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REGIONAL REPRESENTATIONS IN THE EU: BETWEEN DIPLOMACY AND INTEREST MEDIATION

Carolyn Rowe



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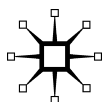
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Regional Representations in the EU: Between Diplomacy and Interest Mediation

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Abbreviations

AER	Association of European Regions
AM	Member of the National Assembly for Wales
CEMR	Council of European Municipalities and Regions
CoR	Committee of the Regions
CPMR	Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions
DA	Devolved Administration in the UK
EC	European Communities
EP	European Parliament
EPRO	European Platform of Regional Offices
ERRIN	European Regions Research and Innovation Network
EU	European Union
EUREGHA	The European Regional and Local Health Authorities Platform
FCO	British Foreign and Commonwealth Office
INTERREG	Interregional Cooperation programmes for the EU
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MSP	Member of the Scottish Parliament
NAWO	National Assembly for Wales Office
NIA	Northern Ireland Assembly
NICE	Northern Ireland Centre in Europe
OFMDFM	Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister, Northern Ireland Assembly
ONIEB	Office of the Northern Ireland Executive in Brussels
REACH	Legislation on the Regulation, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemical Substances in Europe
RDA	UK Regional Development Agency
SEA	Single European Act
SEEUO	Scottish Executive European Union Office
TEU	Treaty on European Union
UKREP	UK Permanent Representation to the EU
WDA	Welsh Development Agency
WMIE	West Midlands in Europe, EU representation

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1

Regional Representations in the EU: An Introduction

What are regional representations in the EU? A stroll around the EU quarter of Brussels will take you past several of the highest-profile representative offices. Scores of others – individual representations, joint representations – are situated in the maze of streets in and around the Schuman and Place Luxembourg districts of Brussels. But do we really understand what these representations are? Why are they there? What are they doing? Who is running them? Are they delivering a real service to regions? And are they having any impact by being active in Brussels?

The answers to these questions are potentially significant, yet poorly understood. Why should individual regions continue to subsidise representative offices in Brussels, just streets away from the collective forum for sub-state interest mediation in the EU, the Committee of the Regions? Common sense would suggest that, having existed for 25 years, these kinds of regional representation must be delivering added value. But what is it, exactly? Who benefits – and how?

Sub-state actors in the EU such as county councils, *Länder*, Autonomous Communities, *kraje* and local, municipal and city authorities began opening independent representative bases in the European capital, Brussels, as long ago as the early 1980s. Whilst the German and British regions each claim credit for setting up the first representation in the EU (Burgsmüller, 2003; Carter and Pasquier, 2010), there is no doubt that in the 1980s these path-breakers set in motion a process which has now become a burgeoning phenomenon. It is hard nowadays to imagine a Brussels without regional representations, as an ever-increasing number of sub-state actors make the trek to Brussels in their search for recognition, voice and influence. Even regional actors from states seeking to join the EU over the medium to longer-term, such as

Croatia and Turkey, have begun establishing bases in and around the EU institutions.

The focus of this book is those representative offices in Brussels which claim to mediate regionally aggregated interests within the EU. They serve as a vital link between the EU institutions and other Brussels-based agencies, and stakeholders within the “regions” of member states. Any study of the EU’s “regional dimension”¹ will obviously be challenged to group under that heading many shapes and forms of sub-state authority, with contrasting roles and responsibilities in the domestic system. For the purposes of this analysis, however, a region will be understood simply as that territorial unit between the national and local levels, regardless of the standing of that political division in each member state.²

The purpose of this approach is to underscore the extent to which “regional” representations in the EU have become part of the common currency of interaction within the Brussels system. The EU is of course still “the single biggest meeting point of commercial and other economic interests outside Washington DC” (Jeffery, 1997: 195) and in recent years the number of organised interests based in Brussels has sky-rocketed (Coen, 2007; Eising, 2007). Amongst those varied interests, there is a commonly held assumption that regional actors will also be based there, as they have been for over 25 years now (MacNeill et al., 2007; Moore, 2007). Despite an increase in the channels of formalised regional interest mediation over that period (Bomberg and Peterson, 1998; Tatham, 2008), not least with the creation of a dedicated Committee of the Regions as an EU advisory body, the quest by regions to secure their own *independent* representation in the city remains intense.

Since their earliest incarnations these independent regional representations have grown in stature, employing larger numbers of policy personnel and moving to more prestigious and better-located offices from which to operate their profile-raising and networking strategies. This maturing system of representative activity is mirrored too in the increasingly sophisticated tools of interest mediation deployed by regions in Brussels, learning as they have done both from previous experience and the precedents set by partners and contacts forged over the years. The business of regional interest mediation in the EU today differs wildly from the original “transmission belt” function of the earliest regional representations which spent the vast majority of their time faxing EU communications and paperwork on funding opportunities back to their home authorities. Regional representations

today operate as Euro-savvy entrepreneurs within an increasingly complex environment of cut-throat corporate lobbying organisations, social interest groups, national governments and competitor regions. Their role is often to be the hub of a much broader portfolio of strategies for interacting with European partners and decision-makers; their presence is a visible reminder that when Europe “hits home”, its impacts are felt across all tiers of authority in the member states.

This obvious expansion of a dedicated regional presence in the European institutional environment raises a number of major questions that this book seeks to address. These representative offices provide a significant interface between regional interests and like-minded authorities based in the EU, alongside the EU institutions. As such, they are an important element within Europe’s expanding multi-level polity. But, can regional representations, operating amidst the vast array of interest organisations in the Brussels environment, affect both the policy- and decision-making process and the shape of actual decisions taken? Can we detect any qualitative difference as a direct result of a burgeoning regional presence at the heart of Europe? These questions focus on the issues affecting the nature of governance in Europe, the shape of decision-making processes in the EU’s polity and, more specifically, the ways of addressing the multi-level nature of governance in the EU. Clearly, the regional presence in Brussels allows qualitative analysis of the extent of the multi-level relationships and their impact on policy agendas. This book makes a contribution to this exploration.

Regional representations as a form of “mobilisation”

Evidence of “sub-national mobilisation” (Hooghe, 1995) can be seen in many different forms. Whilst the establishment of permanent regional representations in the EU is one of the most visible indications of mobilisation in itself, regional mobilisation is a multi-dimensional phenomenon that embraces all forms of sub-state activity on Europe and reaches out beyond the nation-state. As a descriptor, “mobilisation” is a useful concept that has helped to capture the new dynamic of regional engagement in the European Union as a political system, and has allowed analysts and scholars of the EU to “map” the expanding set of formal and informal opportunities for regional interest mediation within that system. But this tells us little about the nature of any changes that this mobilisation may have led to. Though in some cases mobilisation may have reflected an idealistic commitment to integration or attempts to circumvent a domestic conflict by constructing new

opportunities for regional action at the EU level (Jeffery, 2007), mostly it had a simple source: as European competence expanded, in particular from the Single European Act onwards, it reached increasingly into fields of policy which, within member states, fell under the decision-making and implementation competences of regional actors.

Regional representations and the demands they met for direct contact to be established between the European and regional levels thus clearly indicated a new dynamic in European politics (Knodt, 2001: 74), and illustrated how the widening remit of the European Community's policy competencies demanded a "recalibration...of the relative role played by sub-national authorities (SNAs)³ and central state institutions in EU policy making" (Jeffery, 2000: 2).

The opening of regional representations in Brussels from the mid-1980s provided scholars with notable evidence of a new multi-level politics in the European Union (Marks et al., 1996). These operations were the first evidence of the *institutionalisation* of direct links between regional and supra-national levels of authority in Europe. They offered the regions new scope as the relationship was not mediated through the national state. In effect, this meant that national governments no longer served as an exclusive gatekeeper between "foreign affairs" and "domestic affairs" (Ansell et al., 1997: 363; Marks and Hooghe, 1996: 90).

Early analysis of regional mobilisation in Europe suggested that individual regional representations in Brussels, alongside the national permanent representations, would open up further opportunities for regional actors to bypass central government networks and control, and establish direct channels of influence with the key European players (Keating and Hooghe, 2001). The EU level was already widely regarded by regionalist movements as an ally in protecting their interests *against* national governments (Keating and Jones, 1985: 5). The arrival of regional representations in Brussels was therefore regarded as an important, institutionalised strengthening of such ties, offering the potential for existing states to be "outflanked" (Benz, 1998: 117; Marks, 1992: 218). Regions, it was suggested, could now "potentially mobilise Commission support against their own national governments" (Ansell et al., 1997: 350).

The development of *extra-state* opportunities for engagement in the EU policy process parallel domestic drives to develop *intra-state* opportunities for regions to participate in domestic processes of European policy formulation. Furthermore, an increase in the political salience of "regions" across Europe over the past 25 years has coincided with

the growing scope and competence of the European integration project, which now reaches far into the regional domain. Thus, the two processes of European integration and political decentralisation at member-state level have been mutually reinforcing (Greenwood, 2003: 231; Loughlin, 1997: 148).

Ultimately, regional offices in Brussels straddle the divide between intra- and extra-state mechanisms for engagement in the broad EU policy process. As an important tool of the home or sending regional authorities, they can be conceptualised as elements of both extra- and intra-state processes (see Figure 1.1).

The range of strategic options for regions to engage with the EU policy process, both domestically and at the EU level, has thus widened immensely over the past 20 years. Clearly, this affects the activities and aims of regional representations in Brussels, and alters their strategic remit significantly as the environment in which they operate develops.

As Figure 1.1 illustrates, the full role of regional representations is much more complex than might originally be conceived. In Brussels they operate in both the domestic arena, through various intergovernmental mechanisms for European policy development, and at the European level, where they engage with EU institutions and other actors. The complexity of this position suggests that regional representations in the EU merit fuller consideration for a number of reasons.

First, a regional representation in Brussels is the most costly option for sub-state actors to engage with EU issues and ideas. So the decision to launch a regional representation will be based on evidence of significant benefits from a Brussels “showcase” for the region which

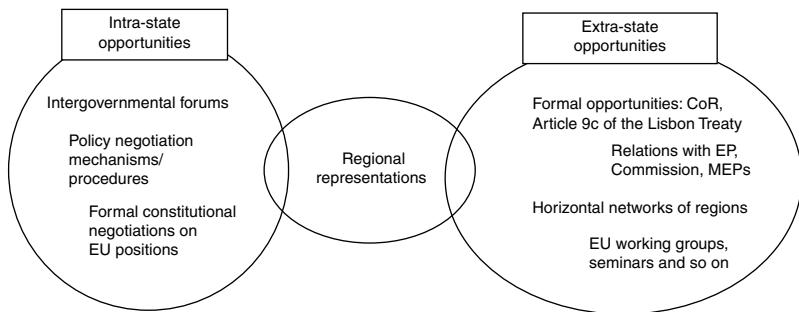


Figure 1.1 Regional offices and intra-/extra-state processes for engagement in EU policy development

outweigh the substantial costs involved in supporting that presence. Whilst the influence of direct regional engagement in Brussels can be termed the “upstream” flow of ideas and interest mediation, from regions and their collective decision-making processes to the European institutions with the interaction of ideas throughout the European policy process, the “downstream” impact of regional representations equally merits exploration. From a purely rational perspective, the question of the “value-for-money” delivered by a regional presence to regional institutions – be they elected regional or local authorities, regional public sector organisations such as voluntary associations, chambers of commerce or inward investment agencies, or even a combination of all of these – is a straightforward one. Why should regional actors continue to fund a presence in Brussels? What is the return on that investment? The answers to these questions inform the case for continued regional engagement in the EU through some form of direct regional office. Assessment of this relationship explains clearly why the regional presence in Brussels continues to grow, and why these bodies undertake the kinds of activity they invest in year upon year.

Second, regional offices have, in the 25 years since their inception, become recognised actors within the institutional and organisational “ecology” (Greenwood, 2003; Nielsen and Salk, 1998) of Brussels, the “soft” flow of ideas and policy preferences into the policy and decision-making process – certainly at the early stages of the policy life-cycle where there is significant scope to impact the shape and future trajectory of planning. A presence in Brussels represents a foothold in a vibrant network of ideas and involvement in the longer-term development of proposals, particularly those which emanate from the European Commission. Absence from Brussels can therefore mean a lack of entry into a network that allows for ideational exchange and the sharing of skills and expertise – ultimately a missed opportunity to engage fully with European decisions and access EU programmes and funding. There is no evidence to indicate what would be lost by *not* being based permanently in Brussels through some form of direct regional representation. However, the statistics on the numbers of regional representations at the heart of the EU has become a core element of any region’s range of European-related activities.

As Figure 1.2 indicates, regional representative offices are now embedded in the organisational mentality of regional authorities across the member states. What started off as individual responses to certain regions’ needs, has grown dramatically to become established practice.

