, Council, Parliament and Court (vertically) and among local, national and transnational levels (horizontally). Within each level, there is extreme pluralism. Legislation needs widespread consent to be implemented. If, after such an extensive approval trajectory Member States do not accept the legislation, there are alternatives to strict reliance on EU norms in certain policy areas. Furthermore, the threat of a European superstate is not realistic. The European constitutional settlement imposes tight constraints on EU policy. The EU's capacity to act in new areas and new ways is constrained by a severe lack of fiscal, administrative and legal authority. It can be seen as a regulatory polity; a polity with legal instruments but little fiscal capacity.

Moravcsik argues that the EU employs two robust legitimating mechanisms:

- (1) direct accountability via the European Parliament
- (2) indirect accountability via elected national officials

Moravcsik especially relies on the second mechanism in his plea that the EU does not suffer from a democratic deficit. He believes that national officials are the main legitimizing factor in the EU's democratic process.

The conclusion drawn by Moravcsik (2002) is that when judged by the practices of existing nation-states and in the context of a multi-level system, there is little evidence that the EU suffers from a fundamental democratic deficit.

Discussion

Personally, I can relate to the positions of both the supporters and opponents of the democratic deficit theory. I agree with the idea that the EU has become a 'democratic' unit of its own, and that it therefore needs legitimation on a direct basis. Indirect accountability via

elected national officials is a too long route to be a robust legitimating mechanism. In addition, it highlights the national connections in the EU, which I think obstruct the creation of a European citizenry or *demos*. In my ideal EU, citizens would vote for European candidates from European political parties, and would in this way leave behind national issues in European political elections. So the accountability, the representation system, and the lack of a European citizenry are legitimate democratic deficits to me.

On the other hand, I agree with Moravcsik on the idea that the EU should not be compared to utopian ideas of how a democratic unit should work. Ideals are important to keep in mind and should be part of the debate on democracy, but they should not be seen as achievable in reality; no existing state has a perfect democracy.

The competing views on the state of democracy can be reconciled in the idea that Europe is in permanent need of refinement of its democratic situation in both direct and indirect ways.

3.3.2 Participation vs. representation

One of the main issues within the EU democracy debate is how participation can find its place next to representation. Many people criticize the way in which lobby groups and committees play an important role in the policy process and in their view, get round the system of representative democracy in the European Parliament to achieve their policy goals. Often legitimacy is linked to how strong the representative system is, and in the EU it can be said that representation has not been a strong factor historically. The EP has acquired more powers lately, but in the beginning it was not designed to fulfill a crucial role in EU lawmaking. Today, the EP plays an important role in the policy process, but still has to work together with the Council and the Commission, which are not directly accountable to the European citizens.

Participatory democracy has been important in the EU historically, also because of poor powers of the EP. From the start of the European Community, lobby groups such as agricultural associations have worked together with the Commission in formulating policies. The whole system of expert committees can also be seen as participation of the citizens, since their interests are looked after by representatives of interests in society on specific issues. Of course, these people are selected and not elected, and they are not accountable to the citizens in general. However, they do reach target groups within the citizenry that have special interests in certain areas that are dealt with by the EU.

Lobby groups and expert committees can contribute to deliberation and discussion preceding and during the policy process. The contribution of participation here is the forming and defending of opinions and the reaching of consensus between different interests at policy-making levels. Especially in an institution where direct political representation is fragile, participation can be seen as an important supplement to representation, and should not be overlooked in the search for legitimacy.

3.4 Defining democracy in the context of the EU

First, let me say that it is not my ambition here to formulate an all-encompassing definition of the term democracy. It is not the purpose of this project to make judgements about the best concept of ‘democracy’, nor to make any comments on whether the EU is democratic at all. The assessment of the democratic ‘deficit’ has already been made in paragraph 3.3.1. What I want to do in this paragraph is to operationalize the term ‘democracy’ to create criteria that can be used to measure the contribution of lobby groups to democracy in the EU. The work of Van Schendelen (2003) will be extensively used for this, because he has succeeded in grasping democracy in a number of notions, which can be used for the purpose of this thesis.

3.4.1 Discussion

Van Schendelen (2003) acknowledges the fact that it is not possible to decide upon the best definition of democracy with regard to the EU. He has incorporated the most popular notions of democracy in the EU debate in a scheme, divided in four categories representing the succeeding stages in the policy-making process.

1. Input notions

Input notions are related to the people and organizations providing inputs (e.g. information, positions) into the decision-making process. The main idea is that this input side has to be *open* to all people and organizations wanting to provide inputs and that the system should treat them as *equals* and be *permeable* to all interests. There are different ways in which these interests can find their way into the decision-making process: (1) through competitive elections for at least the purpose of distributing the formal positions of power, (2) through direct channels, ranging from referendums to petitions and (3) through indirect channels such as political parties and interest groups.

2. Throughput notions

Throughput notions are linked to the process of decision-making; who takes the decisions and why that person? The main concept related to these notions is *representation*; governance must be representative of what the citizenry desires. This representation does not always imply popular election but can also be achieved by adjusting recruitment methods to reflect the population in the machinery. Another group of throughput notions is related to the methods of governance, which can be divided into three variants: (1) *majority rule* (which can be substituted by qualified majority voting), (2) *consensual governance* or the continuous accommodation of preferences by compromises, and (3) *polyarchy* with the opposition preventing a dominant majority (one does not rule out the other). The final group of throughput notions focuses on values that dictate that representative officials should behave in certain ways including *comprehensive discourse*, *transparency* and *legitimacy*.

3. Output notions

The main idea behind output notions is that governance should result in widely acceptable outcomes, also called *legitimate* results. This legitimacy can stem from many different sources, including tradition, charisma of the responsible officials etc. There are however two

more general views on legitimacy, the first one being concerned with methods. These methods are (1) *limited government*, including checks and balances between institutions, decentralization to sub-national and functional authorities and restrained behaviour towards involvement in the private spheres and sectors, and (2) *rule of law*, which says that outputs of governance should be based on formally binding decisions, produced through prescribed procedures, approved by a formally representative platform and open to judicial appeal (Van Schendelen, 2003).

The second general view on legitimacy is related to values. Nominated officials should be accountable to elected officials, and the latter should be *accountable* to their electorate. Furthermore, outputs should be *responsive* to desires formulated at earlier stages in the process.

4. Feedback notions

The main idea behind feedback notions is *citizenship*. Governance affects people in a sense that they can internalize the values of governance selectively and to behave accordingly. More specific notions that are concerned with values are *tolerance*, which is necessary in a pluralistic society, and *group identity* which prevents society from breaking down. Two further specific notions are linked to methods; citizens should possess *freedoms and rights* in order to function appropriately in society and there should be clear *linkages to input* such as political parties, interest groups and the media.

From this analysis, the following table can be drawn to give an overview of the main notions of democracy as found by Van Schendelen (2003):

<p><i>Input notions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Openness, permeability ▪ Pluralistic competition ▪ Competitive elections ▪ Direct channels ▪ Representative channels 	<p><i>Output notions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Legitimacy ▪ Limited government ▪ Rule of law ▪ Accountability ▪ Responsiveness
<p><i>Throughput notions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Representation ▪ Majority-vote decisions ▪ Consensual decisions ▪ Polyarchy, opposition ▪ Legitimate authority ▪ Discursiveness ▪ Transparency 	<p><i>Feedback notions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Citizenship ▪ Tolerance ▪ Identity ▪ Freedoms and rights ▪ Linkages to input

Table 3: Popular notions of democracy (Source: Van Schendelen, 2003)

This table is quite complete in my view, although I do miss the notion ‘inclusion’, which I would like to put in the input notions part. Inclusion means the incorporation of all interests in the policy-making discussion process, regardless of the resources of their defenders. This notion will be added to the aforementioned notions for the next paragraph.

3.5 Selection of the criteria

In this section, the criteria that will be used to measure the way in which lobby groups can contribute to EU democracy will be chosen. It is important to select these criteria over a wide range, so that all aspects of ‘democracy’ are covered. Therefore, criteria will be selected from the different notions found by Van Schendelen (2003) in the public debate on democracy in the EU. Some of the notions will be grouped because they can be linked; others will be left out because lobby groups can hardly influence them (e.g. majority-vote decisions). When explaining the definition of the criteria and how lobbies can influence them, normative statements will be made to show the desired situation for the criteria to be present at EU level.

3.5.1 Access

Interests should be able to find their way to the appropriate institution or official in the EU. The institutions and individuals working for them should be open, permeable and willing to include different interests in their work. In short, the pluralism of civil societies should have a continuation inside the system (Van Schendelen, 2003). Access can be measured by analyzing the different parties that were involved in decision-making as compared to the total number of interests in the field on specific issues in the EU. This should be reflected in the outcomes that will be balanced if access has been granted to interests the correct way. Lobby groups can contribute to access by representing interests of a wide range of society and bringing these interests to the attention of the officials in charge.

3.5.2 Competition

What needs to be avoided at EU level is the dominance of one interest in the policy-making process. This would not reflect the wishes and desires of the European citizenry and would produce policies that are not in the interest of all European people. Therefore, Europe needs multiple groups representing interests that are dissimilar and compete with each other. This plurality of interests would make sure that the majority of the citizens have their interests represented and have a fair chance of seeing their interests taken into account in the formulation of policies. Pluralistic competition can be measured in the same manner as access, by analyzing the different parties that were involved in decision-making as compared to the total number of interests in the field on specific issues in the EU. Lobby groups can contribute to competition if they are respectful and tolerant vis-à-vis other interests and engage in fair competition for the attention of the relevant officials.

3.5.3 Channelling

Direct channels are those that are in place for the transportation of desires such as national referendums, private visits, orderly petitions or street protests. Citizens can reach the political office that they target in a direct way without interfering intermediaries. Lobby groups cannot play an active role here since their intervention would turn the channel from a direct one to an

indirect one. Their roles are limited to the provision of information to the citizens that choose for directly reaching their target office.

Indirect channels are channels where the desires of civil society are represented indirectly, such as in political parties, interest groups, mass media, bureaucracies etc. Lobby groups are in fact indirect channels that represent the wishes of a specific group of citizens. In this regard, lobby groups are a pure form of indirect channelling if they manage to get the desires and wishes of the people they represent through to the relevant institutions and officials.