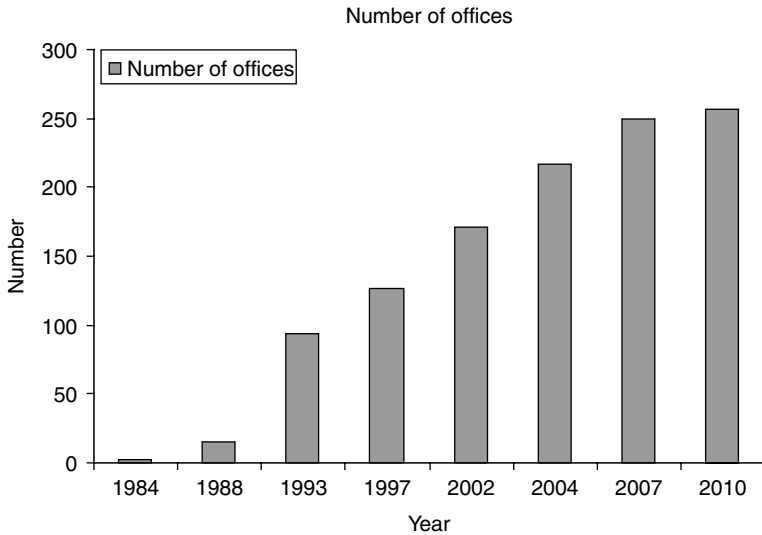


Figure 1.2 Number of regional representations in the EU

Sources: Badiello, 1998; Committee of the Regions, 2004; 2007; 2010; Greenwood, 2003; Jeffery, 1997; Marks et al., 1996.

But what the raw figures alone do not show is the diversity of representative activity within this broad bracket of “regional representations” in the EU. It is the hidden story of differentiation in the aims, operation and remit of these varied representative forms that this book seeks to explore.

Farewell the “Third Level”⁴: hello diversity

There is a certain paradox in our assessment of regional representations in the EU. On the one hand, the idea of a “Europe of the Regions”, where the nation-state is relegated to secondary status in an emergent federal Europe, has largely been discredited. Few formal advances for regional actors have been achieved within the European system of governance since the early 1990s. Yet, at the same time, the *actual level* of regional engagement in the EU continues to grow substantially.

What we have seen, therefore, is that regional representations in Brussels have continued to increase against a contrasting backdrop of declining formal influence for regional governments in the EU, and a growing recognition that European integration simply does

not have the previously hoped-for power to transform territorial relations (Keating 2008a; Moore, 2008). The role of regions in the EU has not been further formalised beyond the high point of the mid-1990s, when the CoR was established and the Maastricht Treaty provided for – limited – regional leadership within the Council of Ministers.⁵ This stagnation has been due largely to a growing discrepancy between “regional” priorities, limited coherence in the demands put forward by all of Europe’s regions, as exemplified in the RegLeg group of EU regions with legislative competences. Even the limited advancements for regions of the proposed Lisbon Treaty do little to consolidate any sense of “Third Level” engagement in the EU (Keating, 2004). Equally, new governance innovations such as the Open Method of Co-ordination also offer little scope for regional actors to develop key leadership roles (Jeffery, 2004). As a result, intermediate political actors have few common causes and nothing approaching a shared agenda on European policy. Simply equating the current situation to a Europe *with* the Regions (Hooghe and Marks, 1996) fails to reflect the differentiation in the activities and demands of an increasingly diverse set of “regional” actors across the EU27. Regional co-operation in policy formulation and legislation drafting varies across both the type of region and the policy sector concerned.

Thus, despite rapid growth, the regional presence in Brussels has failed to crystallize into a single powerful and coherent regional lobby – due in large part to the sheer diversity of its make-up. The increasing diversification of this regional voice in Brussels can be attributed to three core developments:

1. Devolution and decentralisation across the EU’s member states has not resulted in anything approaching a single “Third Level” of constitutional actors. Significant variations in policy competences are identifiable across even the strongest tier of actors below the national level, limiting the extent to which these actors can lobby jointly on policy issues.
2. Where the “constitutional regions” movement has been most significant is in lobbying to differentiate constitutional regions from mere administrative regions, arguing forcefully in favour of powers in the EU which recognise their unique legal status. The mobilising factor has been dissatisfaction with existing channels of interest mediation. In addition to forming a powerful force in constitutional lobbying – on those policy areas where there is agreement – there is a clear

preference for constitutional regions to form ad hoc advocacy coalitions which consciously exclude weaker, non-constitutional regions from their membership.

3. Alongside the constitutional regions/administrative regions divide, a new fault line has emerged between regions from the EU15 and the new member states. Those from the new member states tend to be relatively new, administrative creations. Unlike many of the strong EU15 regions, they do not constitute historic or linguistic regions where national governments sought consciously to cut across inter-ethnic, religious and linguistic divides in the territorial restructuring programmes of the 1990s. In addition, these relatively young and weak actors have limited support for engaging in grand European constitutional issues, with a clear preference for day-to-day policy work in Brussels, notably drawing down EU funding. Thus far, non-constitutional regions from the EU15 have formed the strongest partnerships with this new set of regional actors in Brussels, particularly when this can support a broader advocacy coalition on a sectoral policy concern or facilitate an EU-funded project in their own region. Other than at a purely social or superficial level, the constitutional regions in Brussels have had limited contact to the new member-state regional representations. Whilst this fault line is anticipated only to be a temporary one, it does nonetheless structure the pattern of interaction between actors and is worthy of note.

Regional representations in Brussels reflect the diversification of the “Third Level” agenda in the EU today. Their aims and objectives are domestic, based on fundamentally different strategies for engagement with the EU and can be clustered around the three broad types of region set out above:

- “Constitutional” regions: that is, politically elected intermediate levels of government in EU member states, which have legislative autonomy in a number of policy areas affecting that territory. This group includes the German and Austrian *Länder*, Britain’s devolved authorities (DAs), Belgium’s regions and communities, the Spanish Autonomous Communities and the Italian regions;
- “Non-constitutional” or “administrative” regions: these are formal constructs within member states between the national and local levels of government, which have very limited, if any, independent legislative capacity. They may simply exist as a means of aggregating territorial interests to a manageable level, stimulating economic

- development activity – as in England, or may have executive functions without corresponding legislative capacity – as in France, Finland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Ireland, Sweden and Denmark;
- Regions from the new member states, particularly Central and Eastern Europe, which have already gone through a triple transition in recent years: post-Communist administrative restructuring, decentralisation and territorialisation processes (Hughes et al., 2004; Moore, 2008; O'Dwyer, 2006). Formally, these could be included in one of the first two types of authority, but their footprint in Brussels is noticeably smaller and more limited than those of the more long-standing EU15 member states. The offices in Brussels that represent the interests of this type of region have a much shorter history of engagement with the EU and a solid precedent to follow, in that the EU15 regions have already established several models of interaction in Brussels.

This diversity is largely obscured in studies of governance in the EU or indeed of the nature of collective action and interest mediation in the EU, which tend to conflate regional representations with other sub-state representatives, such as sectoral lobby groups, the CoR and national associations of local and regional government (Bomberg and Peterson, 1998; Greenwood, 2003; Kohler-Koch and Rittberger, 2006). All of this indicates a pressing need to define “regional lobby” and explore the competing dynamics underpinning seemingly similar operations: regional representations in the EU.

Capturing diversity: variations among regional representations

The structure set out above offers a means by which to unpack the notion of a unified “regional lobby” and to consider more fully each approach to the management of a regional representation. This diversity is manifested in the defining factors of any regional representation operation in the EU and can broadly be subsumed under three headings: what they do, how they do it and who makes sure they do it right:

1. What they do: the activities of regional representations and how they vary according to the type of region and the nature therefore of its EU agenda.
2. How they do it: who staffs regional representations and how well equipped they are to do the job. Different types of region adopt

different approaches to the management of their EU representation; manifested through divergent human resource and budgetary policies.

3. Who makes sure they do it right: touching on the issues of effectiveness, value for money, strategic control and accountability.

These three broad areas of concern provide the fundamental lines of enquiry for this work. Each has a significant bearing on the shape and scope of individual representations in the EU. Each illustrates the main areas of differentiation between the work and operation of those offices representing the interests and needs of the various types of region in the EU, as in the threefold categorisation, above.

The rest of this book is structured around these three major questions, with the overall aim being to provide a more nuanced understanding of the functioning of regional representations in the EU. The emphasis is placed on understanding domestic roles and contexts, as this provides for differentiation between the types of regional actor in the EU and, the consequent type of regional representation at the Brussels level. This book takes as its core empirical material analysis of regional representation from the “pioneer” countries of Germany and Britain, which have the longest histories of representative activity in the EU, and two new member states, joining the EU only in 2004 – Poland and the Czech Republic. Together, this framework for analysis offers rich potential scope for investigation across multiple dimensions of the role, operation and function of regional representations. The regional representations from older member states have a wealth of experience to draw on; their scope and form has matured over time in an evolutionary trajectory drawing both on increasing European “capacity” within both Brussels and the sending administrations. These representations have also developed in response to the shifting European context for regional actors and the creation of multiple new opportunities at the Brussels level to engage with the EU institutions and other partners in that arena.

By way of comparison, analysis of the regional representations of the sub-state authorities in new member states offers the potential to assess more fully the “institutionalisation” of regional representations in the EU, and to understand the process of “mimetic isomorphism” (Scherpereel, 2007) that has driven the rapid establishment of a new member-state regional presence in Brussels. Clearly, there has been a straightforward replication of institutional models and types of representative engagement, alongside an ongoing process of social learning.

Further, sending contexts differ sharply across member states, and, to fully understand the role and function of these new member-state representative offices, some recourse to the domestic situation is fundamental. Strategies for engaging with Europe derive from the domestic politics of member states and the divergent governmental, constitutional, financial and ideational resources that regions have, alongside the level of investment they wish to make in a European strategy.

The question of “effectiveness”

Analysis of regional representations in the EU inevitably throws up questions as to their purpose, and ultimately, their effectiveness. What exactly do they achieve through permanent engagement in the Brussels arena? Some may think that regional representations are delivering results. These results might not be the same in all cases; in fact, given their diversity, this is more than likely true. But in order to understand their very presence and continued operation in the EU’s institutional ecology, some sponsoring or supporting agency, in some arena, must consider a regional representation to be a worthwhile investment. So, if we assume that a degree of effectiveness and value is being established by some oversight agency, we can begin to approach the issue and try to define them. How is performance or return on investment being measured?

Fundamentally, effectiveness is where actors achieve the results they set out to achieve. Which is to say, they meet their targets and deliver results that merit continued investment. Applying this understanding to regional representations in the EU forces us to consider not a blanket, benchmark-style approach to the question of their global effectiveness, but rather a more sophisticated and complex toolkit. In considering whether regional representations in the EU deliver a return on investment to their sustaining interests in the domestic arena, we must recognise the wide diversity of goals and objectives set for these representations in the first place. The “regional representation” of the German Free State (or *Land*) of Bavaria, for instance, has widely different aims to those, say, of the Hungarian region of Eszék-Alföld or the French region of Picardie. A one-size-fits-all approach to the determinants of continued support for regional representations misses the point that they are as diverse and as complex as the 27 member states which they represent.

Structure of the book

Whilst it is clearly important for regions to be “in the game” in Brussels, it also matters exactly what they do, who represents them, who calls the

shots, who they do it with and, indeed, *where* they do it. The physical presence which a region in Brussels represents and the statement that this makes to its EU partners is a significant dimension of the whole “regional representation” package. Thus, the size of an office is a significant dimension of regional representation in the EU (Marks et al., 2000), but only when this is considered alongside both the issue of co-location, and the choice of location.

With this research agenda in mind, this book is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 sets out a framework for analysis of regional representations in the EU, capturing the variation between the principal issue areas of activities, resources and accountability structures. In doing so, it benchmarks the different types of regional representation through analysis of their activities, role, form and function.

Chapter 2 considers the emergence of a regional presence in the EU, assessing the reasons why regions considered that independent representational activity was a necessary element of their strategy for engaging with the European Union.

The analysis then moves on to assess with empirical evidence the principal lines of differentiation between the types of regional representation in the EU, that is, offices which support and promote the divergent strategies for engaging with Europe, developed within the different types of regional governmental constructs across the member states. Chapters 3–5 in turn consider the activities, resourcing and accountability frameworks supporting the varying types of regional representation in the EU.

Finally, the concluding chapter provides an overarching assessment of regional representations, on the basis of this differentiated understanding of their role, function and form. Drawing key parallels with related institutional models, it delivers a sharp insight into the complexities of the EU’s regional lobby, and suggests how future analysis of European governance and territorial interest mediation can build on it.

2

Regional Representations in the EU: A Framework for Analysis

Regional representations have become commonplace in the EU's institutional environment, and form part of the "ecology" of collective action (Nielsen and Salk, 1998) in the EU. But their specific purpose and impacts are obscured by the tendency to bracket together all types of regional representations as part of the same sub-state dynamic for permanent engagement in the EU (Greenwood, 2003; Keating and Hooghe, 2006, Tatham, 2008). However, there are a number of avenues of enquiry that can clarify the differences between the various types of regional representation currently operating in the EU. Unpacking what is meant by the "regional lobby" through comparative analysis is the core objective of this book.

If regional representations are a permanent feature within the vast array of Brussels-based interest groups, we need to formulate a more sophisticated understanding of what these offices deliver. Here, some institutional reference points can be useful. First, as visible manifestations of an increasing role for sub-state actors from the EU's member states, their very presence suggests an institutional comparison with the formal bodies for national interest mediation – the Permanent Representations of the member state governments. Equally, they form part of the broader pattern of "collective action" in the EU, and are similar to but distinctive from the EU's organised interests. This offers a potentially very fruitful form of institutional comparison. Second, they are part of the more formal system of multi-level governance that has developed within the EU's system of governance (Börzel, 2009; Kohler-Koch and Rittberger, 2006; Piattoni, 2009).

Third, regional representations manifest extra-territorial interest mediation, and as such bear a resemblance to overseas regional trade

missions and politically-motivated interfaces in the international sphere. All of this extra-territorial activity of regions forms the empirical substance of what is referred to as “paradiplomacy”, a strand of international relations conducted alongside the more traditional, bilateral forms of communication between *national* governments. The dynamics of paradiplomatic activity therefore provide a further useful comparator in our assessment of the precise role and function of regional representations in the EU.

This chapter sets out a framework for the comparative assessment of regional representations as institutional forms. It moves forward by providing an initial positioning of regional representations within academic study of European Union politics. How have regional representative offices traditionally been understood? What do we know about their contribution to governance? This lays the foundations for the subsequent analysis set out in this chapter, which looks at comparable models of territorial interest representation beyond the territory. This overview provides an understanding of the form and function of this activity, which then informs our understanding of regional representations in the EU.

Understanding regional representations as evidence of “mobilisation”

From the 1980s onwards, regional-level input into European Union decision-making became much more visible, not least because around this time the first regional representation was established. This process of establishing an increasing regional voice in the EU was termed “regional mobilisation” by Liesbet Hooghe in 1995,⁶ and encompassed the broad and expanding number of channels through which actors have sought to engage with the European Union.

Analysis of this mobilisation activity sought out the different strands of engagement, and began to critically assess the opportunities for direct interaction which had emerged between the sub-state and EU institutional levels, effectively bypassing national governmental controls (Ansell et al., 1997; Keating and Hooghe, 1996, 2001). Clearly, this increased the number of strategic means through which regions were able to raise issues of immediate local concern, voice policy preferences and attempt to shape thinking on future proposals. As one of the most visible manifestations of the new regional “mobilisation” in the EU (Hooghe, 1995), attention has come to focus on regional representations and to assess the wider significance of regions’ agenda to finance these bureaux in Brussels.

Correspondingly, over the last 20 years a large number of empirical studies of regional representations in the EU have been undertaken. The key question inherent in this research was why a regional authority from any EU member state should seek to open such a representation in Brussels. What purpose could it possibly serve? (Bauer, 1996; Hooghe, 1995; Keating and Hooghe, 1996). Some of the earliest studies of this new institutional form were largely descriptive accounts, motivated primarily by the desire to capture patterns of “mobilisation” in the form of Brussels representations. As only a relatively small number of European regions had begun to open a permanent presence in the city, these analyses sought to investigate the likelihood that any region should choose to open a base in Brussels. Was regional representation motivated by EU-level factors, such as the availability of structural funding from Brussels (Marks et al., 1996)? Or did particular structural characteristics of a region make them more likely to open a representative office in Brussels? (Hooghe, 1995; Nielsen and Salk, 1998). Later work by Marks and a team of researchers sought to find out what regional representations “thought” they were doing in Brussels, through a large-scale survey of representative bureaux, but did not, however, set out any means of assessing whether or not these representations actually achieved their putative goals.

Overall, then, an impressive body of empirical evidence on regional representations in Brussels mapped out the contours of the regional presence in the EU. But the question remained as to the broader significance of the mobilisation phenomenon. The permanent engagement of regions in European policy through representative offices in Brussels was interpreted by some as having important ramifications for the traditional concept of the EC as a collaborative vehicle for *nation-states*. In bypassing member states, new vertical linkages between regions and the EU level challenged the traditional role of nations as the “sole intermediary between subnational and supranational levels of government” (Marks, 1993: 402). Enthusiasm for the emergence of strong regional actors as important players in Europe, led to the view that they could, collectively, challenge nation-states’ supremacy in the decision-making process (Borkenhagen, 1992; Scott et al., 1994).

In many ways, the emergence of independent, regional offices in Brussels provided strong support for proponents of a “federal Europe” (Loughlin, 1996: 158); these representations imitated the institutional norms familiar within traditional, nation-state diplomacy, and encouraged debates suggesting that sub- and supra-national pressures would together result in the demise of Europe’s nation-states. They

represented a step towards a new, trans-national political order which would supersede established national states (Bartolini, 1999, cited in Salk et al., 2001: 4). The permanent presence of regional representations in Brussels fitted neatly with the broader conception of shifting power dynamics in the EU.

However, early enthusiasm for the “national bypass” interpretation of regional offices quickly waned. Experience of their operation in Brussels soon showed that they did not represent the rise of some new territorial hierarchy. Nor has there been a continued drive to outflank the nation-state in favour of a “Europe of the regions” (Elias, 2008; Greenwood, 2003: 252; Keating and Hooghe, 1996: 226). As one UK official pointed out, the hype was rarely matched by the reality: “although we often hear of the idea of the Whitehall bypass, I think that from the outside people see the Whitehall bypass as having more lanes than it actually has got” (regional representative in Brussels, cited in Bomberg and Peterson, 1998: 227).

Part of the difficulty in assessing “regional representation” as an element of a broader package of forms of regional “mobilisation” is that its nature is diffuse, variable, and as a result does not lend itself to simple categorisation. Thus, whilst mobilisation provides an overview of representative activity in the EU and positions regional representations in a broader picture of opportunities for regional engagement in the EU and a developing pattern of “multi-level” governance, it does not on its own encourage a more nuanced and differentiated understanding of the role and purpose of regional representations.

A movement in search of a cause?

If, then, regional representations were not significantly altering the established order of territorial hierarchy in the European Union, by the 1990s, what was the purpose of the increasing numbers of such offices? In fact, as the number of regional representations in Brussels continued to skyrocket in the 1990s, and as regional representation became commonplace, to the extent that it is now standard practice, the core research question shifted from analysis of *who* should choose to base themselves in Brussels and why, to asking instead what purpose continued regional representation serves, and whether such activity is important (Jeffery, 2000; Marks et al., 2002). What do these bodies actually deliver – and to whom? Beyond the questions of who mobilises and who is most likely to mobilise, there are a number of significant issues that remain unaddressed.

Most strikingly, at a theoretical level, understanding of regional representation has failed to move beyond the most basic descriptive terms.

Clearly, *describing* mobilisation as a phenomenon and identifying its causes is only one side of the story. Determining effects is a different matter, and to date research on regional mobilisation and the development of regional representative offices in particular, has thus far drawn a blank. “Regional mobilisation”, therefore, is a cause in search of an effect (Bauer and Pitschelt). We do have something like a framework of expectation, but we do not currently have any more substantive understanding of the longer-term impact and significance of this form of regional mobilisation. As noted above, there has been little conceptual work carried out on the phenomenon of mobilisation; analysis has tended largely to be empirical in nature – who, when, in what numbers and so on? But, for a more theoretical approach to the understanding of mobilisation, we need to consider the question of why there are differentiated levels of representation across regional entities in the EU?

The core question considered in this work builds on the evidence derived from earlier study of regional representations in the EU – who they are, what they think they are doing in Brussels – but seeks to address the more substantive issue of *what* they are. This question is multi-dimensional: what qualities do they deliver in European governance? Equally, what benefits do they deliver for their end users, those who purport to benefit from continued material support for such representations? On a more conceptual level, the question of *what* regional offices deliver can also be raised. How does the permanent presence of regional representations in the EU inform our understanding of the way in which the EU is organised and of broader conceptions of multi-level governance?

To conclude, the term “mobilisation” has served as a useful means of understanding the increased level of regional engagement in European issues that has manifested itself in Brussels since the 1980s, but is only a description, lacking any kind of conceptual link to related research agendas on European integration, notably those on governance and in particular multi-level governance. It is to these ideas that we now turn, seeking to build linkages between these two bodies of research.

Mobilisation, regional representations and governance

The multiplication of contacts between sub-state actors and EU decision-makers in structural funding provided evidence of the earliest ideas of “multi-level” governance. Whilst never put forward as a “theory” of European integration, the concept of multi-level governance (MLG), as developed originally by Gary Marks and his collaborators (Hooghe,

1995; Marks, 1992, 1993; Marks et al., 1995), challenges traditional readings of the EU as a state-driven exercise, and depicts instead a more flexible governing space that actively encourages non-state actors, including regional authorities, to participate and exchange resources, and empowers decision-making institutions. The imagery constructed by MLG scholars aims to capture complexity, fluidity, and shifting constellations of resource-dependent actors within the Brussels policy negotiation arena.

But, like the concept of regional mobilisation, MLG ideas have equally been unable to deliver systematic insights into the restructured nature of politics in the EU that this enhanced degree of regional engagement is said to have ushered in. Yes, regions are more present and more active in Brussels, but does this activity in any way distinguish itself from mere multi-level “participation” (Bache, 1998) on the one hand, or multi-level “dialogue” (Wilson, 2003) on the other? Whilst the increased presence of regional representations in Brussels alongside an expanded portfolio of strategic opportunities for engagement is clearly a shift towards more multi-level *participation* in the EU, it is difficult to assess the actual added value of this greater level of participation, and at what point a shift towards enhanced multi-level *governance* becomes a reality. Theorists of governance (and indeed, multi-level governance) suggest a shaping role for those actors engaged in the governing process (Hooghe and Marks, 2001; Kohler-Koch and Rittberger, 2006). Therefore, if multi-level governance is an emergent form of social regulation at the EU level (Bache and Flinders, 2004), these multi-level interactions in Brussels must be making some form of impact on the outcomes of this process (Bache, 2008: 31). What is therefore missing from both the study of regional mobilisation in the EU and the interpretations of regional representations in the EU is an assessment of the manner in which regional engagement in Brussels constitutes influence.

The starting point for the analysis presented in this book is that regional representations vary much more than has previously been acknowledged, and that this variation between types of regional representation has a significant bearing on their ambitions and impacts in the EU. To put it bluntly, regional representations in the EU may well have a bearing on governance in the EU, but that impact is variable. This categorisation has its roots in the domestic politics of Europe in the member states. An approach to the study of regional representations in the EU that draws primarily on domestic lines of enquiry is not in itself a radical departure, as we will see. What is new, however, is the emphasis on differentiation between categories of regional representation,

or types of institutional forms and activities which are established by regions when they undertake representation in the EU. Any understanding of these distinctions needs to be rooted in a domestic perspective, as it is at this level that those differences are established.

Understanding regional representations in the EU: the need for a “domestic lens”

The idea of approaching the study of regional representations in the EU through a “domestic lens” has largely been obscured in recent analyses of these offices, due primarily to their now blanket coverage throughout the EU’s 27 member states. It is now the rule, rather than the exception, that any regional authority will maintain a permanent office in Brussels (Moore, 2006). This has fed into the growing tendency by observers to refer collectively to regional representations as the “regional lobby” – ignoring significant differences in scope, objectives and form – for the purposes of comment or argument about the overall European political system. The growing tendency to bracket together all types of regional representative office and to essentially equate their goals, aims and working practices, does a great disservice to the enterprises themselves and, perhaps more significantly in the context of the understanding of EU governance, prevents scholarship on the EU from fully appreciating the different ways in which the major types of regional representations deliver outputs and how they are operationalised.

Yet there is evidence to suggest that an informed domestic understanding can deliver the more nuanced appreciation of the differences between types of regional representations in the EU that is not broadly acknowledged.

Factors from the national polity – the domestic power of a region and the existence of regional political demands which conflict with those of the national government – have been proven to have the highest predictive power when it comes to assessing the *likelihood* of regional representation in Brussels (Börzel, 2006; Marks et al., 1996: 60; Nielsen and Salk, 1998: 239). An understanding of the European-level requirements of the home or sponsoring authorities has also been found to be fundamental to the explanation of patterns of operational variation in Brussels, and those requirements are shaped by the domestic political, legal and financial context (Heichlinger, 1999: 1).

Studies that sought to establish the actual function of regional offices, have similarly shown that the domestic frame of reference consistently underpins the activities of regional representations in Brussels

(Jeffery, 1997b; Salk et al., 2001). Evidence has shown that regional offices themselves place less emphasis on gaining political influence in Brussels than on “information gathering” (Marks et al., 2002: 7), that is, collating intelligence on behalf of the home or sending authorities. Regional representations themselves therefore perceive their purpose as being more about the downstream communication of information to their home authorities, rather than “upstream” to the EU institutions. Furthermore, whilst many offices do regard gaining influence over EU decisions as an important goal, variations in how and to what extent they want to achieve such influence can be explained only through a closer examination of the national position of regions:

Subnational governments are institutionally determined in their respective domestic arenas. The action for subnational offices is rooted in their respective domestic polities where we find subnational governments operating alongside – and sometimes against – national governments to increase their resources, to gain greater political autonomy, or to avoid being outflanked by the imposition of EU policies that national governments have bargained over their heads. (Marks et al., 2002: 15)

A growing awareness of the importance of domestic factors therefore suggests the need for research to focus more specifically on the national setting as a framework for analysis of the role and purpose of regional offices.

Such a research agenda is supported further by evidence of a clear relationship between the domestic *constitutional* power of regions, and their ability to shape policy both at the national and the European level (Große Hüttmann and Knodt, 2006; Heichlinger, 2004; Jeffery, 2000). But how exactly do constitutional factors determine the purpose of regional offices today? What other – domestically rooted – factors impact on the shape and scope of regional representations? To answer these questions, and to develop a differentiated understanding of types of regional representations in the EU, we need to develop a comparative framework for assessment that will allow these differences to be readily identifiable.

Comparing regional representations: forms of territorial interest mediation

We can only begin a true assessment of regional representations through closer analysis of their structures, make-up, goals and activities. Such an

approach moves beyond the generic view of a single, unified “regional lobby” in Brussels, to a much more differentiated appreciation of what regional representations really are and, crucially, a clearer understanding of how they can be differentiated from one another. To that end, we need to seek out other institutional reference points which facilitate a more robust conceptualisation of their precise shape and nature.