3.5.4 Representation

The idea behind the throughput criteria is that governance must be representative of what the people desire (Van Schendelen, 2003). Representation is a term that has many different definitions. Keeping in mind the complex nature of the EU, representation in this context will stand for an elected or selected body that reflects the demographic distribution of the population and acts on behalf and in behalf of the people. Committees helping the Commission with its tasks can be seen as representative bodies, as well as the more obviously representative institution, the European Parliament. Representation can be promoted by lobby groups if the lobby groups are themselves representative bodies acting on behalf of the citizens. Their organizational structure should be centred on representation with management functions open to competitive elections. Furthermore, their members should have the opportunity to influence the strategies and policies of the group. Also, the more members an interest group has, the more influence it should have, since it is then seen as representing a larger part of the population and its desires.

3.5.5 Deliberation

The main idea here is that different preferences are continually accommodated by new compromises (Lijphart in Van Schendelen, 2003), which prevents the rise of a dominant preference and makes sure that different preferences are incorporated into decisions. At EU-level, this can become quite difficult, because there are so many interests and preferences. If every decision had to be taken by consensus, the EU would not be able to progress at the speed it is progressing today with QMV in a considerable number of policy areas. It is understandable that deliberation is a term associated to democracy; in the ideal situation, everyone would agree with every decision made by public authorities – after long and interesting discussions. However, the desirability and extent to which deliberation is desirable can be a subject of controversy.

Lobby groups can help the promotion of deliberation by participating in the policy process while being open to discussion and consensus. Therefore, they should accept and acknowledge the fact that other interests are also important and should be taken into consideration in the process.

3.5.6 Transparency

Behaving in a transparent way is considered to be an important factor in democratic systems. People should be able to know who takes decisions, how these decisions are made and what the predicted consequences will be for them. The decision-making in the EU has frequently been criticized for not being transparent, which is understandable given its complex structure and the number of parties involved in a single decision.

Lobby groups can help to open up the process by providing the public with information relevant for their activities; what their strategies and goals are, what they stand for, who they represent and what they do at EU-level. Moreover, they can demand the same from the other parties involved in decision-making by setting high standards; the European Commission (2001) has set transparency of the institutions as one of its objectives in the Laeken Declaration.

3.5.7 Legitimacy

A legitimate government is widely considered as acceptable (Van Schendelen, 2003). There are many possible sources of legitimacy, e.g. legitimacy related to the inputs in the policy process (input legitimacy), legitimacy related to the outputs of the process (output legitimacy), the fairness and justness of the throughput process, the personal authority or charisma of the responsible officials or even tradition and science (Van Schendelen, 2003).

Tradition is not relevant here since the EU has not been around too long yet and therefore does not have any mention-worthy traditions that could foster its legitimacy. Legitimacy stemming from personal authority or charisma is subjective and will only last as long as the person in question is in function, not guaranteeing the EU lasting legitimacy. Public management is not an exact science and cannot always predict effects correctly, therefore not providing enough security to be a legitimating source. Legitimacy for the EU stems from inputs, throughputs and outputs in my view.

Input-legitimacy can be promoted by lobby groups if they can bring issues and interests that are important to the public to the attention of the officials dealing with the specific policy fields. This will enable the officials with providing solutions to problems they would not have seen without the help of the interest groups. Throughput-legitimacy can be fostered by lobby groups if they are able to represent the interests of the citizens in their participation in the policy process and if they manage to do this in a transparent and clear manner. Output-legitimacy can be promoted by interest groups when they are part of the effective performance of the EU. This can be accomplished by supporting and promoting the implementation of policies and providing information to the citizens about the effects of EU policies.

3.5.8 Rule of law

Rule of law means that outputs of governance should ultimately be based on formally binding decisions, produced through prescribed procedures, approved by a formally representative

platform and open to judicial appeal (Van Schendelen, 2003). Rule of law is important in democracy because every system needs rules; without them, there would be chaos. There always are exceptions to the rules and ways to turn around them. Especially in the EU context, formal structures are different from the fresh and blood, so what is true in theory may not always be true in practice. However, law is one of the pillars of democracy since it also sets out standards for the democratic procedures (e.g. the representative system, voting procedures etc.). Lobby groups can promote rule of law by simply adhering to the rules laid down for them. They should work through the official and legal channels open to them (e.g. committees, civil society platforms) and act in a transparent way so that the public can be optimally informed about their whereabouts.

3.5.9 Accountability

A democratic system would not be very useful if the elected officials would not be held responsible to the electorate. Otherwise, they would be elected on the basis of certain objectives and promises, not live up to them after the election, and not be 'punished' for that. Elected officials are in office to represent the wishes and desires of the people who voted for them. Therefore, their decisions are open to scrutiny and they can be asked to answer for them. The bureaucracy is - in a more indirect way - also held accountable, since it has to justify its decisions to the elected officials.

Lobby groups can foster accountability by critically looking at the performance of the elected officials and the bureaucracy and intervene when they think that people do not live up to their promises. Moreover, they should make sure that they are held accountable themselves to their members or the group whose interests they represent.

3.5.10 Citizenship

At the moment, there is no clear common identity shared by all European citizens, and this is often regarded as one of the main constraints to further integration. Without identifying themselves with the EU, the citizens will never be enthusiastic about the far-reaching political integration planned by European leaders. Therefore, many political philosophers wonder whether the efforts to further integration are legitimate and can be justified solely on the basis of economic, social and political arguments without trying to foster a common identity. Citizenship also entails rights and freedoms, which permit citizens to act as citizens. Furthermore, citizens should be tolerant of each other to be able to solve irritating differences in a peaceful way (Van Schendelen, 2003).

Lobby groups can help creating a common European identity by not discriminating on the basis of ethnicity or nationality in the representation of interests. Furthermore, they should strive for goals that are in the interest more than one geographical location to foster mutual feelings. In the striving for these interests, they should be tolerant and respectful vis-à-vis other interests.

4. Methods of field work

In order to gain knowledge about the way people and organizations involved in the Brussels lobbying and decision-making process see democracy and lobbying, it was decided to arrange interviews with several key persons. The aim was to contact as many people as possible in the different organizational forms interests can take on as seen in chapter 2:

	Individual action	Collective action	Third party
National level	Individual national action	National association	National consultant
European level	Individual EU action	European association	Brussels consultant

Table 4: Organizational forms of interest representation (Source: Bouwen, 2001)

From the start, it was clear that it would not be possible to organize enough interviews for the data to be reliable and relevant. The time period for this project was too short for this, and people working in the EU agricultural lobbying circuit were found to be very busy and often not reachable for the purpose of this research. Therefore, the aim of the fieldwork was to explore the sector and get an idea of how lobby groups are perceived by some key individuals from organizations involved with lobbying. The objective was therefore to hold interviews with at least two people from the following organizations;

- The Commission (heads of unit)
- Individual firms
- European associations (mostly encompassing national associations and therefore also covering in part this category)
- The European Parliament
- The European Council

Third party representatives were not contacted because they act on behalf of any of the two other categories (individual and collective action). The consultative bodies of the EU such as ECOSOC and COREG were not contacted due to the limited role they play in the policy process.

For the individual action level, it was decided to contact Dutch multinationals active in the agricultural lobbying at DG AGRI. Unilever and Ahold were contacted by email and found to be willing to cooperate with the research. The preference was to hold face-to-face interviews with open questions, which was possible at Unilever, but Ahold was only available for a telephone interview with open questions.

Several Commission heads of unit at DG AGRI were emailed to ask for interviews to get the comments of the receiver side of lobbying. Two heads of unit were prepared to cooperate. From the first interview in Brussels, a list of collective action organizations perceived to be influential by the head of unit in question was given and from this information the collective action groups were selected.

Five Members of Parliament belonging to the committee on agriculture were contacted by email and phone, but none of them proved to be available to participate in the research.

The Council secretariat was contacted to be able to find relevant persons to interview within the Council, but no answer was received within the time period set for the interviews.

Of the three European associations provided by the head of unit first interviewed, one was willing to cooperate with the project (RSPB). It was decided to send the questions by email for logistical reasons, since the contact person lives in the UK. Furthermore, COPA-Cogeca, CEJA and BEUC were contacted by email and phone, but were not willing to cooperate.

The persons to be interviewed are:

Organization	Name	Function	Method
European Commission	Mr. T. Garcia-Azcarate	Head of unit of horticultural products and olive oil at the DG AGRI	Face-to-face interview
European Commission	Mrs. Summa	Head of unit at the DG AGRI in the field of promotion of agricultural products and grants for information provision	Face-to-face interview
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (U.K.)	Mr. J. Dixon	Agriculture policy officer for 4 years, senior policy officer for 3 years and head of rural policy for 2 years.	Interview by email
Unilever	Mr. D. Toet	Senior regulatory adviser foods	Face-to-face interview
Ahold	Mr. F. Schmid	Vice President Food Safety & Consumer Health	Telephone interview

Table 5: List of participants in field research

5. Interviewing stakeholders

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the outcomes of the interviews held with five persons involved in the EU agricultural lobbying process will be presented. The previous chapter highlighted how these persons were selected. An average number of 10 open questions were asked and answers were elaborated upon. At the end of each paragraph, key terms in relation to democracy used by the person interviewed are summarized to reflect the major issues in the discussion. The final paragraph will look back on the interviews and assess the completeness of views.

5.2 The stakeholder views

5.2.1 Mr. Garcia-Azcarate, European Commission

Mr. Garcia-Azcarate is head of unit of horticultural products and olive oil at the DG AGRI in the European Commission. He is responsible for the markets in fruits and vegetables, olive oil, potatoes and flowers.

From his schedule of the first quarter of 2005, the average number of meetings with lobbyists such as European associations and individual firms and other representatives (national governments, consultants etc.) can be estimated to amount to approximately four to five times per week. The lobbyists Mr. Garcia-Azcarate meets change a lot relating to the current proposals, and have differing backgrounds; some of them come from European associations such as Freshfel, others represent national governments and there are also a few individual firms such as Heinz.