It is helpful here to call on the abundant existing interpretations of interest mediation in the European context. Here, two key areas of research would appear particularly appropriate, and can be identified by even the most cursory glance at the regional presence in the EU. Regional representations in Brussels, it would appear, lie “somewhere between an informal ‘embassy’ for their particular region and a lobbying agency” (Hooghe, 1995: 186). Comparison, then, of regional representations with these two other forms of interest mediation should therefore yield fruitful results. To what extent are some types of regional representation like lobby groups? To what extent are other types of regional representations more like mini-embassies for their regions? An assessment of regional representations across national contexts should thus also lead to a more nuanced interpretation of their precise nature and function, and allow for the establishment of a typology of *forms* of regional interest mediation.

The existence of national patterns of regional representation in the EU does not preclude substantial variation within those parameters. Indeed, cross-national studies of the role and function of regional representation have illustrated that variation occurs not simply along national boundaries, but within them too (Heichlinger, 1999; Jeffery, 1997; Neunreither, 2001). Thus, by assessing the operation, activities and accountability structures of regional offices in a cross-national context, we can position types of office within a continuum of institutional forms of territorial interest mediation. In line with the core research question of this study, this approach will highlight the causality of the relationship between territorial governing arrangements and representational activity in Brussels. How exactly do competencies, policy aspirations and lines of accountability at the national level determine the shape and scope of a region’s representation in Brussels? How is the format of their Brussels office directly related to their EU-level “needs”?

The remainder of this chapter sets out a framework for the comparison of regional offices through a detailed appreciation of their precise activities and functions. An activity-based model will be devised which draws on comparable institutional forms of interest representation,

from the fields of international relations, diplomacy, advocacy studies as well as domestic politics. In order to capture the essence of these representational forms, these comparators are drawn from broadly similar institutional forms of interest mediation: embassies and lobbying organisations.

Establishing a spectrum of the activities carried out by these related institutions will provide the basis for subsequent analysis of the role and function of regional offices. Positioning regional offices within the broader context of representational engagement will help facilitate the more nuanced, differentiated understanding of their overall purpose that has thus far been lacking from analyses of regional representations in the EU. In addition, a core objective in establishing this comparative framework is to capture variation in regional representation among regions of one country, as well as cross-nationally.

Embassies as a form of territorial interest mediation

Despite the wide variation in their scope and operation, regional representations in the EU are often anecdotally referred to as mini “embassies” for their region (Marks et al., 2002: 4; Streeck and Schmitter, 1991: 153). As representations of territorial interests outside the territory, regional offices in Brussels certainly *look* like embassies. The term is often used pejoratively.⁷ But to what extent does that analogy hold true to an analysis of their actual activities, role and function? And is the comparison equally valid across all of the various types of regional representation which operate in Brussels?

Comparison with diplomatic representations or “missions” should yield some useful insights into the validity of these claims. Bilateral state embassies form the key comparator in this section, but reference is also made to national embassies to both multilateral organisations and nation-states. This wider scope provides added value to the analysis of regional representations in Brussels, as it assesses comparable forms of *territorial* interest representation in a multilateral and a non-state environment. This comparison therefore considers also forms of extra-territorial interest representation in the absence of state structures and, in particular, an independent foreign policy.

Role and function of embassies

Embassies represent the institutionalisation of diplomacy, providing the centre of diplomatic endeavour and a focal point for the home territory overseas. Diplomatic missions abroad are the cutting edge of the

foreign policy apparatus and the home system's "eyes and ears" (Rana, 2000: 311).

Bilateral embassies

These are the most common institutionalized form of territorial interest representation in the diplomatic context. Whilst their precise scope will differ according to circumstances, a set of core functions can clearly be identified. Table 2.1 sets out the remit of embassies in the traditional, bilateral context.

Closer examination of the activities of bilateral embassies and regional representations in the EU reveals that this favoured anecdotal reference point is not entirely unproblematic. The classification provided by Locke and Yost (Table 2.1) would appear to reveal that the majority of the work carried out by a "traditional" embassy is beyond the scope of a regional representation. Indeed, the "bread-and-butter" work of embassies and consular services – the job of representing citizens in a foreign land – does not apply (Marks et al., 2002: 4).

Overlap is likely to arise principally in those areas which fall under the competence of regional authorities in the domestic arena, such as economic actions and agriculture, as opposed to issues of "high politics", such as defence, or consular activities.

But whilst the areas of activity in which embassies and Brussels regional offices operate may differ substantially, the type of activity, or the form which that activity takes, does not. One of the key functions of diplomats is obtaining information (Holsti, 1995: 133); information is the first step towards advocacy (Van Schendelen, 1993: 4). As a major

Table 2.1 Diplomatic missions: fields of activity

1	Diplomacy
2	Defence
3	Economic actions
4	Intelligence
5	International finance
6	Agriculture
7	Consular assistance
8	Foreign assistance
9	Public diplomacy (cultural affairs and PR)
10	Law enforcement
11	Health issues
12	Administration of the embassy

Source: Locke and Yost, 1997: 121–126.

role played by diplomatic staff is “persuading foreign officials to take actions that advance...[state]...interests or to avoid actions that harm them” (Locke and Yost, 1997: 5), information gathering can be regarded as the underlying basis for effective diplomacy. The staff of bilateral embassies work in the host environment to tap channels of information flow – this is fundamental to successful representation.

New technologies have provided an extra dimension to the work of embassies overseas. Information which the embassy itself would once have channelled home to the domestic administration may now reach the sending authorities from several sources, for example, the media. This change of pace has forced embassies to adapt their working practices. Crucially, it is widely agreed that the information age has not made overseas representation superfluous, but rather, has intensified the demand for an on-the-ground presence, which is able rapidly to distil events and interpret their importance for the home state (Rana, 2000; Swift, 1998). Their role is to provide tailored, filtered intelligence for the home authority:

Like a good sponge, the active Mission accumulates varied and even trivial data, not just from official sources...It has the time to sift through this, and make the connections, even where none are evident at first sight. This makes the Mission the prime custodian of information. (Rana, 2000: 316–317)

Finally, embassies are the embodiment of the domestic administration in the host environment. Thus, officials overseas act upon the instructions of their home authority. Whilst they act as a source of ideas and initiatives, contribute informed opinions and make policy recommendations (Rana, 2000: 317), their capacity for decisive action on their own responsibility is limited; they do not have a large say in determining their own role, or how and why it should change (Swift, 1998: 4). With clear lines of accountability and control, the diplomatic mission presents the overseas face of the home administration.

Multilateral embassies

A further diplomatic parallel can be drawn between regional representations in the EU and national embassies to multilateral organisations such as the UN. Embassies to multilateral organisations rely on a very high level of expertise to staff the mission, and in many instances, governments exploit parallel contacts outside diplomatic channels, such as members of the business community, experienced officials and

journalists, for negotiations with multilateral organisations (Palliser, 1982: 36). The dynamics of information exchange and the promotion of national positions are therefore substantially different in a multilateral context. The provision of “expert knowledge” is often an entry card into negotiations in a multilateral context. Expert information can be regarded as a good, and an ability to supply it secures access (Bouwen, 2001: 1).

The multilateral aspect is also a factor on the sending side of international diplomacy. A key example is provided by the EU’s own external delegations. These have been successfully carving out a niche for themselves in the international diplomatic realm by working to develop autonomous areas of influence, whilst still continuing to work as closely as possible with traditional embassies. This strategy has seen them concentrate on sectors that receive less attention than traditional embassies, such as businesses, peripheral regions, and scientific and technical institutions. As such, the EU’s delegations have set a new functional standard of diplomacy, which can be described as “consumer-oriented diplomacy...less dependent on the single interests of the legating state and more responsive to the needs of non-institutional actors from both the EU and the host country” (Bruter, 1999: 199). The success of the diplomatic undertakings of the European Commission proves conclusively that it is possible to practise “diplomacy without a state” (Bruter, 1999: 197).

This wider conception of the role of an embassy and the emphasis on “consumer” or, at the very least, “end user” needs has an important resonance for regional representation in the EU. It establishes a more informal approach within international relations which can work without the support of a nation-state, one which encompasses the wider interests of a community and hence represents a “platform” of interests.

National EU “embassies”: the Permanent Representations

For the purposes of this study, perhaps the most useful comparison from the diplomatic realm is provided by analysis of the role and function of embassies or Permanent Representations to the EU. These bodies also seek to represent territorially defined – albeit national – interests within the same supra-national environment as regional offices. The main functions of the Permanent Representation within the EU can be defined as follows:

1. Information gatherer who lobbies for appropriate changes at an early stage;

2. Information provider, briefing ministers who attend Council meetings and making national MEPs aware of the home government's position;
3. Policy formulation in the national sphere, assisting in putting together national policy towards EU issues and proposals, including adjustments to policy as the negotiating situation develops;
4. Information conductor, linking national and EU officials; and
5. Negotiator – within the scope of the overall national policy position – both formally and informally. Traditionally takes place within the Council, now increasingly within the European Parliament (Blair, 2001: 148).

However, these functions are not weighted equally. Blair notes that EU permanent representations “expend their greatest effort by lobbying and negotiating on behalf of national capitals and informing the latter of the extent to which EU activities affect them” (Blair, 2001: 147). Information work therefore constitutes the largest element of the permanent representation's function in the EU.

The points raised in the above discussion are summarised in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Modelling the activities of regional offices: comparison with embassies⁸

Activity	State embassies	State to multilateral embassies	Multilateral to state embassies	Permanent Representations to the EU
Information gathering (downstream)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Information provision (upstream)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Consular assistance, that is, to individual nationals	✓	×	×	×
Business assistance, that is, “consumer-oriented” diplomacy	Partially	×	✓	×
Self-promotion, that is, carving out a role	×	×	✓	×

Lobbying and regional interest intermediation

Comparing regional representations to lobby groups and associations for collective action based in Brussels is an obvious route, yet this comparison has not been particularly well developed in the studies of regional representations in the EU. It must be recognised that collective action issues applicable to other actors do not arise in the same way for territorial public authorities, because they are:

...a distinct level of governance, sometimes intertwined with national interests, sometimes separate, and with a whole range of competencies and interests. (Greenwood, 2003: 233)

Yet clearly regional representations are situated physically in a network of multiple interest groups in Brussels, often in shared premises. The mode of interaction is broadly similar; a team of officials are housed in a representative office, and are tasked with monitoring EU legislative developments, reporting on these to members, subscribers, or to head office in some other state. The sending authorities may formulate a response to those proposals, with the assistance of the Brussels team, and it is their job then to filter these interests “upstream” into relevant parts of the policy process, with or without the assistance of like-minded interests. To some outside observers, this physical similarity has led to the notion that the regional representations are based permanently in Brussels primarily as a means of engaging in permanent dialogue with the EU institutions about their own region’s policy preferences and strategic aims on Europe; they simply “take the form and function of lobbying organisations rather than political representations” (Bauer and Börzel, 2010). As with the “catch-all” term the “regional lobby”, the suggestion that regional representations are simply lobbyists for their region overlooks the key differences in types of representation, and certainly requires further qualification through fuller analysis of individual activities, ambitions and functions, as we shall see.

Research on collective action in the EU has sought to differentiate between the competing ideas of “political” and “policy” legitimacy in the EU, alternatively assessed as “input” and “output” legitimacy (Risse and Kleine, 2007; Scharpf, 1999). On the one hand, the EU institutions are crucially aware of the criticisms raised of a democratic deficit in their work, and a lack of robust, mainstream political mechanics in their functioning – not least since the very public displays of citizen disaffection with the EU in the French and Dutch “No” votes in referendums

on the draft Constitutional Treaty in 2005 and Ireland's "No" vote on the Lisbon Treaty in 2008. This ongoing search for credibility has resulted in an EU policy-making style today that is pluralist and almost excessively open to those who wish to engage with it, when contrasted with national policy processes around the EU. The Commission's long-standing engagement with organized interests is viewed in particular as contributing to a high level of "policy-making" legitimacy in the EU (Majone, 2001; Scharpf, 1999). Further evidence of this open process of policy negotiation is provided by the EU's strong cultural bias towards consultation rather than conflict in lobbying – as evidenced by the low number of litigation strategies used to date in pursuit of EU aims (Coen, 2007: 340). For all organised interests, therefore, both public and private, there is a recognisable incentive to be mobilised at the Brussels level.

The literature on "regional mobilisation" in the EU implies at its core that there is something to be gained from increased direct regional interest mediation in the European policy arena, and regional representations are one of a number of manifestations of sub-state ambitions to maximise the opportunities presented at the European. Read from this perspective, the underlying reasons for increased regional activity at the Brussels level are the same as for many other collective interests around the EU: consequent to the shifting of decision-making on policies of core relevance to regional actors from national to supra-national arenas, groups of interest actors have re-focused on these new decision-makers. This is self-evident.

What is less evident is that this shift in the locus of political authority upwards to the EU institutions has also generated innovations in the systems of European governance. European integration has also provided new opportunities for non-state actors to escape national filters of interest aggregation, and in doing so, has provided them with additional political power (Egeberg, 2005). The creation of a European decision-making system has indeed opened up multiple opportunities for various means of regional interest intermediation, allowing regions to access additional resources independent of central state control (Kohler-Koch, 1999). But to what extent is regional lobbying simply mimicking the upstream policy engagement of corporate and private interests in the EU? Or is it, rather, providing a substantively new model of public sector lobbying?

Organised interest mediation in the EU

Interest representation in the EU has thrived as a result of a significant *resource dependency* between organised interest groups and the

under-resourced Commission staff (Bouwen, 2001; Bouwen and McCown, 2007). The Commission needs expertise and information in order to fulfill its regulatory role (Coen, 2007). As a result, in recent years, the volume and diversity of interests represented in Brussels has grown exponentially (Greenwood, 2003; Mazey and Richardson, 2003). Understanding the nature of lobbying and in turn, using EU lobbying as a “benchmark” in the assessment of the activities of regional offices is complicated further by the sheer complexity of representative forms of interest groups and interest mediation in the European sphere. The strategic options open to interest groups are manifold. Nevertheless, a broad categorisation of strategies can be identified. Four major routes of interest representation exist.

First, an interest may choose to run a single representative office in Brussels. Large multinational businesses, for instance, such as Microsoft, may choose to operate a representative office in Brussels itself. Staffing a single business office is the most expensive option open to only a few, principally large, international businesses with vested interests in developing the European single market or in European standards and such like.

A second option would be for an interest to join a national-level grouping to push for specific European policy goals by winning over a *national* administration to the cause; national interests would thus influence European outcomes through EU-level intergovernmental negotiation.

Third, an organised interest could join an EU grouping by virtue of its membership of a national organisation. Such “eurogroups” tend mainly to be federated structures; the membership base of employers’ organisation *Business Europe*, for instance, consists of national-level employers’ associations.

Third, a business could pay the direct membership costs of joining a European-level lobbying organisation. One of the most well-known examples of this type of organisation, AmCham – the American Chamber of Commerce – and specifically its EU Committee, represents American business interests in the EU. Many of these companies also maintain their own individual company offices in Brussels, including Microsoft and Coca-Cola.

A fourth option would be that a private interest could choose to employ the services of one of a growing number of professional lobbying groups in Brussels, such as Hill and Knowlton or Weber Shandwick, either on a short- or long-term basis. Hired lobbyists should be seen as complementary to the political action of firms, as they provide specialist

information upon which the government affairs directors can draw; they do not, however, satisfy businesses' long-term need to be a "political insider", as the firm is operating through an intermediary, and does not establish the "good will" which is significant over the longer-term (Coen, 2007).

Thus, these main strategic options can be conceptualised as in Figure 2.1.

There is no hierarchy of channels of interest mediation in Brussels; none of these strategic options outweighs all others. Despite a Commission preference for channelling interests through the so-called Eurogroups, given their trans-national make-up (Mazey and Richardson, 2001a: 77), in practice, corporate interests will implement a risk-avoidance strategy, by maintaining a portfolio of lobby options (Bouwen, 2001: 16; Eising, 2007), an approach described as "promiscuity rather than monogamy"

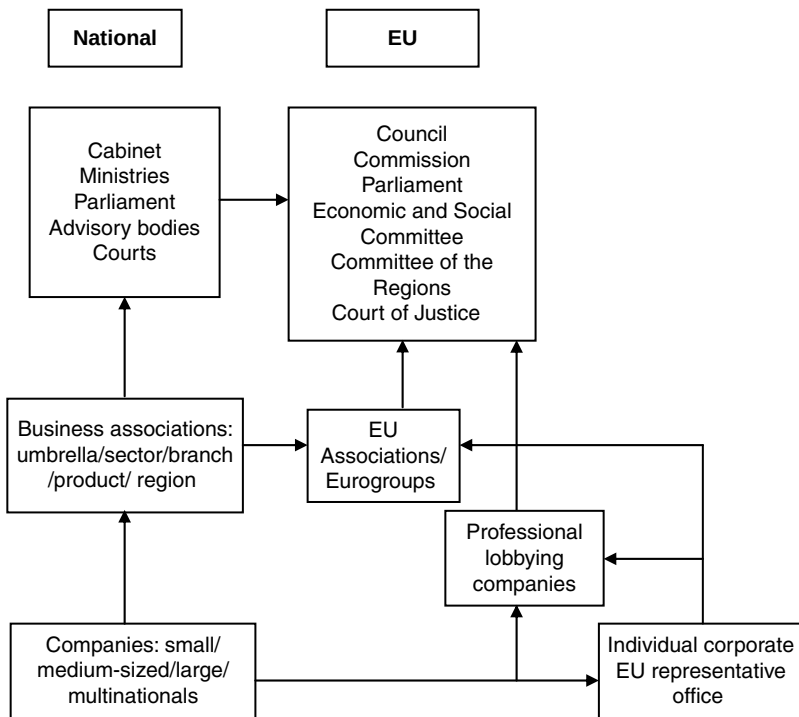


Figure 2.1 EU lobbying routes for business interests

Source: Adapted from Pijnenburg, 1998: 317.

(Mazey and Richardson, 2001a: 77). Available resources to invest in interest mediation are thus the significant constraining factor.

One final venue for interest mediation in Brussels is the *ad hoc* coalition of interests, which has become increasingly commonplace in recent years (Green Cowles, 1998; Mazey and Richardson, 2001a). A sort of “disposable collective action” (Aspinwall, 1998: 201), these involve players from numerous sectors, who mobilise around a specific policy issue. The grouping is fluid and will dissolve once a final decision has been taken on the actual issue.

Ad hoc lobbying coalitions are a direct response to the nature of the EU policy-making environment. Its extreme complexity and multiple access points (Aspinwall and Greenwood, 1998: 7), heightens the need for flexibility and manoeuvrability amongst interest groups if they are to create policy-win situations. Indeed, failure to join these fluid interest mediation arenas, concentrating instead on the five more traditional forms of interest representation listed above, may even prove a more risky strategy; these kinds of membership organisation could well prove too slow for the groups’ representation needs, on account of their “cumbersome consensus-building processes” (Mazey and Richardson 2001a: 77).

Such ad hoc coalitions are established as a result of links forged at the Brussels level. The maintenance of a Brussels presence offers immediate access to these groupings, which are founded upon an ability to act quickly and flexibly and allow for a dynamic response as the EU’s policy agenda develops. Equally, a permanent Brussels presence is a prerequisite for constructing a trans-national lobbying alliance in the first instance, and mobilising a group which is illustrative of a “pan-European interest”, one of the building blocks towards effective upstream interaction with the EU institutions (Coen, 2007). A foothold in the Brussels network of lobbyists and information providers is thus key to exploiting the potential of these short-term, issue-specific groupings.

The EU lobbying environment

Regardless of the actual structure of the organised interest, there are certain common features to all EU lobbying. The main aims of a Brussels lobbying base are:

1. monitoring social and political issues likely to impact on the interests of the business;
2. helping represent the organisation to key audiences or stakeholders; guiding senior leaders as necessary in their policy-making; and

3. long-term relationship building, utilising the subsequent “inside track” advantage (McLaughlin et al., 1993: 198).

The work carried out by lobbying organisations, like regional representations in the EU, therefore straddles the divide between upstream and downstream information provision.

Nevertheless, organised interests in the EU tend to focus the majority of their activity on the early stages of the policy process, recognising the formal and informal powers of the Commission as an agenda-setter. Given that the primary task of EU institutions is the conception of common policies rather than their execution, the interest organisations are more active when EU institutions are designing policy proposals or deciding upon them, rather than during the implementation stage (Eising, 2007: 397). Lobbying resources invested in the early stages of the policy-making process therefore tend to produce greater returns than those allocated to lobbying later in the process (Mazey and Richardson, 2001b: 219–220). As a result, it is hardly surprising that the Commission today remains the “foremost venue for interest representation at the EU level” (Greenwood, 2003: 30). Interest group activities also decrease notably once the Commission has delivered its proposals to the Parliament and the Council, underscoring further the vital position that these organisations attribute to the Commission in the EU legislative process (Eising, 2007: 398).

The European Parliament remains the second most important institutional target of lobbyists, given its ability to amend and co-decide upon proposed legislation (Greenwood, 2003: 32). The Council of Ministers, as the third principal institution in the process, is less of a target for lobbyists, given the importance of national decision-making processes within the Council’s intergovernmental procedures. Nonetheless, the Permanent Representations of the member-state governments to the EU are a focus of lobbying effort in Brussels (Mazey and Richardson, 2001b: 232). Finally, organised interests may well choose to target the European Court of Justice (ECJ) as a source of influencing legislation (Wincott, 2001: 193–194).

Access to each of the EU institutions is variable, depending on the issue at stake and the nature of the *resource dependency* between officials and lobbyists (Bouwen and McCown, 2007; Broscheid and Coen, 2007). The Commission demands the expertise of organised interests, particularly because much of the substance of its policies relates to technical detail – standards, parameters, procedural rules and such like (Mazey and Richardson, 2001a: 78). With its limited resources, the

Commission is heavily dependent on EU-level sources which have a “quasi-monopoly” over information (Greenwood, 2003: 32). Thus, despite the growing number of interests vying for Commission officials’ “ear time” in Brussels, EU policy-makers demand specialist information and expertise from the political marketplace (Coen, 1997: 104; Coen, 2008: 334). Being able to provide that kind of specialist information therefore offers opportunities for access to the relevant policy-makers (Bouwen, 2001; Eising, 2004) and hence the first step in a process of upstream influence.

There is a question mark over the extent to which EU lobbying effort is focused on upstream activity in comparison with downstream information provision. Whilst the precise balance of upstream/downstream activity will depend on the objectives of the organisation, it has been suggested that the *size* of an individual lobbying bureau, in terms of its staffing, may serve as an approximation of the balance of its activities. Small-scale operations at the Brussels level may act merely as “listening posts”, whose function is to “simply gather information on funding opportunities or new EU-level policy initiatives” (Mazey and Richardson, 2001a: 75). Some smaller Brussels-based organisations may well consist of a permanent staff which is expanded as and when required, particularly regarding the need for specific technical expertise – a crucial lobbying asset. Experts from the home or external organisations may therefore be drawn in whenever necessary (Mazey and Richardson, 2001a: 75).

Furthermore, the downstream provision of information can be viewed as a major bonus of membership of an EU-level representation. In order to overcome the “free rider” problem identified in Mancur Olson’s classic 1971 delineation of the logic of collective action, groups must provide *selective* in addition to *collective* benefits (Olson, 1971: 16). Within the EU context, such selective benefits are most likely to relate to tailored or advance intelligence, as well as securing contacts with relevant key officials within the EU institutions, and within networks of like-minded organisations. EU lobby groups have been found to attach particular importance to the provision of tailored and timely information as a membership incentive, which is considered as important as the more obvious incentive of “representing members’ interests in Europe” (Aspinwall and Greenwood, 1998: 9).

Effective EU lobbying

Given the multiplicity of interests clamouring for access to the Commission, it is not surprising that the Commission itself has tried

to regulate the lobbying process over the years, and in doing so, has fostered the institutionalisation of interest intermediation in the European Union (Mazey and Richardson, 2003: 209). Furthermore, the code of conduct delineated by the Commission has established something like an unofficial set of rules of engagement for organised interests in the EU.

The first step towards a more formalised process of engaging organised interests in Commission work processes came in 1992, when the Commission published an outline of its strategy for engaging with organised interests in the EU, *An Open and Structured Dialogue* (European Commission, 1992). This argued that the Commission's aim was to act as an "institution open to outside input. The Commission believes this process to be fundamental to the development of its policies" (European Commission, 1992).

Efforts to institutionalise and indeed regulate the political participation of organised interests in the EU have continued since then. The role of lobbies in the European policy process was again recognised in the Commission's 2001 White Paper on Governance. In it, the Commission acknowledged that the exponential growth in lobbying organisations in Brussels required a new approach on its part towards managing interaction. Thus, in the White Paper the Commission pledged to produce a set of minimum standards for consultation and to publish them as a code of conduct (European Commission, 2001: 17).

In 2005, the then Administrative Affairs and Anti-Fraud Commissioner Siim Kallas launched a "transparency initiative", an attempt by the Commission to increase trust in the institution by securing equality of accessibility (Kallas Communication, 9 November 2005). This led to the creation in 2008 of a voluntary – controversially not mandatory – register of interest groups in the EU, which the Commission manages through a web-portal.⁹ Interest groups which sign up to the Commission's register of interests agree to adhere to a Commission-designed "Code of Conduct for Interest Representatives" – a set of general principles that lobbyists must follow, such as "openness, honesty and integrity" (Commission, 2008).¹⁰

Together, however, these documents serve merely to encourage self-regulation amongst EU-level interest groupings, in the absence of any official system of accreditation. As such, they relate primarily to standard measures found in other democracies: groups should behave honestly and professionally, should not employ or seek to employ Commission Officials, or offer any form of inducement to Commission officials in order to obtain information or privileged treatment.

Nonetheless, these guidelines do provide a basic framework for interaction, and therefore constitute informal “rules of the game” which are widely understood. They codify what is tacitly understood in the EU interest group environment, whereby experience of interaction with the decision-making institutions over time led to the emergence of distinct norms and best practice in terms of EU lobbying, based on trust and conciliatory behaviour (Coen, 2004). Understanding these norms and adhering to these unofficial rules can be regarded as the key to successful lobbying and hence effective participation in EU policy-making (Mazey and Richardson, 2001a: 82–83). Indeed, they have now become firmly embedded within the Commission and lobbying groups alike, and hence “constitute the foundations of an emerging European policy style” (Mazey and Richardson, 2003: 221).

Despite the Commission’s openness to lobbyists in general, any interest’s effectiveness in influencing policy directly is determined by its ability to establish a “positive reputation” in the European political process over the longer-term; that is, its ability to establish a reputation as a provider of reliable, issue-specific information (Eising, 2007: 339).