The appointments with the Member States take place on a regular basis each month and are centred on meetings, with contacts before, during and after the meetings to discuss the topics at hand. Mr. Garcia-Azcarate tries to receive everyone because the European Commission is a public service, and he believes that public servants should not be biased towards certain organizational forms; it is the substance that counts. Confidence is the basis; if someone is caught lying, the confidence will not be restored no matter whether the person is part of an association, a government or a firm. Next to confidence, the person also has to be reliable and credible. The lobby groups help Mr. Garcia-Azcarate a lot with his work. The more specific the issue, the more important they become. The Commission needs expertise and therefore also contacts the lobby groups to get information needed for proposals.

When a new proposal is on its way, five files are organized with demands and wishes from different players. In order of priority, these players are;

1. The European Parliament and the Council
2. The Member States
3. European associations
4. National associations
5. Individual firms

The first file to be taken into consideration is the one with the wishes and demands of the Parliament and the Council. When solutions can be found here, they will be taken on in the proposal. Normally, some issues will be left open after this stage. Then the second step is taken by looking at the wishes and demands from Member States in order to fill the remaining gaps in the proposal. This process continues if the proposal is not complete after the inputs from the Member States. The third file contains the demands and wishes of European associations, the fourth those of the national associations and the last one those of individual firms.

The key lobby groups in the field of work of Mr. Garcia-Azcarate according to him are different by subject. On the major general topics such as CAP reform, the environmentalists are key players. He even points the RSPB (the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) out as the single most influential lobby group in the formulation of the CAP reforms of 1992. This group has written a discussion paper in 1988 with suggestions for improvement of the CAP that took account of the budget restrictions and with a clear understanding of how the agricultural policy came in place. Mr. Garcia-Azcarate considers this capacity to understand the opportunities and restrictions that the Commission faces to be very important. It is not helpful to just criticize a policy without knowing what the backgrounds are, what (financial) pressures the Commission experiences or without making relevant and helpful proposals to help overcome the weaknesses of the policy. In the past, the RSPB and other environmental and consumer groups were acting like that; being very critical and pessimistic and portraying the CAP as nonsensical and 'rubbish'. In the late 80s, the RSPB changed its tactics and formulated very useful, politically acceptable and feasible proposals. It is striking to see the resemblances between the discussion paper and the CAP reforms of 1992, says Mr. Garcia-Azcarate. It is thus very important for lobby groups to be successful, to think with the Commission and put themselves in the shoes of the responsible officials, thinking of the different players to be pleased and the political and financial restrictions to be overcome. Farmer groups such as COPA have put themselves out of the game on the main topics because of their negative behaviour towards all the CAP reforms, saying that they would not work and that their effects would be dramatic, which each time was proven wrong.

On more specific market issues, Mr. Garcia-Azcarate says that in his field the trade sector is very important, and on the markets in fruit and vegetables the industry plays a major role. Here the farmers and the environmentalists play a less proactive role. This is very interesting since my first assumption was that the farmers were very important players in this field because of their past experience and reputation of being very influential in the EU agricultural sector. But their credibility has been damaged since their negative attitude towards reforms has been proven to be untrustworthy and pessimistic. Consultants do not often come to see Mr. Garcia-Azcarate, but when they come they mostly represent European federations and are accompanied by one of the members of the federation; they hardly ever come alone. The main federations have their own office in Brussels and do not rely on the services of professional consultants. Examples of federations that do take on the help of consultants are the French prune association and the German mushroom association.

Mr. Garcia-Azcarate's view is that the European Parliament is more easily influencable than the Commission. His explanation is as follows; in the Commission, in order to get one's view through, many people from different backgrounds, nationalities and with different experience have to be convinced. In his case, for example, a decision is taken collectively with colleagues from other nationalities, and people from the budgetary, legal and other departments have to agree. Then, up the ladder, his superiors coming from the UK, Denmark and other countries (he is a Spaniard himself) have to come to the same conclusion. This creates a certain balance in which makes the Commission resistant to lobbying, supported by checks from other departments and DGs. The Commission's decision-making is a process of collective decision-making, which is highlighted by Mr. Garcia-Azcarate as *the* most important safeguard against the rule of lobbyists. Arguments are the source of decisions, making the Commission an area for discourse and debate. The Commission can be seen as an intellectual unit that presents proposals that are EU-balanced; including the standpoints and wishes of the overall EU constituency. If the Commission makes a biased proposal favouring a group over the other, it fails at this aim of preparing the playing field for the other actors in a EU-balanced way. The Commission could be compared to a sponge (absorbing) as opposed to a stone (which can be used to throw at others); it absorbs everything of value for its aim, but cannot be used by other players for their own purposes.

To Mr Garcia-Azcarate, the main objective of the MEPs is to get re-elected. Because of the fact that their electorate only consists of people from their own country, own region or even own local constituency , the chance is big that they will try to satisfy the needs and wants of people from a single country. However, it is difficult to see the addition of national, regional or even local constituencies as the European constituency. Therefore, the Commission will be in a better place to formulate proposals for the European citizenry. Mr. Garcia-Azcarate also mentioned that the Parliament is now a more favourable action place for lobbyists than the Commission, because the chance of succeeding is higher there.

With internet, it is no longer necessary to actually be in Brussels to get the information needed to influence the decision-making. The EU nowadays has a website containing an enormous amount of information accessible to everyone with an internet connection. Distributing information is in some way also distributing power; when one has the information, one has more weight in a discussion because of the knowledge acquired. However, being close to Brussels gives that 'feeling' necessary to understand how the whole machinery works. This brings costs with it because establishing an office in Brussels and keeping up-to-date is quite resource-intensive, so only resourceful players can afford this. Approached in this way, resourceful players may have an advantage over less resourceful players.

When asked about the meaning of democracy in the EU, Mr. Garcia-Azcarate said it should contain the following elements:

- Inclusion
This means that all involved nationalities, backgrounds and experience (e.g. environmental vs. financial vs. legal) have to be included in a decision
- Collective decision-making
Working together to find the best solution
- European-balanced policies
The decisions have to be in the interest of the European citizens

Regarding Mr. Garcia-Azcarate's opinion on the possible negative effect on EU democracy, he sees lobbies as potentially having both positive and negative effects, but the negative effects can be overcome by good defence mechanisms (the checks and balances within the Commission, collective decision-making). The positive effects are that lobby groups can bring problems to the Commission's attention, they can contribute the necessary expertise for formulating proposals and they can bring unknown issues to the public. These opportunities to get involved in the decision-making process can also be used for wrong and intentionally harmful purposes, but the defence mechanism in place should be strong enough to filter out the lobbies with wrong intentions. So the effect of lobbying on democracy is positive in Mr. Garcia-Azcarate's opinion; it brings information and organization into the debate and discourse and helps with making collective decisions. The administration has built up a defence system that protects it from abuse. If a lobby is too powerful, it is not the fault of the lobby groups; the administration should have been designed to resist it. This is not yet the case in the Parliament. However, the more power is handed over to the Parliament, the more it will need a defence mechanism. Mr. Garcia-Azcarate believes that the EP will always be more sensible to lobbies.

The catchwords that Mr. Garcia-Azcarate used in relation to his perception of lobbying and democracy can be summarized as follows:

- Collective decision-making
- Information
- Checks and balances
- Inclusion

5.2.2 Mrs. Hilikka Summa, European Commission

Mrs Hilikka Summa is head of unit at the DG AGRI in the field of promotion of agricultural products and grants for information provision. Mrs Summa's playing field is particular in the sense that lobby groups deliver the proposals for promotion of their products, and the Commission decides if the proposal is fit for support or not. This means that the promotion of agricultural products policy is based on initiatives of representative bodies in the agricultural sector that are knowledgeable in their field and can provide the Commission with information. However, this is not the only source of information that the Commission uses since it is not always reliable; it also gets information from Member States, statistics on the market and DG AGRI market units.

Once a proposal for promotion is in the pipeline, Mrs Summa will not meet with groups that are involved in the proposal; she sees this as being unfair since it is impossible for her to meet with all involved groups due to lack of time. This way, she does not favour one group over the other. When Mrs Summa agrees to meet lobby groups, it mainly concerns general issues. She meets one lobby group per week on average. The beneficiaries of the promotional policies are profit and non-profit groups that are filtered through the Member States and have similar resources, which makes the playing field quite levelled.

When asked about lobbying in general, Mrs Summa said that she did not perceive it as being negative. All groups have the same opportunity and the field is open, so everyone who wants to be involved can get involved. However, there can be an uneven distribution of resources since players such as big enterprises have more money and time to lobby the institutions regularly. To counter this, the administration is quite strict on rules and procedures that are there to prevent corruption and inappropriate influences. Furthermore, mechanisms have been put into place assuring wide (public) consultation, e.g. impact assessments.

Mrs Summa was quite clear on her view of the separation of roles between the institutions. The Commission is the administration which does not necessarily have to be democratic. Its main aim is to be an efficient machine that makes proposals, is an expert, hears and includes different groups and implements regulation. In this process, lobbies are a part of normal life and constitute an exchange of information. Lobbies can contribute to freedom of organization, freedom of speech and free thinking. As long as lobbying sticks to exchange of information, Mrs Summa believes that there is no harm in lobbies. However, there is a risk if the lobbies become too powerful, closed and non-transparent. This can happen in situations where the same persons fill the same positions for 10 to 15 years and form a closed circle difficult to access for newcomers and outsiders. Mobility and renewal are essential in order to prevent this, also within the representative bodies that are involved in lobbying since they have the tendency to become closed. Lobby groups (including NGOs, governments) should try to be as democratic as they can be, keeping in mind that companies by definition are not democratic.

Concluding, Mrs Summa's opinion is that lobbies can have possible negative as well as positive effects to democracy in the EU; there are useful aspects but also risks in accepting them. To make full use of the useful aspects and prevent the risks, obligatory mobility within the DGs and the lobby groups and reforms to make the prevention mechanisms stronger and more efficient are required.

The catchwords that Mrs Summa used in relation to her perception of lobbying and democracy can be summarized as follows:

- Equal opportunities
- Wide (public) consultation
- Transparency
- Openness
- Freedom of speech, organization and thinking

5.2.3 Mr. Dick Toet, Unilever

Mr. Toet is senior regulatory adviser foods at Unilever. He works with three other fulltime advisers in the regulatory affairs department. The department deals with all regulatory issues related to Unilever's food products and has global responsibilities. Part of their work is to define lobbying strategies to influence proposals within the EU that can affect Unilever policy and products. According to Mr. Toet, most of the regulation affecting Unilever's food products comes from DG SANCO and to a lesser extent from DG AGRI.