It is also recognised that, over the longer-term, relationships can be cultivated, based on the degree of professionalism displayed by organised interests, and the level of sophistication they adopt in interacting with the EU institutions. A recognition of appropriate norms and behaviour in the practice of EU lobbying is crucial, based on trust and conciliatory behaviour (Coen, 2004; Greenwood, 2002, 2003). The more effective lobbying groups have developed a positive reputation as credible partners for the Commission within the European political process (Coen, 2007).

Playing the “credibility game” (Coen, 2007: 335) as a lobbyist in the EU requires:

- Being able to deliver expertise quickly and in a readily usable form for the Commission.
- Being prepared to participate in policy framing, especially in the very early stages of policy formulation when problems are being identified and options are being searched. This often means being as interested in seminars, workshops, conferences, and observatories as in more structured “consultation” in the later stages of the process.
- Maintaining close professional links with Commission officials at all levels, across a wide range of DGs and across a broad spectrum of nationalities.
- Present rational/technical arguments based on reliable data.
- Viewing European policy as an opportunity, not a threat.

- Formulating European, not national or particularistic, solutions.
- Being willing to work with other stakeholders, including those who are usually opponents, either in ad hoc interest group coalitions or in special venues constructed by the Commission to solve policy problems.
- Being co-operative, positive and trustworthy: building up trust is a long-term investment.
- Participating in the whole race: the policy process often never terminates. (Mazey and Richardson, 2001a: 83).

These points provide a broad framework for effective *upstream* engagement in the EU policy process. The same conditions for “effectiveness” apply to regional representations in the EU as much as they do to organised interest groups in Brussels. Effective interaction with the EU policy process is a long-term “game”. Organised interests, both public and private, have to learn to manage their policy environment; as the first wave of lobbyists in the EU soon recognised, they would have to deploy a greater number of skills than merely passive monitoring of the progress of European legislation and directives and presenting the occasional position paper to the European Commission (Coen, 2007; Pijnenburg, 1998).

Developing common performance indicators is regularly mooted as a means of measuring the effectiveness of regional representations and their activities in Brussels. Yet would some kind of benchmarking process really help to understand lobbying and its effectiveness? Opponents argue that if there were targets or benchmarks, and the only way to measure these was through analysis of points raised in opinions and their replication in the actual text of, for example, CoR Opinions, EU regulations and directives, then inevitably civil servants would have the incentive to roll back their aspirations and demands in order to be seen to be successful – thus undermining the very purpose of their lobbying efforts.

The cultivation of long-term relationships based on awareness of the subtleties of “appropriateness” in lobbying behaviour in Brussels is as crucial for regional offices as it is for corporate interests (Coen, 2007: 338). Whilst the primary function of regional representations in Brussels remains to support the EU policy work of the sponsoring authorities – whatever form it may take – this task cannot be completed effectively without the office’s sophisticated awareness of how to interact effectively within the wider Brussels interest group marketplace. Any representative office of a legislative region therefore relies on the

skills needed to operate and function effectively in the EU arena. Here, an acute awareness of the informal “rules of the game” is fundamental, and skills in this area are only developed by longer-term engagement in this political arena. Successful regional representations, like any interest group operating in the EU, rely on an understanding of the distinct norms and best practice of EU lobbying, which are based on trust and conciliatory behaviour (Coen, 2004; Hamada, 2007). Understanding these norms and adhering to these unofficial rules can be regarded as the key to successful lobbying and hence effective participation in EU policy-making (Mazey and Richardson, 2001a: 82–83).

At this point, Table 2.3 offers some pointers as to how to assess the activities of regional representations alongside those of more traditional types of lobbying organisations in the EU.

Table 2.3 Modelling the activities of regional offices: comparison with EU lobbyists

Activity	Single interest offices	National organisation	Eurogroups	Direct membership EU organisation	Ad hoc coalitions
Forming ad hoc pressure groups on single issues	✓	✓	✓	✓	–
Providing tailored, selected information to membership base/HQ (downstream)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Networking for access to key decision-makers (long-term effort)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Providing information to EU institutions (upstream)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
EU institutional change advocacy/Treaty lobbying	×	×	×	×	×

How are territorial interests different to lobbyists?

How then do regional representations in Brussels differ from EU “lobbyists” in the traditional sense? The Commission itself clearly distinguishes between organised interests in general and public authorities, noting that these are not expected to register in its official “Register of Interest Representatives” – though they may do so if they wish.¹¹ But how exactly is the “regional lobby” so different from other organised interests in the EU? This question will be approached over the course of the next three chapters, through a detailed analysis of regional representations’ activities, resourcing profiles and strategic control. To consider regional offices merely as lobbying outfits is a very one-dimensional perspective that excludes a wide set of important influences that filter into the activities of such representations, and ultimately furnish them with a qualitatively different position in systems of European governance than mere lobbyists. There are numerous overlaps in the position occupied by interest groups in the EU and regional representations, though, as has previously been stressed, these are not in themselves identical organisational forms. A clearer understanding of the differentiated nature of “regional representation” will allow us to see how these bureaux are similar to, and differ from, other organised interests in the EU.

Regional representations are able to fulfil a unique role within the institutionalised “credibility game” (Coen, 2007: 335) of lobbying and interest mediation in the EU. Their expertise as chief implementers of EU legislation is one of the core entry cards to negotiations with the institutions. As the spokespersons for aggregated regional interests, regional representations can offer relevant policy information, expertise and data on the implementation of EU policies that can feed back into future policy cycles launched by the Commission. This process serves a dual benefit: the Commission relies on expert and professionalised information to improve the legitimacy of its own policy process. Equally, these feedback loops are essential to the business of regional representations in pursuit of policies more favourable to their own interests. Sophisticated regional representations that have learned to play this game strategically can deliver appropriate information on specific policy proposals with an impact in their territory, not simply as public-interest actors but also as representatives of specific sectoral concerns. For instance, regional representations with a high concentration of chemical companies in their localities, where a high percentage of their populations relied on chemical manufacturers for employment, were able to harness industry players in their mission to shape early-stage thinking on the REACH directive, agreed in 2006.¹²

Whilst this kind of activity blurs the distinction between public sector and private-interest lobbying, regional offices can offer a further incentive to EU institutions to be considered during the policy-making process. The relationship between organised interest groups and the Commission is, however, not based solely on the delivery of expert information. Regional representations can offer a qualitatively different level of legitimacy to these policy negotiations – citizen legitimacy. Within the “credibility game”, regional representations are able to play the “citizen legitimacy” card, arguing forcefully that their policy positions offer viewpoints not only on specific sectoral policy concerns of importance in their territories, but that these positions are backed by citizen representatives, that is, coalitions of local and/or regional authorities. Regional representations are likely therefore to secure access to EU decision-makers on proposals which are potentially controversial, and where the EU institutions are therefore particularly keen to secure additional *input* legitimacy. It is in this search for legitimacy that regional interests have recently seen opportunities for upstream engagement and policy dialogue expansion. Finally, regional representatives may also secure “eartime” within the EU institutions on account of their domestic position, and recognition that legislation will need their support domestically if it is to be properly implemented.¹³

In line with the shifting patterns of resource dependency across time, space and sectors which complicate any study of collective action in the EU, the opportunity to argue for enhanced regional input varies from case to case, as we shall see (Chapters 4 and 5). Nonetheless, the public sector credentials of regional representations in the EU offer a further option in an arsenal of strategic weaponry that can be deployed to secure access to decision-makers over and above those that can be deployed by other forms of organised interest.

However, there is little in the way of empirical evidence as yet to suggest that this enhanced level of regional interest mediation in the EU equates to impact, that is, some degree of policy change that would represent an impact on governance in the EU. Indeed, as numerous large-scale studies of collective action in the EU have repeatedly shown, whilst the EU institutions are open to outside interests, access is variable across policy sectors and across types of interest (Bouwen, 2002, 2003; Eising, 2007). Perhaps more significantly, most of these large-scale studies use access as a proxy for influence, given the difficulty of capturing impacts quantitatively (Christine Mahoney, 2007, *Lobbying Success in the United States and the European Union*, *Journal of Public Policy*, 27, 1, 35–56). In short, access is not equal to influence – even

though it is a necessary first step towards having a say on EU policies (Beyers, 2002). A greater regularity of access and interaction does not in itself offer a greater ability to shape EU policy outcomes, but it does follow that those actors who maintain more regular contact have the necessary “soft” skills – they are generally well informed about EU policy-making and can process this information for their members and political allies, thus exerting more influence on EU policies than those who do not have that access (Eising, 2007: 387). For regional interests, as for other organised interests in the EU, gaining access to the institutions is only the first step towards shaping outcomes, as indeed the core understanding of “governance”, multi-level or otherwise, would suggest. Thus, whilst surveys undertaken by Mbaye (2008) and Marks et al. (2002) indicate the intensity and frequency of interaction between regional representations and the different EU institutions, such data needs to be qualified by closer empirical analysis of those interactions. Chapter 4 considers further the varied pattern of interactions between regional representations and other actors, and assesses the value of relationships constructed by regional representations.

Paradiplomacy – the international activity of regions

The concept of “paradiplomacy” provides a third and final institutional reference point for our study. Regional international mobilisation is not confined to the European sphere. Research on the role of regions within the emerging system of EU politics and governance forms an important sub-element of a much wider literature on the external relations of regions (Blatter et al., 2008; Hrbek, 2003; Le Gloannec, 2007; Meier-Walser, 1999; Thiele, 2006). What this vast and growing body of literature identifies is that there has been an important “rescaling” of socio-economic and political spaces over the past 30 years (Jeffery and Wincott, 2006; Keating, 2009). These new scales of political action indicate a large degree of fluidity within what would previously have been conceptualised as the (Westphalian) nation-state order, and suggest that regional actors are in the process of re-positioning themselves as governing actors, rather than governed subjects, within this new global political architecture.

From this literature, the concept of “parallel diplomacy” or *paradiplomacy* is an interesting and potentially useful reference point for the analysis of regional representations in the EU, given that paradiplomacy does, on occasion, also take an institutionalised form. Developed from the study of North American federalism, and in particular the

study of the external roles and representative activities of sub-state actors, the term implies a form of interest mediation that is not fully contiguous with traditional international relations between national governments or “the activities of regions below the level of the state in international politics” (Mitchell, 1995: 287). Despite historical precedents for the institutionalised, international presence of regions in the 19th and early 20th centuries (Gunlicks, 2001; Lecours, 2002), it is evident that regional mobilisation in the international sphere has become more commonplace in recent years. The pressures of both globalisation and European integration have opened up new space for the activities of regions, and the overseas presence of *regional* representations is an increasingly familiar sight.¹⁴

Efforts have been undertaken to assess these new forms of external action by regional governments. The most comprehensive systematisation of regional engagement abroad is put forward by Mitchell and Leicester in their insightful critique of the nature of “paradiplomacy” – sub-state diplomacy carried out in parallel to an overarching diplomatic agenda pursued by a national government – and its more separatist variant of “proto-diplomacy”, indicating a sub-national strategy at odds with and seeking directly to undermine national diplomatic efforts (Mitchell and Leicester, 1999).

Neither conceptualisation suggests that the multiplication of international relations through increased sub-national engagement globally amounts to a zero sum equation. If anything, the foreign relations of sub-state actors can qualify relationships between nation-states, adding a degree of nuance to the substance of that interaction (Michelmann, 1990). Equally, they may offer a streamlining or rationalisation of international activity, allowing regions to take on responsibility for showcasing local specificities directly to potential investors, or relieving national governments of the burden of international profiling of some less politically sensitive aspects of the domestic political economy (Duchacek, 1990).

Paradiplomacy and domestic political tensions

Inherent in the idea of paradiplomacy is the existence of – or at least the perception of – a set of territorial policy preferences at variance from those of the state as a whole (Mitchell and Leicester, 1999: 9). It is therefore to be expected that the cultivation of international relations by a region is in certain instances closely linked to internal power struggles in a domestic arena. Regions may regard international engagement as a tool for achieving domestic policy objectives. In its earliest incarnations,

principally in the 1980s, “paradiplomacy” tended largely to be regarded with scepticism by central state authorities, who sought to limit its scope (Hahn, 1986). Fears that the emergence of regional representations in Brussels presented evidence of institutionalised paradiplomacy which would result in a negative impact on the foreign policy of the central government, underpinned the reproaches of *Nebenaußenpolitik* or “auxiliary foreign policy” with which the first German *Länder* offices were met.

The international representation of regions is certainly on the rise (Blatter et al., 2008; Lecours, 2002), yet it is underpinned by different sets of functional logics. Three sets of motivating factors can be seen to drive the paradiplomacy of regions: economic, cultural and political (Aldecoa and Keating, 1999: 4). Regions with cultural identities and heritage at odds with the dominant culture of the nation-state seek resources and support in the international realm, particularly where the national government is unsympathetic to their cause. For instance, Catalonia has promoted the study of its own language and history within Spanish departments in universities abroad, and has sought EU-level protection for minority languages in Europe as a whole (Keating, 1999: 5). In the case of Canada, the province of Ontario, with its dominant economic position in the Canadian federation, has often felt a lesser need for direct foreign-policy involvement than Québec (Soldatos, 1990: 37) – highlighting the imperatives of cultural distinctiveness in the development of regional external relations (Belanger, 2002).

Intra-state cultural tensions play a significant role in promoting paradiplomatic activity, and can spillover into the political realm. The existence of culturally-determined cleavages within a society – multiple territorial identities, cultures and languages within a single state – find their expression in the political realm, for instance in durable differences in party-political colouration across a territory (Marks et al., 1996: 45). Cultural distinctiveness thus presents an important potential source of friction between levels of authority within a state, which can have ramifications for the development of autonomous strands of international relations.

Yet, whilst cultural and political or policy tensions have shaped a degree of paradiplomatic activity around the globe, the primary motivational force remains economic. In an increasingly interdependent global economy, there is a strong economic logic behind regions’ external projection (Keating, 1996) related to the need to compete autonomously for investment capital and the spillover of their domestic economic competences, particularly regulatory, into the international

arena. Even in instances where there is a self-evident political “sub-text” to regional representation abroad, such as the offices representing Wallonia in Quebec, Baton Rouge, Paris and Hanoi, many more offices are set up by the export promotion agency Wallonia Export (formerly *Agence Wallonne à l'Exportation (AWEX)*). Attracting foreign investment and promoting exports are therefore regarded as “the core objectives of most, if not all, paradiplomacies” (Lecours, 2002: 9). Bureaux which represent regions’ interests in other countries tend largely to be regional trade, investment and information centres. These offices, now a familiar sight in leading investment centres such as New York, Shanghai or silicon valley, are a leading example of what has been termed “paradiplomacy”.

An overview of the main forms of paradiplomatic activity highlights the centrality of economic objectives:

1. establishing permanent offices in foreign capitals or centres of commerce and industry – the most expensive and visible form of paradiplomacy;
2. well-promoted and well-publicised trips abroad by regional leaders;
3. short-term, professional fact-finding missions dispatched abroad by regional governments or authorities;
4. trade and investment shows and fairs that feature regional manufacturing trade and technology and publicity campaigns;
5. participation of representatives of regional governments in the work of international conferences or organisations or even in the formal diplomatic representation of their national government in foreign capitals (Duchacek, 1990: 14–15).

Paradiplomacy as a means of bypassing state controls?

Countering the notion that the international activity of regions runs harmoniously in “parallel” with the international relations of states, three main issues can be seen to underpin central governments’ very legitimate concerns over paradiplomatic actions. First, an increase in the number of actors from one nation-state who are engaging in the international realm can confuse the picture of policy preferences which is being conveyed, with a detrimental effect on those particular relationships. Such a lack of intra-state co-ordination on external relations may have much more serious ramifications, and may even risk jeopardising international ties between two nation-states. If a senior-level official makes a controversial public political statement in the country they are visiting concerning human rights, for instance, it matters whether they

are doing so as a party leader, the representative of a regional government or speaking for the country as a whole. "Needless to say, the fine line might not always be understood in all cases" (Gunlicks, 2001: 16). The same logic applies for multiple strands of regional engagement in the EU.

Second, the development of a strong international personality gives regional leaders a prestige that can be used as leverage in negotiations on constitutional and institutional change (Lecours, 2002: 6). The case of Bavaria in Germany provides an example of a strong regional leader being able to increase their own "hitting power" domestically as a result of having strong links internationally (Jeffery, 2000).

Third, the concept of "protodiplomacy" is a variant form of paradiplomacy,¹⁵ where an independent stream of international relations are not run in parallel with the state's international relations, but *against* them, offering the potential to outflank a position adopted by the central state authorities in the international arena. Protodiplomacy consists of "initiatives and activities of a non-central government abroad that graft a more or less separatist message on to its economic, social, and cultural links with foreign nations" (Mitchell and Leicester, 1999: 9). Under these conditions, paradiplomacy can act against and even threaten the integrity of the state (Mitchell, 1995: 287).

But whereas early views of the increased, independent international activity of regions tended to underscore these concerns, and highlight just how detrimental to national foreign policy this could be, in reality, these concerns have in large part failed to materialise. Instead, the contemporary approach to the international relations of regions suggests that "paradiplomacy", by contrast, potentially offers a rationalisation of international engagement. Soldatos (1990) conceptualises paradiplomatic action in terms of "segmentations", both territorial and functional. *Territorial* segmentation proposes the idea that various levels of government are simultaneously active directly in the area of external relations. Whilst this carries with it the potential for disharmony in national approaches to international matters, it also offers the opportunity for an increase in the efficiency of national action in international relations.

Similarly, *functional* segmentation also presents the potential for both discord and enhanced efficiency in overall international relations. External relations in certain policy sectors, notably those which are territorially disaggregated within the home polity, can best be conducted by various tiers of government. Belgium today is one example of a very real issue (Delmartino, 2003).

Paradiplomacy, in the Soldatos conceptualisation therefore, does not always imply a disintegrative phenomenon, but could in fact be part of a rationalisation process in external relations, which could:

1. promote an international interest which is in accordance with the overall national interest;
2. share costs and pool both forces and resources of foreign policy-making with the national government; and
3. look for complementarities (Soldatos, 1990: 42).

Regional representations in the EU: paradiplomacy in action?

The intra-state dimensions of paradiplomacy – economic, cultural and political – underline the view that domestic politics is the frame of reference through which the international presence of regional actors can best be understood. The motivations for engaging with influential actors and the policy process internationally are often overlapping but remain at their core domestically rooted.

A representation in Brussels is one dimension of regional paradiplomacy in action (Moore, 2006; Stegmann McCallion, 2008). The motivations underpinning the work of a Brussels office – economic, cultural and political – are shifting, fluid and overlapping. If we are to understand *what* regional offices in Brussels are, we must extrapolate from this general picture a more sophisticated and nuanced understanding of their role and purpose through an analysis of the intergovernmental relations on Europe within a domestic polity. This is the question to which we will turn in the next Chapter.

But at this point, Table 2.4 offers some pointers as to how to assess the activities of regional representations compared with the more

Table 2.4 Modelling the activities of regional offices: comparison with regional missions overseas

Activity	Regional trade mission
Trade promotion services to business	✓
Partnership searches for business needs	✓
Promotional activities in cultural realm such as exhibitions, receptions	✓
Networking with and exchange of best practices with other like-minded regional offices	✓
Formal role in high politics	×
Informal political communication	✓

traditional vehicles for regional interest mediation in the international realm.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the varied nature of regional representation in the EU. The notion of regional “mobilisation” in and of itself does not provide a systematic framework for analysing the nuances that exist within the current pattern of representative activity within the EU. Ideas on mobilisation have been useful in mapping the contours of the new regional engagement in Brussels, but have little explanatory or predictive power. The weakness of regional mobilisation as a concept lies in its inability to capture the underlying dynamics of the changes brought about by the phenomenon that it seeks to explore.

Ideas on multi-level governance, which build largely on the empirical evidence put forward by the mobilisation thesis, have equally fallen short of developing a robust and systematic theoretical model to capture the inherent dynamics of regional representation in the EU, or to assess fully the wider impacts on European politics which this new phenomenon has ushered in. It is for this reason that this chapter has sought to establish an alternative conceptualisation of regional representations in the EU. Through detailed comparative analysis with related institutional forms, this book will develop an activity-based model of regional representations, one that captures more fully the complex variations in shape, scope and form of the different types of regional representation currently operating in the EU.

One of the key points of differentiation between types of regional representation is how their work operates within the domestic or sending arena. Awareness of the domestic background to regional representations therefore needs to be frontloaded as the initial starting point in our analysis of the dynamics of regional representation. It is to this domestic context that we now turn.

3

Regional Offices and the Domestic Politics of Europe

Since they first emerged on the European scene in the 1980s, regional representations in the EU have carved out a niche role for themselves on the EU institutional landscape and have established a foothold as partners and interlocutors in the decision-making and policy arena which pulsates in Europe's capital city. But this role has developed over time. In many instances, particularly for the constitutional regions, the first wave of EU representations were reproached overstepping the boundaries of their legitimate role in international affairs, and were challenged – in some cases through the courts – by national governments. In other instances, more modest aspirations were quickly met, and the perceived value added by a Brussels base led to their rapid expansion over time.

The “pioneer” representative offices, which were established in the early years of the 1980s, had the hardest task of all. Not only did they have to win acceptance from their national governments of their right to interact directly with the EU institutions on this basis, they also had to develop their own rules of engagement in that interaction. Through trial and error, and pushing the boundaries of acceptability, the first regional representations began to establish what are today commonly accepted as the “rules of the game” in relations with the EU institutions, and in horizontal relations with other regional representations. Their role was to act as path-breakers; subsequent regional representations, even those from other member states, were able to build upon the precedents set by this pioneer group, in terms of function, operation, visibility and legal status.

As we will see below, many of the initial disputes and tensions which prompted regional actors to “mobilise” in Brussels independent of national controls – such as the demand for faster access to EU

information, particularly on forthcoming legislative proposals and financial schemes – were in fact resolved by the setting up of these regional representative offices. The benefits of a regional presence in Brussels were felt almost immediately, and as such, encouraged regional leaderships to maintain their EU offices in the face of mounting pressure from the central state authorities.

Inevitably, the establishment of regional representative offices in the EU proved problematic, as national governments were wary of losing their monopoly on EU relations. Initial tensions between central and regional governments over the scope of autonomous action in Brussels served to shape the operation of regional representations, leading eventually to the present situation of mutual understanding, albeit with some inherent undercurrents of tension.

But these disputes were short-lived and, in fact, no member-state government has been moved to legislate *against* regional representations (Moore, 2008). The gradual recognition of the complementary role of regional representations alongside permanent representations in the EU has facilitated their growth and expansion over the 25 years of their existence, and the expanding remit of their activities. The regional representations which have been active in Brussels since the pioneer era have seen their roles and actions develop enormously over that time (Chapter 4). In turn, the regional authorities from new member states have a very clear model of regional representation and a set of benchmarks to adhere to. Their founding history is therefore very different to that of the first regional representations in the mid-1980s.

This chapter has four substantive parts. The first part provides a brief history of the first regional representations to be established in the EU, and explores the domestic tensions and the EU-level developments which prompted their original creation. Whilst these tensions were unique to the emergent context of the European integration process in the 1980s, regional actors drew heavily on reference points established by their international activities. The second part thus examines the external relations of regions in a global context, looking at how constitutional viewpoints on the legality of sub-state international action have been shaped. Part three considers the legal challenges which were mounted against regional representations, and in each case assesses the outcome of the constitutional debate. Ultimately, the scope and function of sub-state representative activity in Brussels is directly related to the manner in which intergovernmental tensions over EU strategy are resolved within the domestic polity. Part four of this chapter explores

the significance of the historical “institutionalisation” of regional representations, and the impact this will have for the analyses set out in the remainder of this book.

Regional offices and the domestic politics of Europe: the founding era

Before looking at *policy contexts* and assessing the role and function of regional representations through analysis of their activity profiles (Chapter 4), we can explore the *political contexts* within which an independent regional presence in the EU has emerged. Where exactly did the idea of regional representations come from? Why were they set up? And why did so many other regions decide to follow in their wake?

Political contexts: the EU dimension

From the outset, the European integration project was a state-driven process. The Treaty of Rome makes no mention of any tier of authority in Europe other than national governments. As a result, the dynamics of European economic and political integration were widely regarded as being “blind” to the nature and preferences of sub-state authorities within the member states, meaning that the EU does not mandate members’ sub-state arrangements (Lynch, 2004; Marks and Hooghe, 1996; Weatherill, 2005). Historically speaking, the regional footprint in Brussels was only developed about 25 years after the European project was launched. Yet sub-state actors have successfully worked to carve out a strong regional footprint in Brussels over the past quarter century; today, it is rare to find a regional authority within the EU which does *not* have some form of permanent representative presence at the heart of the EU in Brussels. So how did this situation come about?

The answer lies in both developments within member states and at the EU level itself. The first reason is rooted in the development of the EU as a political system over that period. Successive EU Treaty revisions and an expanding policy portfolio, in particular from the Single European Act onwards, saw the EU begin to reach increasingly into fields of policy which, within member states, fell under the competence of regional actors, with regard both to decisional capacity and to implementation (Jeffery, 2007). This opened up multiple new avenues for direct regional engagement in EU decision-making, creating an opportunity framework for regional actors that was radically different to that of the early 1980s. Second, and for largely the same reasons, sub-state actors have progressively been drawn into the business of interest representation

in Europe as a result of cumulative domestic pressures, both political and policy-oriented. Since the 1980s, processes of governance in the EU have developed in a manner conducive to the incorporation of a broad set of interests, be they corporate views, civil society preferences or indeed sub-state considerations (Bouwen, 2002; Greenwood, 2003). The combined force of the resulting pressures on sub-state actors has underpinned the entrenchment in Brussels of a permanently mobilised set of regional interests.

As a result, the opportunity structure through which regional actors can engage with the European decision-making process has shifted considerably over the past 25 years, with emphasis resting firmly on greater and more consistent inclusion of the interests of non-state actors. The openness of the EU interest politics model (Coen, 2007) and its extreme permeability to interest group lobbying – even when compared with the more pluralistic member states (Mazey and Richardson, 2007: 251) – has extended the scope for public as well as private actors, and regions have worked to exploit this situation to their advantage. The creation of a regional presence in and around the European institutions has been a key means of enhancing regional perspectives amongst key decision-makers, and fostering greater understanding of the sub-state implications of EU policies.

The net effect has been a widening of the channels through which a regional set of interests can be articulated in Europe. Alongside regional representative offices, five primary routes can be identified:

- The Committee of the Regions: at the time of its creation, expectations of this regional chamber were high. Suggestions were even made that the CoR might represent a first step towards an institutionalisation of the “Europe of the Regions” (Scott et al., 1994: 58–59). It was regarded as potentially able to lead, over the longer-term, to a major increase in the weight of regional governments in EU policy-making (Goetz, 1995: 104). In reality, however, the CoR has largely proved a disappointment. It has not established itself as an authoritative voice of the regions (Jeffery, 2004: 5), largely on account of its inability to overcome its “birth defects”: severe internal divisions (Hooghe, 1995: 181) and a lack of clear identity and mission (Bloomfield and Moore, 2009; Jeffery, 1997c: 206). Nonetheless, the CoR can be a useful tool for the promotion of regional interests when the Commission seeks allies, such as during the run-up to the December 2005 budget negotiations and the implications for the future of regional policy, or when the Commission lacks a clear view on certain policies and is receptive to well-defined policy proposals (Tatham, 2008: 7).