When developing a strategy for influencing EU legislation, the regulatory department is in charge. They will consult with colleagues who work within the field of action at Unilever to gain the expertise necessary to develop high quality proposals. After having consulted with these colleagues, the issue is brought to a larger group to analyze the (financial) impact the proposal will have on the company - also in relation to its competitors. Top management will eventually take the ultimate decision on the strategy to be adopted. It is important to know that these strategies are not developed in an isolated way and that the regulatory affairs department is in touch with other stakeholders during the process. One of the strongest alliances that can be formed to influence EU legislation is an alliance between consumers and industry, so these two groups will try to come to a common strategy whenever this is possible. Unilever takes part in European associations and forums where it tries to reach agreements that are advantageous to the business.

Unilever adjusts its lobbying to the stage the proposal is in. In the draft stage, it focuses on the Commission. When the Commission sends the proposal to the EP and the Council, Unilever is in contact with national governments and with permanent representatives and MEPs. For these activities to be effective it is highly desirable that these persons are contacted in their own language and preferably by their own nationals. For that reason Unilever's HQ relies heavily on their colleagues in the various Member States. However, language barriers lose their meaning when it comes to issues that have to be dealt with by people that have technical expertise.

Mr. Toet sees a resurge of the industry as important player in the EU, after having lost this role to consumers and environmental groups. Apparently, the Commission and other institutions now recognize the important role the industry plays in providing the citizens (and thus the electorate) with jobs, where consumer and environmental organizations cannot do no such thing. After all, the electorate of the MEPs and national governments is none other than Unilever's customers.

When asked about how he sees democracy in the EU, Mr. Toet thinks that the current democracy situation in the EU is not bad; the procedure of decision-making is comprehensible, it is possible to influence this procedure because the EU is open to this (but he also acknowledges the fact that it costs a lot of time and money), there is representation in the Parliament through directly elected MEPs, and the political decisions are ultimately made by the Council, which can be seen as a body of indirect representation. The major problem is

that European citizens cannot get very excited about the European Institutions, which is worrying. He also thinks that there are a lot of lobbyists nowadays, who do not all live up to the quality and honesty standards that most of the interest groups have set for themselves – and where set by the institutions. Furthermore, Mr. Toet criticizes the big bureaucracy in the EU, but at the same time says that the Netherlands may even score worse in this particular area.

Mr. Toet's opinion is that lobbies contribute to democracy in the EU. First of all, the lobbying process is transparent, with position papers published on the internet. Moreover, the receivers of lobbies are aware of who they are dealing with and what the lobbyists want. Next to industry and trade, consumers and environmentalists are present in the lobbying arena, so there is balance between interests. However, as said above, quality is a point of contention. The soundest argument Mr. Toet has provided in favour of lobbies is that lobbies are part of the right of speech and informed choice. When they are constructive and of high quality, lobbies can also contribute towards good decision-making and good governance, which is in the interest of all stakeholders in the EU.

The catchwords that Mr. Toet used in relation to his perception of lobbying and democracy can be summarized as follows:

- Quality
- Representation
- Right of speech
- Transparency
- Balance

5.2.4 Mr. Fons Schmid, Ahold

Mr. Schmid is Vice President Food Safety & Consumer Health at Ahold. He works together with 7 other full-time employees who cover the public affairs for Ahold worldwide; their work is not just focused on the EU, but also on the USA and other countries. His role is to always know exactly what is going on in his field, be able to compare this to the events in the outside world, and to assess whether it can affect Ahold's business. Threats and opportunities are formulated, and on the basis of these a strategy is (or is not) developed. The DGs of influence to Ahold's business are mainly DG AGRI, DG SANCO and DG Internal Market. For Ahold, consumers and industry are the main partners in trying to formulate a common position in the EU.

The Commission is the main target for the lobbies of Ahold. It is critical for them to get in touch with the relevant people at the Commission as soon as possible in the proposal stage. The main tool is conferring and deliberation, and sometimes a position paper will flow from this process. Ahold's efforts are thus concentrated on the Commission. When necessary, they will try to influence the EP and the Council, but the possible effects are already limited at this stage in the procedure.

Mr. Schmid's experience is that the institutions are equally open to lobbies, and that it is as easy (or hard) to get in one institution as the other. Being sincere is very important when approaching officials and representatives. Information on business, socio-economic, financial and health impacts of proposals is highly appreciated, since there are not enough resources within the institutions to acquire that information without the help of interest groups. However, it is Mr. Schmid's opinion that the Parliament is less transparent than the Commission, more happens behind closed doors. As the main priority of most politicians is to be re-elected, emotions play a significant role, which makes it harder to win your case with only sound arguments; proposals should also appeal to the electorate.

Within Ahold, decisions on the lobbying strategy are taken in meetings while making use of the internal expertise of marketers, communications experts and market researchers. European associations are very important to Ahold; it is for example member of Eurocommerce, the major representative body of the food and non-food retail trade sector. Ahold takes part in advisory organs on behalf of the associations, but has also been asked to represent itself in certain committees.

When asked about the importance of democracy in the EU, Mr. Schmid answered that it should be reinforced. He believes that it is a good thing that the Constitution has been drawn up, but the major problem remains; the distance between national citizens and the EU. Moreover, the processes within the EU are not clear to the citizens, such as the role of the EP. However, Mr. Schmid thinks that improving this takes time; the EU is very young and people should not expect to have a full-working democratic body in such a short period.

According to Mr. Schmid, lobbies are part of the democratic process, and the critics on the negative effect of lobbies on democracy in the EU are nonsense. A justified interest should be allowed defence. Moreover, Mr. Schmid believes that lobbying in the EU is an open and transparent process; everybody (with time and resources) can take part in it and information is published on internet. Substance and quality are required when delivering information, which levels the playing field. Mr. Schmid also thinks that it is important to work together when making decisions, since decisions then have more legitimacy.

The catchwords that Mr. Schmid used in relation to his perception of lobbying and democracy can be summarized as follows:

- Quality
- Substance
- Transparency
- Collective decision-making
- Openness

5.2.5 Mr. Jim Dixon, RSPB

Mr. Dixon worked at the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds between 1990 and 1999. He was agriculture policy officer for 4 years, senior policy officer for 3 years and head of

rural policy for 2 years. In that capacity he was co-ordinator of the Birdlife International European Agriculture Task Force and several similar roles.

In Mr. Dixon's time at the RSPB, there were a range of policy experts influencing many Directorates of the Commission, especially Environment, Agriculture, Transport, International Relations, Enlargement, Regional and the President's Office. Also lobbied were the European Council, including the Presidency, the Parliament, Committee of the Regions, Court of Auditors. The main inputs were written – letters, reports, responses to consultations and e-mails. Moreover, many face-to-face meetings with Commission officials and MEPs were held, and conferences, events and receptions were organized to meet and influence officials. The RSPB also made use of European and national media to influence EU institutions.

The internal strategy formulation regarding lobbying was rather autocratic. Overall policies were approved by the RSPB's Council and these were published and formed the basis of all subsequent lobbying work. In practice, there was a high degree of leeway for senior officers (Chief Executive, Directors, policy staff) to make interventions into policy without any other involvement. Much policy-making was based on research, including economic analysis, informal discussion, consultation and science. At an international level, the RSPB worked with partner organizations within BirdLife International and also with other NGOs – mainly WWF and the European Environmental Bureau.

The openness of the different institutions depended on what the RSPB was lobbying for, who individually it was talking to, when it was lobbying and other factors. For example, officers in the forward studies unit were found to be open to general position statements and also officers of certain policy directorates who were keen to hear 'on the ground' experience of policy as it is implemented in Member States. It also helped if the officials were from Britain, Germany, Netherlands and Spain as these were more attuned to environmental issues. Sometimes officials were 'gathering information' when they were reflecting on policy and at that stage they were receptive. Sometimes when decisions were politically sensitive, officials preferred only to meet Member State officials. Generally, Mr. Dixon found DG Agriculture more receptive to agriculture messages, although there were good relations with certain DG Environment officials too. Mr. Dixon's colleagues with a stronger environment (birds, habitats directive, water) lobbying worked closer with DG Environment. In his latter years, Mr. Dixon was appointed to a DG Agriculture advisory committee. Over the years, he witnessed a distinct opening up of the institutions. In the early 1990s, the Commission was closed to all but agriculture lobbyists (COPA and NFU) but with successive greener Commissioners and a more forceful green lobby (Mr Dixon and colleagues) the institution became much more open.

Mr. Dixon also lobbied the Parliament but he thinks it was largely irrelevant as the EP produced reports that lacked credibility. He believes co-decision between the Parliament and Council to be a good thing because it has made the Parliament more realistic and coherent

than it was in the early 1990s. The Committee of the Regions was irrelevant to CAP in Mr. Dixon's time. In his latter years the RSPB began to effectively influence the EU Presidencies of the European Council with some notable successes in Spanish, Austrian, British and Netherlands Presidencies.

When asked to reflect on democracy in the EU, Mr. Dixon thought it largely functions well. It is best when it is relevant to the lives of real people. For many people in Europe, the EU institutions are remote and for some this is a disincentive to vote and get involved. For others it is very positive as they come from societies (in Eastern and Southern Europe) where there has been a failure of democracy in recent years. Overall, there is a split between people who see the EU institutions as a threat to long-standing democracies, and people who see it as something that will foster new democracies.

Mr. Dixon believes that it is important for all public bodies to be open, transparent and accountable to the communities they serve. People must have confidence in the institutions that serve them and therefore the democratic process is important. When Mr. Dixon lobbied the EU institutions, there was almost no democratic check on the CAP, except indirectly by ministers elected to the national governments on the Council of Ministers. Today, the transparency of the institutions and the stronger role of the Parliament are probably better than when he was lobbying the EU institutions.

Mr. Dixon thinks that it is possible that lobby groups have a negative impact on EU democracy when they fail to represent truly the breadth of citizen's interests. For this reason the institutions must open themselves up to *all* lobby groups and not just a small number of highly organised bodies. When Mr. Dixon began lobbying on the CAP, a few farming and industry groups dominated it. When he left the job consumers, environmentalists, food safety campaigners and others all began to have a wider interest. Lobby groups also ensure that information is published in media in a way that makes it easier for people to understand what is going on. Furthermore, lobby groups can challenge elected politicians and officials. They can inform the public about issues, they can give the citizen a sense that 'their voice' can be heard. Of course, lobby groups *are not* the voice of people; it is up to officials to commission proper public opinion research and for politicians to submit themselves to the vote at election time.

Mr. Dixon believes that in the new democracies of Eastern Europe (and relatively new ones of Southern Europe) lobby groups have been central in opening up and making decision-making more transparent. However, he also believes that the ideal situation is not a bureaucracy 'held open' by lobby groups but rather a bureaucracy that wishes the door to be open and accessible to all groups in society and that invests its time and its staff time in doing so. The EU institutions have begun to do this. As institutions do this, the role of lobby groups changes. Instead of being campaigning and fighting organizations, they must adapt to provide expert advice. And they too must learn to be open, transparent and inclusive of a wider shade of opinions. Mr. Dixon left the RSPB partly because he wished to open up bureaucracy from

within and believed that the RSPB needed to change too. Mr. Dixon now works in a small public body with that clear intention and has also been in a job in which a whole government department changed its attitude to outside influence radically, which is now the mainstream.

The catchwords that Mr. Dixon used in relation to his perception of lobbying and democracy can be summarized as follows:

- Openness (to *all* lobby groups)
- Transparency
- Accountability
- Inclusion

5.3 Conclusions

The interviews have provided some very useful information about the reality of dealing on a daily basis with lobbies in the EU that could not have been provided by literature. One of the most surprising findings was that the RSPB has been such an important player during the reforms in 1992. In the literature consulted for this project, no reference to this interest group could be found.

However, it should be noted explicitly that it seems there are no real opponents of lobbying within the group of people interviewed. The interviewees seem to be well aware of the negative sides of the practice of lobbying, but apparently they believe that there is a sufficient amount of ‘defence mechanisms’ to protect the EU from the negative side of lobbies. When selecting the people to be interviewed, it was not the idea to find an equal amount of proponents and opponents. The objective was to find a variety of people working in different parts and sides of the system, and finding out how they felt about lobbying in the EU. Perhaps it would have been better to actively search proponents and opponents in order to get a balanced view, but it is also interesting to see that these people react positively to lobbies because of the opportunity they provide for freedom of speech, gathering of expertise and information and how they help administrators in the Commission in formulating better policies.

6. How democratic are lobbies?

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the criteria of democracy will be linked to the activities of lobby groups to assess in which way lobbies contribute to democracy in the EU. For this, the outcomes of the interviews will be used as well as the knowledge gained from the chapters analyzing theory on the topic. The ten criteria were selected in the third chapter; (1) access, (2) competition, (3) channelling, (4) representation, (5) deliberation, (6) transparency, (7) legitimacy, (8) rule of law, (9) accountability and (10) citizenship.

6.2 Linking lobbies to the criteria

6.2.1 Access

From chapter 3: *'Lobby groups can contribute to access by representing interests of a wide range of society and bringing these interests to the attention of the officials in charge.'*

According to Mr Garcia-Azcarate, lobbyists change a lot relating to the current proposals, and have differing backgrounds. He personally receives groups ranging from European associations to national governments and individual firms. These organizations come there as representatives of interests of a variety of people and groups and meet with officials to discuss their problems and objectives while trying to influence EU policy-making in their favour. Representing interests at a high level requires resources such as money, which means that there is a significant possibility that many interests cannot be represented. Moreover, Mr Garcia-Azcarate and Mrs Summa acknowledge that lack of time is a factor in the impossibility of welcoming all interests into the policy process. However, they do try to receive everyone because, as Mr Garcia-Azcarate said, the Commission is a public service which should not be biased towards certain groups or organizational forms – it is the substance that counts.

Mr Toet believed that there is a balance in the representation of interests in the EU because next to industry and trade, consumers and environmentalists have surged to become major players. This is in favour of the idea that there is a wide range of society that is being represented at EU level. Mr Dixon agrees with this when he says that when he left the job a few years ago, consumers, environmentalists and food safety campaigners had joined farming and industry groups in the influence process of the CAP.

There seems to be a significantly more balanced playing field today compared a few years ago. If industry and trade interests were the major influencing actors before, nowadays consumers and environmentalists have found a way to play an important role at EU-level too and therefore have managed to bring the interests of a wider group to the public attention. When searching through the Commission CONECCS database containing information on interest groups, a multitude of groups appears to be active in the policy process, formally and informally. The efforts of the Commission to open up the dialogue with civil society have

certainly helped less resourceful players to be heard. But to say that all interests are represented or will ever be represented is too far-reaching and probably unrealistic. However, if we look at the contribution to access of lobby groups realistically, it must be said that they are playing a substantial role in bringing interests to the attention of officials and are representing an increasing part of the population. So with regards to the criterion access, lobby groups do contribute effectively to a more democratic EU.

6.2.2 Competition

From chapter 3: *‘Lobby groups can contribute to competition if they are respectful and tolerant vis-à-vis other interests and engage in fair competition for the attention of the relevant officials.’*

None of the interviewees perceived interest group competition as being unfair – although Mrs Summa thought that it could be *possible* in situations where there is no job mobility that some lobbies could become too powerful, closed and non-transparent. Mr Toet’s main problem in the competitive arena was that he thought that a lot of lobbyists nowadays do not live up to the quality and honesty standards that most of the interest groups have set up for themselves – and where established by the institutions. Mr Garcia-Azcarate however believes that these dishonest players with low quality information will be uncovered by officials as lobbyists are judged on the quality and honesty of their information. This is endorsed by Mr Schmid who says that as lobbyist, being sincere is of utmost importance when approaching officials.

Tolerance for other interests is showed by the fact that companies such as Unilever will always try to form alliances with consumers where possible, because the alliance between industry and consumers is the strongest one that can be formed. Unfortunately, no more information on attitudes towards other interests was provided by the interviewees, so it is hard to make a sound judgement in this regard.

With regards to competition, the evidence from the interviewed stakeholders was leaning towards being positive. Apart from the belief of Mr Toet that there are a lot of dishonest lobbyists nowadays, no other incidents were brought up that spoiled the honest image of the lobbying competition. There was not enough information to make judgements about tolerance between interest groups. So the contribution of lobby groups towards competition is slightly positive.

6.2.3 Channelling

From chapter 3: *‘Lobby groups cannot play an active role in direct channelling since their intervention would turn the channel from a direct one to an indirect one. Their roles are limited to the provision of information to the citizens that choose for directly reaching their target office. Lobby groups are a pure form of indirect channelling if they manage to get the desires and wishes of the people they represent through to the relevant institutions and officials.’*

Mrs Summa and Mr Garcia-Azcarate acknowledge that they require the information and expertise provided by lobby groups to be able to perform their tasks in a successful way. This information needs to be of high quality and honest to be accepted in a competitive environment. Lobby groups that are able to provide such expertise or information can channel the interests from their members to the officials and at the same time help the EU perform its tasks. Mr Toet has mentioned that there are lobbyists that do not live up to these standards, but it is up to the receiving officials to differentiate between the trustworthy interest groups and the non-trustworthy groups. According to Mr Garcia-Azcarate, the Commission has built up defence mechanisms such as checks and balances and consensual decision-making to filter the 'bad' information.

It is hard to draw a conclusion on this criterion since the risks of the provision of information by lobby groups are acknowledged by multiple interviewees. The lobby groups will be able to get the desires and wishes of the people they represent through only if the information through which they try to influence the officials is honest and of high quality. Therefore, the contribution of lobbies to channelling falls between the positive and negative sides, because it is possible that due to bad information provision, the interests of the people will not be channelled effectively.

6.2.4 Representation

From chapter 3: *'Representation can be promoted by lobby groups if the lobby groups are themselves representative bodies acting on behalf of the citizens. Their organizational structure should be centred on representation with management functions open to competitive elections. Furthermore, their members should have the opportunity to influence the strategies and policies of the group.'*

In the second chapter, several players in agricultural lobbying were presented. These organizations have (at least minimal) organizational structures that are based on elections, representation and the participation of members in the policy process (as far as could be understood from the information on their websites). These 5 organizations are of course just a minimal part of the whole of interest groups in the EU agricultural lobbying sector, but they do seem to set an example for other organizations in terms of representative organizational structure. Since this is an exploration of the field and the assumptions and judgements are made on the basis of the knowledge gathered for this project, the conclusion here is that with regards to representation, lobby groups contribute to democracy in the EU.

6.2.5 Deliberation

From chapter 3: *'Lobby groups can help the promotion of deliberation by participating in the policy process while being open to discussion and consensus. Therefore, the groups should accept and acknowledge the fact that other interests are also important and should be taken into consideration in the process.'*

Unilever always tries to form consensual alliances before taking its standpoints to Europe. According to Mr Toet, an alliance between the industry and the consumers is a very strong negotiating position and therefore these two stakeholders will try whenever possible to come together and find a common strategy. Ahold's main partners in the attempt to formulate a common position are also the consumers and the industry. For this, an open mind is needed as well as the openness to discussion and consensus.

The RSPB worked together with partner organizations and other NGOs (mainly the WWF and the European Environmental Bureau) at the international level, but these organizations are similarly minded and cannot be seen as defending very different interests from the RSPB.

From this information, it can be said that the organizations discussed during the interviews team up with other organizations and other interests to try to form a strong alliance when stepping into the lobbying arena. They are open to discussion and to finding strategies that suit their partners (and potential rivals). Therefore, lobby groups can contribute towards democracy in the EU with regards to deliberation.

6.2.6 Transparency

From chapter 3: *'Lobby groups can help making the process more transparent by providing the public with information relevant for their activities; what their strategies and goals are, what they stand for, who they represent and what they do at EU-level. Moreover, they can demand the same from the other parties involved in decision-making by setting high standards.'*

The 5 organizations presented in chapter 2 all had very informative websites containing at least their background, goals and objectives and organizational structure. Copa-Cogeca also had position papers and an overview of the current activities of the organization. These websites provided the public with information that was relevant and clear, and thus contributed towards more transparency, also by setting high standards. Not all interest groups have such transparent information supplies, so this is again a hard criterion to give general comments about. However, from what has been analyzed in this project, it seems that lobby groups contribute positively towards democracy with regards to transparency.

6.2.7 Legitimacy

From chapter 3: *'Input-legitimacy can be promoted by lobby groups if they can bring issues and interests that are important to the public to the attention of the officials dealing with the specific policy fields. Throughput-legitimacy can be fostered by lobby groups if they are able to represent the interests of the citizens in their participation in the policy process and if they manage to do this in a transparent and clear manner. Output-legitimacy can be promoted by interest groups when they are part of the effective performance of the EU. This can be accomplished by supporting and promoting the implementation of policies and providing information to the citizens about the effects of EU policies.'*

Input-legitimacy can be associated to indirect channelling, since it also deals with bringing the interests of the people to the attention of the officials. The conclusion is the same here; the contribution of lobbies is positive. Throughput-legitimacy is related to transparency, where the representation of interests must be conducted in a transparent and clear manner. Here, it can be said, as in the previous paragraph, that the contribution of lobby groups is again positive towards a democratic EU.

Output-legitimacy is a different issue. The European Commission is responsible for the implementation of policies and relies heavily on third parties (e.g. national governments, but also private players) for this. From the interviews and information on interest groups, no knowledge was gained on this issue. However, interest groups are known to provide expertise on the effects of policies to the officials prior to the decision-making. Mr Schmid has said that information on business, socio-economic, financial and health impacts of proposals is highly appreciated, since there are not enough resources within the institutions to acquire that information without the help of interest groups. In this respect, they are also responsible for the effects of policies and can contribute to output-legitimacy. There is no information on real-life cases from the exploration of the agricultural lobbying field, so no judgement will be made on the actual impact of lobbies on democracy in the EU with regards to output-legitimacy.

Overall, lobbies contribute positively towards input- and throughput-legitimacy, that are closely related to the criteria of transparency and indirect channelling.

6.2.8 Rule of law

From chapter 3: *'Lobby groups can promote rule of law by simply adhering to the rules laid down for them. They should work through the official and legal channels open to them (e.g. committees, civil society platforms) and act in a transparent way so that the public can be optimally informed about their whereabouts.'*

In response to the critical attitude of citizens towards the opaque way in which lobby groups acted at EU-level, the European Parliament has formulated rules of conduct for lobbyists, while the Commission has encouraged self-regulation a decade ago. Mrs Summa says that the Commission is now quite strict on rules and procedures that are there to prevent corruption and inappropriate influences. Earlier on, the analyzed organizations were found to be transparent in their activities. However, it would be inappropriate to make positive judgements on the contribution of lobby groups to rule of law since officially, there is no legal provision for them to get involved in the decision-making process on their own (meaning, outside the committee and expert group system). If the exact procedures are followed, no lobby group would be included in the policy-making outside committee arrangements. This is of course not how the EU works in practice, but theoretically, lobby groups obstruct rule of law and thus do not contribute towards democracy in this regard.

6.2.9 Accountability

From chapter 3: *‘Lobby groups can foster accountability by critically looking at the performance of the elected officials and the bureaucracy and intervene when they think that these people do not live up to their promises. Moreover, they should make sure that they are held accountable themselves to their members or the group whose interests they represent.’*

It is difficult to make any assessment with regards to the first part of the criterion of accountability. No MEPs were interviewed, and other stakeholders did not give information on the activities of lobby groups relating to elections and their aftermath, although some of the interviewees believed that MEPs are more easily influencable than Commission officials and that their way of working is obscure. But with this information it is not possible to make judgements in relation to the first part of accountability.

The second part can be assessed. The 5 interest groups presented in chapter 2 all have (at least minimal) organizational structures that are based on elections, representation and the participation of members in the policy process. Therefore, the management will be accountable to its members; if this does not happen properly, the members can make their voice be heard during elections or the choice of delegates. So the analyzed interest groups do have accountability structures and therefore contribute towards more accountability in the EU.

6.2.10 Citizenship

From chapter 3: *‘Lobby groups can help creating a common European identity by not discriminating on the basis of ethnicity or nationality in the representation of interests. Furthermore, they should strive for goals that are in the interest more than one geographical location to foster mutual feelings. In the striving for these interests, they should be tolerant and respectful vis-à-vis other interests.’*

Interest groups can be a gathering of interests across borders. An association like COPA-Cogeca represents the interests of farmers in the Member States, a company like Unilever represents its own interests but also those of its customers who are part of the larger electorate of the EU. The RSPB has produced a paper with proposals for the reform of the CAP, from which ideas have found their way into legislation. In order to produce such a high-quality paper, the RSPB had to understand the opportunities and restrictions the Commission faced and the desires of multiple players. It succeeded in putting itself in the place of others and from that experience was able to formulate a very useful, politically acceptable and feasible proposal. The organizations where the interviewees work(ed) for thus are examples of how lobby groups can help creating a larger European identity by looking after the interests of people from multiple countries and by being able to position themselves in other people’s shoes. In this respect, interest groups do contribute towards democracy with regards to citizenship.

6.3 Conclusions

The ten selected criteria have been discussed and lobbying activities have been linked to them to see whether these activities can contribute towards their presence and therefore democracy in the EU. Table 6 summarizes the results.

Criterion	Contribution
Access	+
Competition	+
Channelling	+/-
Representation	+
Deliberation	+
Transparency	+
Legitimacy	+
Rule of law	-
Accountability	(+) partly assessed
Citizenship	+

Table 6: Contributions of lobbies to the democratic criteria

The outcomes of these analyses are very positive about the contribution of lobbying toward democracy as measured by the criteria, with positive contributions for all criteria except *rule of law* and *channelling*. This is a very optimistic image, and it must be kept in mind that if other interest groups were assessed, other persons interviewed, or the criteria were replaced, results would probably have been different. In the next chapter, the outcomes will be discussed.

7. Conclusions

7.1 Research questions

7.1.1 Central question

The central question formulated at the start of this project was:

‘In which way does the lobbying of lobby groups in the EU agricultural sector contribute to democracy in the EU?’

From the previous chapter, we can say that based on ten selected criteria and a limited number of analyzed organizations in the EU agricultural sector, lobbying was found to have an overall positive effect on democracy in the EU. It contributed positively towards access, competition, representation, deliberation, transparency, legitimacy, accountability and citizenship but was seen as having a (possible) negative effect on rule of law and channelling.

7.1.2 Research questions

Sub-questions that were found to be relevant to answer the central question were:

- *‘How can democracy in the EU be defined and operationalized?’*
In chapter 3, democracy has been defined by analyzing the work of Van Schendelen (2003). The findings have been operationalized by taking catchwords related to democracy and calling these criteria for democracy. Ten criteria were selected to be matched to lobbying. These criteria were: (1) access, (2) competition, (3) channelling, (4) representation, (5) deliberation, (6) transparency, (7) legitimacy, (8) rule of law, (9) accountability and (10) citizenship.
- *‘Which types of interest groups are there in the agricultural sector in the European Union lobby circuit?’*
In chapter 2, the organizational forms of interest groups have been discussed and the following types of interest groups were found:

	Individual action	Collective action	Third party
National level	Individual national action	National association	National consultant
European level	Individual EU action	European association	Brussels consultant

Table 7: Organizational forms of interest representation (Source: Bouwen, 2001)

Furthermore, from literature a number of prominent interest groups were selected and presented to get an idea of what the field in agricultural lobbying looked like. These groups were COPA-Cogeca, CEJA, BEUC, CIAA and ETUC.

- *‘How can the practice of lobbying in the EU be linked to criteria of democracy?’*
This has been done by assessing the impact of lobbying on the criteria in chapter 6.
- *‘What are the possibilities for these interest groups to influence the EU policy-making?’*
In chapter 2, the possibilities were found to be individual action, collective action and third party action, all at national or European level (Bouwen, 2001).
- *‘What does the practice of lobbying in the agricultural sector look like?’*
This has been analyzed by interviewing people involved in the EU agricultural lobbying sector. The outcomes of these interviews were presented in chapter 5.

7.2 General assessment

It is impossible to grasp the term democracy in a project like this one, and it has not been the aim to formulate criteria that can be applied to all sorts of phenomena to assess their democratic impact. However, as an exploration of the field of agricultural lobbying in the EU, it has been very interesting to see that there exists some sort of neo-corporatist working environment in which different parties are involved in formulating proposals and that these parties all admit that they need each others’ support, help and information to be able to perform their own activities. If the word ‘lobbying’ has a negative sound to it for many citizens, in the agricultural sector there seems to be a different perception of the influencing game.

Lobbying in the EU is a crucial activity because there are not enough resources available within the institutions to come to good policy proposals that can effectively solve the problems they were created for. Companies like Unilever and Ahold have customers that are in fact the electorate of the EU Parliamentarians. If they have sensible information on their wants and needs, it is only logical that these companies are heard by the politicians who want to be re-elected during the next elections. And if an association like the RSPB can write a discussion paper with proposals that can help the Commission with reforming the CAP in a way that is acceptable and realisable by all parties involved, this help is highly appreciated and stimulated.

However, lobbying also sometimes leaves people and groups worse off. Resources like time and money are crucial in being able to provide the expertise and information wanted by the institutions, and smaller groups often are not able to gather these resources. This has consequences for the inclusion of all interests. But how realistic is it to expect the EU institutions to take into account all interests in their proposals? This is highly improbable, and would take too much effort to be interesting anyway.

After linking the criteria chosen to represent the major aspects of democracy in the EU to the findings of the interviews with stakeholders and the study of several organizations active at influencing level, it was found that lobbying actually contributed to democracy in the EU in the researched cases. Of course, these cases might not be reliable and significant. It is

interesting to see though that in an exploration of the field that did not look specifically for opponents and proponents of lobbying but for the opinions of relevant stakeholders in the field of agricultural lobbying, that the interviewees all agreed that lobbying is necessary in the EU and can contribute to democracy if the risks are minimized by using good defence mechanisms (such as checks and balances and collective decision-making). From the information provided by the interviewees separately, lobbying was found to contribute to EU democracy on nearly all criteria. The image created becomes very – maybe too – optimistic this way, but the point is that lobby groups definitely *can* contribute towards democracy if they are prepared to open themselves up to things like deliberation, representative organizational structures and honest high-quality information provision. Organizations like the RSPB give the good example by showing that they are able to put themselves in the position of other interest groups and stakeholders and this way contribute in a major way to the reforms of the CAP. Firms like Unilever and Ahold are in touch with consumers and industry to try to find a solution to a problem together and this way help the promotion of discussion and consensus at EU-level. Commission officials do their best to not discriminate and be open to all sorts of interests to eventually come to the best policy solutions.

Lobby groups will not be the single most important factor for the development of democracy in the EU, but they can be very useful pioneers in the representation of interests of the citizens in a policy system that is very complex and incomprehensible to many people. From this project, the prospects appear to be good for a future in which lobby groups are an accepted part of a democratic system and accepted by all people affected.

7.3 Reflection on the project

When starting with this project, it was very difficult to assess where I was going and what I would be able to achieve in the end. Dealing with big terms like democracy and especially breaking this down into criteria to link it to lobbying in the EU has been very challenging and complicated.

The main obstacle was the response rate from people contacted to be interviewed. Preferably, I would have wanted to interview 2 MEPs and more people working for European associations. Unfortunately and understandably, there were many people unavailable for cooperation. Moreover, I would have liked to hear a number of real opponents of lobbying in the EU, to balance the mainly positive voices heard from the interviewed persons. I think that it would have made it easier for me then to be more critical about the effect on lobbying on the criteria and overall democracy in the EU.

It was clear from the beginning that this project would not finish in general recommendations that would be generally reliable and applicable. Based on the time frame and resources, this project was going to be an exploration of the topic, and it has been very interesting for me to assemble information first-hand from heads of unit at the Commission, persons responsible for the lobbies of Ahold and Unilever and one person involved in the discussion paper that would be largely responsible for the success of the CAP reforms. I could never have learnt

this from literature or classes, and writing this thesis has been an interesting journey through the daily reality of Brussels.

7.4 Recommendations

7.4.1 EU institutions and lobbying

In this project, only persons working at the Commission were interviewed, so there is no view on the personal perceptions of persons working in the other institutions. From the outcomes of the interviews held, the Parliament seemed to be the most influencable by lobby groups and in need of more defence mechanisms to prevent lobbies from becoming too powerful. It would therefore be recommendable to develop such mechanisms by for example testing Parliamentary commission advices by assessing the degree of influence exercised by external advisory groups including interest groups.

The Commission has checks and balances in place to prevent a too great influence of lobbies, but is vulnerable there where positions are held by the same people for a long time period. Therefore renewal and mobility is recommendable. Moreover, the Commission officials should continue working on or improve their openness to different interests and prevent biased toward favouring certain groups over others.

7.4.2 Lobby groups

Lobby groups should themselves strive for democracy within their own organizations where possible in order to be accepted as part of the democratic system that the EU wants to become. Associations should apply democratic voting and election principles in order to partially overcome the possible damage their contribution can have on the democratic principle of representation at EU-level. Publishing standpoints and strategies for influence on their websites could be a way of making themselves and their activities more transparent. Moreover, lobby groups should try to meet in public with EU officials to be less secretive. They should most importantly provide the officials with honest information of high-quality to make sure that they succeed at representing interests. Overall, lobby groups must strive to adhere to democratic standards and promote democracy in all its forms at EU level.

7.4.3 Further research

In the literature consulted, no research on the contributions of lobbies to democracy was found. This is an unexplored field, although it is very interesting and can certainly be very relevant in the development of the EU and the problems it is facing now; low enthusiasm from the citizens and their feeling of being left out of the process is for example linked to citizenship, and this exploration project has found that lobby groups can positively contribute towards citizenship feelings.

It would also be interesting to know how scholars feel about where the EU is going and whether democratization is an important factor in this process. If so, democracy in the EU should be defined and it would probably be possible to extract some key democratic criteria from that discussion to be used for purposes of communication to the citizens. Defining

democracy will never create a consensus however, and this is thus an unrealistic proposal for research, although it is important to have debates on the topic.

Finally, it would be interesting to start a large research on the perceptions of lobbying across Parliamentarians, Council officials, Commission officials but also citizens and interest groups. It could be possible that EU institutions are very positive on lobbying, as well as interest groups, but that citizens do not feel positively, which can foster an image of Brussels as a secretive non-transparent bureaucracy.

8. Literature

Altenstetter, C. (1994), 'European Union responses to AIDS/HIV and policy networks in the pre-Maastricht era', *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 413-440

Andersen, S. and Eliassen K. (1991), 'European Community Lobbying', *European Journal of Political Research*, pp.173-187

Andersen, S.S. and Eliassen, K.A. (1998), 'EU lobbying – towards political segmentation in the EU?', in: Claeys, P.-H. et al. (1998), pp. 167-183

Bartholomew, M. and Brooks, T. (1989), 'Lobbying Brussels to get what you need for 1992', *The Wall Street Journal*, January 31, 7

Bellier, I. (1997), 'The Commission as an actor: An anthropologist's view', in: Wallace, H.S. and Young, A.R. (1997), pp. 91-115

Bennett, R.J. (1997), 'Trade associations: new challenges, new logic?' in Bennett, R.J. (ed.), (1997) pp. 1-11

Bennett, R.J. (1999), 'Business Routes of Influence in Brussels: Exploring the Choice of Direct Representation', *Political Studies*, vol. XLVII, pp. 240-257

BEUC website (2005), World Wide Web, <<http://www.beuc.org>>

Bouwen, P. (2001), 'Corporate Lobbying in the European Union: Towards a Theory of Access' (working paper), downloadable from www.iue.it/PUB/sps20015.pdf

Bouwen, P. (2002), 'A Comparative Study of Business Lobbying in the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council of Ministers', *MPIfG Discussion Paper 02/7*

Bouwen, P. (2002), 'Corporate Lobbying in the European Union: the logic of Access', *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol.9, no3, pp. 365-390

Bowler, S. and Farrell, D.M. (1993), 'Legislator shirking and voter monitoring: Impacts of European electoral systems upon legislator-voter relationships', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 31, no. 1, pp. 45-69

Broscheid, A. and Coen, D. (2003), 'Insider and outsider lobbying of the European Commission: An informational model of forum politics', *Journal of Public Policy*, vol. 4, no. 2, pp.165-189

- Broscheid, A. and Coen, D. (2003), 'Investigating micro-theories of macro-structures: Lobbying systems in the European Union', downloadable from www.uncp.edu/home/brosch/apsa_proceeding_333.PDF
- Bücker, A., Joerges, C., Neyer, J. And Schlacke, S. (1996), 'Social regulation through European committees: An interdisciplinary agenda and two fields of research', in Pedler, R. and Schaefer, G. (1996), pp. 39-48
- Budd, S. and Jones, A. (1989), 'The European Community, a guide to the maze', London: Kogan Page
- Buitendijk, G.J., and Schendelen, van, M.P.C.M. (1995), 'Brussels advisory committees', *European Law Review*, vol. 20, no. 1, pp. 37-56
- Bursens (1996), 'De Europese Lobby's en de Europese Instellingen', *Res Publica*, vol. 38, no. 1, pp. 113-134
- Camerra-Rowe, P. (2004), 'Changing Patterns of Business Representation in the European Union,' downloadable from ww.europamet.org/conference2004/papers/I2_CamerraRowe.pdf
- CEJA website (2005), World Wide Web, <<http://www.ceja.be>>
- Christiansen, T. (1997), 'Tensions of European governance: politicized bureaucracy and multiple accountability in the European Commission', *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 73-90
- Christiansen, T. and Kirchner, E. (2000) (eds.), 'Committee governance in the European Union', Manchester : Manchester University Press
- CIAA website (2005), World Wide Web, <<http://www.ciaa.be>>
- Claeys, P.-H. et al. (1998) (eds.), 'Lobbying, Pluralism and European Integration', Brussels: Presses interuniversitaires européennes
- Coen, D. (1996), 'The large firm as a political actor in the European Union: An empirical study of the behaviour and logic', European University Institute
- Coen, D. (1997), 'The evolution of the large firm as a political actor in the European Union', *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 91-108
- Coen, D. (1998), 'The European business interest and the nation state: Large-firm lobbying in the European union and the member States', *Journal of Public Policy*, vol. 18, no 1, pp. 75-100

- Cook, T. and Morgan, P. (1971), 'Participatory Democracy', San Francisco: Canfield Press
- CONECCS website (2005), World Wide Web, <http://europa.eu.int/comm/civil_society/coneccs>
- Copa-Cogeca Website (2005), World Wide Web, <<http://www.copa-cogeca.be>>
- Corbett, R., Jacobs, F. and Shackleton, M. (1995), 'The European Parliament', London: Cartermill Publishing
- Cram, L. and Greenwood, J. (1996), 'European level business collective action: The study agenda ahead', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 34, no. 3, pp. 449-463
- Dabertrand, F. (1999), 'Les institutions communautaires face au lobbying: une comparaison entre l'attitude de la Commission et du Parlement Européen', Mémoire de fin d'études, Institut d'Etudes Européennes, Université Libre de Bruxelles
- De Bony, E. (1994), 'Lobbying in the EU: the Search for Ground Rules', *European Trends*, 3rd quarter, pp. 73-79 P17.800
- Demmke, C., Eberharter, E., Schaefer, G.F. and Türk, A. (1996), 'The history of comitology', in: Pedler, R. and Schaefer, G. (1996), pp. 61-82
- Dinan, D. (1998), 'Encyclopaedia of the European Union', London: Macmillan
- Donnelly, M. (1993), 'The structure of the European Commission and the policy formation process', in: Mazey, S. and Richardson, J. (1993), pp. 74-81
- Economic and Social Committee (1980), 'European Interest Groups and their relationships with the Economic and Social Committee', Farnborough: Saxon House
- Edwards, G. and Spence, D. (1997), 'The European Commission', London: Cartermill International Limited
- ETUC website (2005), World Wide Web, <<http://www.etuc.org>>
- Europe Portal Website (2005), World Wide Web, <<http://europa.eu.int>>
- Gardner, J. (1991), 'Effective Lobbying in the EC', Deventer/Boston: Kluwer
- Gorges, M. (1996), 'Eurocorporatism? Interest intermediation in the European Community', New York and London: University Press of America

- Grande, E. (1996), 'The state and interest groups', *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 3, no. 3, pp. 318-338
- Grant, W. (1993), 'Pressure groups and the European Community: An overview', in: Mazey, S. and Richardson, J. (1993), pp. 27-46
- Gray, O. (1998), 'The structure of interest group representation in the EU: Some observations of a practitioner', Claeys, P.-H. et al. (1998), pp. 281-290
- Greenwood, J., Grote, J.R. and Ronit, K. (1992), 'Organised Interests and the European Community', London: Sage
- Greenwood, J. and Ronit (1994), 'Interest Groups in the European Community: Newly Emerging Dynamics and Forms', *West European Politics*, vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 31-52
- Greenwood, J. (1997), 'Representing interests in the European Union', Basingstoke: MacMillan Press
- Greenwood, J. (1998), 'Corporatism, pluralism and the capacities of Euro groups', in: Claeys, P.-H. et al. (1998), pp. 83-109
- Greenwood, J. and Aspinwall, M. (eds.) (1998a), 'Collective Action in the European Union: Interests and the new politics of associability', London: Routledge
- Greenwood, J. (1998b), 'Regulating Lobbying in the European Union', *Parliamentary Affairs*, vol. 51, no. 4
- Greenwood, J. and Webster, R. (2000), 'Are EU Business Associations Governable?', *European Integration Online Papers*, vol. 4, no. 3, p. 16
- Greenwood, J. (2003), 'Interest representation in the European Union', New York: Palgrave MacMillan
- Haas, P.M. (1998), 'Compliance with EU directives: insights from international relations and comparative politics', *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 17-37
- Harvey, B. (1993), 'Lobbying in Europe: The experience of voluntary organizations', in: Mazey, S. and Richardson, J. (1993), pp. 188-200
- Hayes-Renshaw, F. and Wallace, H. (1997), 'The Council of Ministers', Basingstoke: Macmillan

Héritier, A. (1996), 'The accommodation of diversity in European policy-making and its outcomes : Regulatory policy as patchwork', *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 149-167

Höreth, M. (1999), 'No way out for the beast? The unsolved legitimacy problems of European governance', *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 249-268

Hull, R. (1993), 'Lobbying Brussels: A view from within', in: Mazey, S. and Richardson, J. (1993), pp. 82-92

Kirchner, E.J. (1981), 'The role of interest groups in the European Community', Aldershot: Gower Publications

Koepl, P. (2000), 'The acceptance, relevance and dominance of lobbying the EU Commission – A first-time survey of the EU Commission's civil servants', *Journal of Public Affairs*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 69-80

Kohler-Koch, B. (1994), 'Changing Patterns of Interest Intermediation in the European Union', *Government and Opposition*, vol. 29, no. 2, pp.166-180

Kohler-Koch, B. (1997), 'Organized Interests in the EC and the European Parliament', *European Integration Online Papers*, vol. 1, no. 9, p. 27

Kohler-Koch, B. (1997), 'Organized interest in European Integration: The evolution of a new type of governance?', in: Wallace, H.S. and Young, A.R. (1997), pp. 42-68

Kohler-Koch, B. (1998), 'Organized interests in the EU and the European Parliament', in: Claeys, P.-H. et al. (1998), pp. 126-158

Kohler-Koch, B. and Quittkat, D. (1999), 'Intermediation of interests in the European Union', *Arbeitspapiere – Mannheimer Zentrum für Europäische Sozialforschung*, no. 9, pp. 1-15

Kreppel, A. And Tsebelis, G. (1999), 'Coalition formation in the European Parliament', *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 32, no. 8, pp. 933-966

Lehning, P.B. (2001), 'European citizenship: Towards a European identity?', *Law and Philosophy*, vol. 20, no. 3, pp.239-282

Lohmann, S. (1995), 'Information, Access and Contributions: A Signalling Model of Lobbying', *Public Choice*, vol. 85, pp. 267-284

Mazey, S. and Richardson, J. (1993), 'Lobbying in the European Community', Oxford: Oxford University Press

Mazey, S. and Richardson, J. (2001), 'European Union: Power and Policy Making', London: Routledge

Mc Cormick, J. (2002), 'Understanding the European Union; A Concise Introduction', New York: Palgrave

McLaughlin, A.M., Jordan, A.G. and Maloney, W.A. (1993), 'Corporate Lobbying in the European Community', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 31, no. 2, pp. 191-212

McLaughlin, A.M. and Greenwood, J. (1999), 'The Management of Interest Representation in the European Union', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 33, no. 1

Moravcsik, A. (2002), 'In Defence of the 'Democratic Deficit': Reassessing Legitimacy in the European Union', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 40, no. 4, pp. 603-624

Pedler, R. and Schendelen, van, M.C.P.M. (1994) (eds.), 'Lobbying in the EU: companies, trade associations and issue groups', Aldershot: Dartmouth

Pedler, R. and Schaefer, G. (eds.) (1996), 'Shaping European Law and Policy: The Role of Committees and Comitology in the Political Process', Maastricht: EIPA

Peterson, J. and Shackleton, M. (2002), 'The Institutions of the European Union', New York: Oxford University Press

Pijnenburg, B. (1998), 'EU lobbying by ad hoc coalitions: An exploratory case study', *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 303-321

Pinder, J. (1998), 'The Building of the European Union', Oxford: Oxford University Press

Pollack, M.A. (1997), 'Representing Diffuse Interests in EC Policy-making', *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 4, no.4, pp.572-590

Potters, J. and Sloof, R. (1996), 'Interest Groups: A Survey of Empirical Models that try to assess their Influence', *European Journal of Political Economy*, vol. 12, pp. 403-442

Preston, M. E. (1998), 'The European Commission and special interest groups', in Claeys, P.-H. et al. (1998), pp. 222-232

Radaelli, C.M. (1995), 'The role of knowledge in the policy process', *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp.159-183

Rideau, J. (1993), 'Les groupes d'intérêt dans le système institutionnel communautaire', *Revue des Affaires Européennes*, vol. 3, pp.49-73

- Ruzza, C. (2002), "Frame bridging" and the new politics of persuasion, advocacy and influence', in Warleigh, A. and Fairbrass, J. (2002), pp. 93-115
- Schaeffer, G.F. (1996), 'Committees in the EC policy process: A first step towards developing a conceptual framework', in: Pedler, R. and Schaefer, G. (1996), pp. 3-24
- Schendelen, van, M.P.C.M. (1984), 'The European Parliament : Political influence is more than legal powers', *Journal of European Integration*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 59-76 P13.500
- Schendelen, van, M.C.P.M. (eds.) (1993), 'National Public and Private EC Lobbying', Aldershot: Dartmouth
- Schendelen, van, M.C.P.M. (eds.) (1993), 'Nederlandse lobby's in Europa', Den Haag: SDU Uitgeverij Koninginnegracht
- Schendelen, van, M.P.C.M. (1996), 'The Council decides: Does the Council decide?', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 34, no. 4, pp. 531-548
- Schendelen, van, M.P.C.M. (2002), 'Machiavelli in Brussels: the Art of Lobbying in the EU', Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press
- Schendelen, van, M.P.C.M. (2002), 'The ideal profile of the PA expert at EU level', *Journal of Public Affairs*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 85-89
- Schwaiger, K. and Kirchner, E. (1981), 'The Role of Interest Groups in the European Community', Gower: Aldershot
- Schendelen, van, M.P.C.M. (2003), 'Syllabus en Reader Europese Politiek', Rotterdam: Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam
- Schmitter, P.C. (2000), 'How to Democratize the European Union... And Why Bother?', Boston: Rowman and Littlefield
- Shackleton, M. (2002), 'The European Parliament', in: Peterson, J. and Shackleton, M. (2002), pp. 95-117
- Steets, J., Rödinger, A. and Kumanoff, N. (2004), 'The future of democracy: European perspectives: 126th Bergedorf Round Table', Hamburg : Edition Körber-Stiftung
- Streeck, W. and Schmitter, P.C. (1991), 'From National Corporatism to Transnational Pluralism: Organized Interests in the Single European Market', *Politics and Society*, vol. 19, no. 2, pp. 133-164 P10.773

Tsebelis, G. (1994), 'The power of the European Parliament as a conditional agenda setter', *American Political Science Review*, vol. 88, no. 1, pp. 128-142

Wallace, H.S. and Young, A.R. (1997) (eds), *Participation and policy-making in the European Union*, Oxford: Clarendon Press

Warleigh, A. and Fairbrass, J. (2002) (eds), *Influence and interests in the European Union: the new politics of persuasion and advocacy*, London: Europa Publications

Wessels, W. (1997), 'The growth and differentiation of multi-level networks: A corporatist mega-bureaucracy or an open city?', in: Wallace, H.S. and Young, A.R. (1997), pp. 17-41

Zwaan, de, J. (1995), 'The permanent representatives committee: its role in the European decision-making', Amsterdam: Elsevier

Zweifel, T.D. (2002), '...Who is without sin cast the first stone: the EU's democratic deficit in comparison', *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 9, no. 5, pp. 812-840

9. Appendix

9.1 EU interest groups timeline

Employers, unions: UNICE, ETUC

Cooperatives

Agriculture: COPA

National associations: Steel and
Agriculture (D & F)

Agriculture (UK & IRL)

Development

Consumers: BEUC

Companies: ERT EU committee

Citizens' rights
Corporate offices
Environment & waste
Voluntary groups
Transport
Telecoms

Regions
Public utilities

Commercial communications

Information

Society

Social cohesion

1958 Treaty of Rome
CAP

1968 Duties removed

1973 Enlargement I
Lomé I

1985 Single Market White
Paper

1986 Single European Act
Uruguay Round

1989 3rd EP election
Berlin Wall falls

1991 3rd IGC starts

1992 Single Market

1993 Uruguay Round
completed

1994 EEA agreed
Maastricht Treaty
COREG

1995 Enlargement III
WP growth,
employment and
competitivity

1998 Internet Action Plan

2000 Euro

Figure 2: EU pressure groups timeline (Gray, 1996)