- The European Commission: as the agenda-setter for the EU, the Commission is the primary focus of the majority of lobbying activity, public and private (Cram, 2001). It has frequently been seen to be open and receptive to the regional lobby. In spite of increasing tensions between the Commission's policy agenda and certain more powerful regional interests in the EU (Jeffery, 2004), the Commission's strategy to play the long-term "credibility game" (Coen, 2007) ensures that its door is firmly open to sub-national interests, thus making it the most important target for regional interests in the EU.
- The European Parliament: the growth in the decision-making powers of the European Parliament in the years since it became a directly elected institution have also expanded the Parliament's position as a target for lobbyists – amongst these, of course, sets of regionally aggregated interests (Bouwen, 2002; 2004). Indeed, for some of the German *Länder*, their representatives in the European Parliament have an explicit lobbying function, channelling region-specific interests through the Parliament into the European decision-making arena (Börzel, 2002: 76).
- The Council of Ministers: a huge new opportunity for the mediation of regional interests in the EU policy process was presented by the conclusion of the Maastricht Treaty on European Union (TEU) in 1991, and the inclusion of a provision to allow regional actors – under strictly controlled conditions – to take on the mantle of member states around the negotiating table in Brussels. Article 146 of the Maastricht Treaty on European Union (TEU) – subsequently renumbered Article 203 by the Amsterdam Treaty, and most recently enshrined as a concept within the Lisbon Treaty of 2009 as Article 9c – allows a member state to send a regional minister to act as its delegate in the Council of Ministers in certain instances. However, this opportunity is not open to all sub-state authorities but only those regions with constitutional powers in their respective domestic systems; that is, the German and Austrian *Länder*, the Spanish Autonomous Communities, the UK's devolved administrations or the Belgian regions of Flanders and Wallonia.
- European networks and associations: a key vehicle for mobilising heavy-hitting regional advocacy coalitions and securing influence with the primary decision-making bodies. The largest of these sets of actors are:
 - CEMR (Council of European Municipalities and Regions): the European federation of national associations of local and regional governments

- AER (Association of European Regions)
- CPMR (Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions)
- EUROCITIES, which lobbies on urban issues
- The above membership organisations are complemented by a growing number of policy and information-sharing networks which tend to draw down major support, even if only initially, from EU initiatives. Examples include ERRIN (the European Regions Research and Innovation Network) or EUREGHA (the European Regional and Local Health Authorities Platform).

This framework maps out the new political space for regional interests in Europe that has developed since the 1980s. The first regional representations were established in a period when opportunities for sub-state actors to gain direct and unmediated access to the European political arena was expanding, at a time when the policy portfolio of the EU was also expanding rapidly into areas of core sub-national responsibility within the member states. Pushed on by wider European geo-political factors since the 1980s, the process of European integration from the Single European Act onwards has significantly increased the competence overlap between the EU and its regions (MacNeill et al., 2007), thus raising potential political returns on strategic regional engagement in the EU policy process.

From the regional perspective, the new EU-level playing field that emerged in the mid-1980s, opened up a rich array of opportunities to access decision-making independently of the nation-state. Each of the above arenas offers access to the EU policy process which is unmediated by the central state authorities of the home member state. Exploiting these channels to the benefit of the home region has become common practice amongst all regions, not just the constitutionally powerful or more innovative actors; indeed, it has become the defining characteristic of a new model of regional and local governmental activity in the European Union (Bullmann, 1997; Tatham, 2008). Whilst the relationship between national governments and sub-state authorities in Brussels needs to be managed sensitively so as not to close off further potential routes to influence – such as domestic procedures for EU policy formulation – unmediated access to the policy process, particularly in the early, informal stage with its emphasis on ideas generation, was recognised by sub-state actors as an opportunity to be embraced.

The decline in support for the idea of a “Europe of the Regions” (Elias, 2008), so popular in the 1980s at around the time of the inception of the first regional representations, presents us with something of a

paradox. Empirical analysis shows that the level of independent and direct representative activity by regions in the EU continues to increase rapidly, despite the widespread discredit of the notion of a Europe of the Regions or a Federal Europe.

We can begin to understand the paradoxical situation of increasing regional representation in the EU at a time when the “Europe of the Regions” idea has fallen out of favour, by first unpacking the real meaning of the concept “Europe of the Regions”. This was always a very malleable concept, used by different actors in pursuit of differing goals. Nonetheless, the one unifying factor inherent in its imagery of a Europe driven not simply by nation-states was that it could be harnessed in pursuit of a regional agenda – greater political participation for regional actors on EU issues, both at the member-state level and at the Brussels level (Moore, 2008). Ultimately, it was in finding solutions to satisfy the varying intensity of demands for regional access that the concept fell apart; no Europe-wide solution could be developed given the increasing diversity of regional actors in the EU.

Political contexts: the member state dimension

As this new opportunity framework was being constructed at the European level, domestic processes of decentralisation and devolution and the subsequent widening of the sphere of regional competences within the member states have served to open up further the scope for regional actors to manage political portfolios independently of national controls (Marks et al., 2008). This has necessarily drawn them into an ongoing dialogue with Europe’s decision-makers and keepers of the EU development assistance monies, in a rapid evolution of what has been termed *multi-level governance* (Marks, 1993).

The development of *extra-state* opportunities for engagement in the EU policy process has run parallel to domestic drives to strengthen and extend *intra-state* opportunity structures for regions to participate in domestic processes of European policy formulation. Furthermore, an increase in the political salience of regions across Europe over the past 20 years has coincided with the growing scope and competence of the European integration project, which now reaches far into the regional sphere of authority. Thus, the two processes of European integration and political decentralisation at the member state level have been mutually reinforcing (Keating, 2008; Loughlin, 2007).

In order therefore to understand the development of the regional “footprint” in Brussels, we need to go back to the initial moment at

which regional representations were established and consider the intra-state drivers which promoted the idea of independent regional representations. The domestic context offers us pointers as to how to understand the original motivations for the development of regional representations in Brussels, and allows us to build upon this consideration for our analysis of the contemporary shape and role of regional offices in the EU. To be sure, their scope and remit has evolved over time, but no radical changes to the basic principles of regional representation have occurred. What we can see instead is the subtle strengthening over time of the regional agenda on Europe, for both external and internal factors, as noted above.

Of course, the “pioneer” regional representations in the mid-1980s – offices from German and British regions – had no EU models on which to base their actions, but instead, drew from national reference points of territorial interest mediation as a means to structure their operational remit, all the while seeking to deliver benefits to the sponsoring authorities in their member states. The scope of these models is assessed in the domestic narrative, below. For the regional authorities which established their bases in Brussels later, reference to the benchmarks set by these pioneer offices was inevitable, though again, their own domestic interests on Europe helped to shape their scope and purpose in notably different ways. For regional actors from new and acceding member states, there is now a mass of different forms of territorial interest mediation to draw on, along with the opportunity to set up individual partnership arrangements with more established regional representations. Transferable models and social learning opportunities from around the EU therefore shape the contemporary founding process more than reference points from the domestic contexts.

Analysis of the establishment of the representations of regional authorities in the new member states illustrates a new founding context: a wealth of benchmarks and opportunities to learn from best practice through constructive – and mutually beneficial – partnerships, as well as social learning. The pattern was already set that regions *should* have a presence in Brussels, therefore helping to overcome any objections raised by national governments.

Push vs. pull factors

We can examine the mobilising forces which underpinned the first regional representations in Brussels in terms of two sets of motivating factors: push factors versus pull factors.

“Push” factors suggest pressures from the bottom up, located therefore within the domestic polity, which encourage a regional government to undertake permanent, extra-state representation. In the 1980s, the German *Länder* opened permanent bases in Brussels in an effort to protect their constitutionally enshrined competences in both administration and legislation. By undertaking direct action in Brussels, the German *Länder* sought to mitigate some of the negative domestic repercussions of national decision-making, and represent a pro-active, policy-shaping approach to longer-term engagement with the EU. Their motivations can therefore be classified as evidence of a *resource push*.

By contrast, UK regions’ decision to employ what limited resources they had at the time in running a Brussels base was an effort to promote their individual regional objectives and to strengthen their own role domestically. The European policy process offered scope for innovative, British regional actors to exploit the EC for their own development, particularly in being able to access structural funding for the benefit of their own region (MacNeill et al., 2007). Indeed, the EU representation of the Scottish region Strathclyde claimed to have attracted £500 million into the area largely on the basis of their networking efforts in Brussels (John, 1994c: 912). Their engagement in Brussels in the form of regional representations therefore substantiates a *resource pull* thesis. Resource pull suggests that the decision to establish a permanent Brussels representative office was, at the outset at least, driven by the scale of the resources available to regions from the EU, and the ability to influence the distribution of those resources (Marks et al., 1996: 43).

These sets of motivational factors are not mutually exclusive, and aspects of both may well have had an impact in regions’ decisions to establish a Brussels representation. Certainly, the draw of direct and unmediated access to the distributors of European monies in the mid-1980s – ahead of the 1988 Structural Funds review which saw allocations decentralised from the European Commission to the member states, that is, national governments – was a large factor for all EU regions in their decision to mount independent representation in Europe; the “resource pull” of Brussels certainly had an influence on the German *Länder* alongside “resource push” factors (Jeffery, 1997b: 189). Similarly, the “resource push” thesis may have played a role, albeit a very marginal one, in the decision of UK regions to locate in Brussels; the establishment of a UK regional presence in Brussels at this time represented a display of institutional confidence in the face of fiscal austerity, a “culture of Conservative scorn” for the powers of local government and the

possible reorganisation of many of the strategic powers of local authorities in Britain (John, 1994a: 739).

However, the major pattern of motivations for the original establishment of regional representation in Brussels divide clearly along the lines of conflict set out below.

Table 3.1 shows clearly that both “resource push” and “resource pull” motivations constituted important independent variables in determining the early pattern of regional mobilisation in Brussels through the decision to open a presence in the city.

This framework for analysis was developed to capture the initial dynamics of regional “mobilisation” in the European Union, within a very different policy and institutional environment than the EU currently presents. It is interesting, then, to note that the core dynamics of mobilisation through a regional representation can still best be understood through recourse to the domestic polity. Rather than helping today to interpret the mobilisation phenomenon itself, these two clearly identifiable sets of motivating pressures – resource push and resource pull factors – underpin the day to day nature of that regional representation as a political process. Whether regions are “pulled” or “pushed” in their regional engagement depends on their domestic constitutional resources; those regions with autonomous legislative capacities, the

Table 3.1 Motivations of German and British regions in establishing offices in Brussels, mid-1980s

	Resource push	Resource pull
Germany	Concerns to protect domestic competences A fear of a “hollowing out” of the <i>Länder</i> , to become mere administrative units Desire to move beyond view of EC as threat to the <i>Länder</i> ’s “institutional self-interest” and to engage fully with European policy	European funding opportunities
Britain	Display of institutional confidence in face of central government hostile to regional authority	European funding opportunities EC viewed consistently at regional level as an opportunity rather than a threat

so-called “constitutional” or “legislative” regions, engage with the EU arena as a means of deriving the necessary political goods – informational, ideational and strategic – to interact effectively within domestic intergovernmental policy negotiations. In those EU regions with autonomous legislative capacity, direct engagement in Brussels is a means by which to maximize the resources which a regional authority can hold at its disposal for future interactions with the respective national government. As we shall see as we move on to consider the activities of the various types of regional representations in the EU, their national, constitutionally defined power therefore “pushes” them to engage in the Brussels arena in order to fulfil their domestic role. In those regions which do not have a legislative dimension, the aim of Brussels representation is primarily to interact with like-minded regions, largely with a strategic view to engaging in EU-funded assistance programmes for economic development and the transfer of knowledge and skills et cetera. The lure of these financial resources “pulls” such regions to operate at the EU level.

The domestic narrative

Germany

The establishment of German regional representations in the shape of “*Länder*” EU offices illustrates clearly the interplay of increasing levels of domestic tension over European responsibility and the expanding opportunity space for regional actors in the EU. In fact, German regional offices in Brussels were established out of a very real domestic political need for the *Länder* to have greater access to EC/EU policy developments, and to counteract inadequacies within the German system for the provision of EU information. Their emergence is thus tied to the overall history of *Länder* involvement in European affairs.

Germany’s membership of the European Communities (EC) presented challenges to the domestic federal system from the outset. The *Länder* were affected particularly strongly by the process of European integration because, like the federation, they were continuously losing policy authority to the EC; however, unlike the Federal Government, the *Länder* had no direct role in the decision-making organs of the EC, especially the Council of Ministers, and, in addition, were obliged to implement European law in the Federal Republic (Naß, 1989: 184).

As the German federal system distributes authority not simply by policy area, but also by *function* within the policy-making process, most policy areas are subject to some form of shared competence

(Schmidt, 2003: 62–65). The practice of co-determination is thus a common feature of German federalism; through the territorially constructed upper chamber, the *Bundesrat*, the *Länder* are able to participate directly in policy-making at the centre (Deeg, 1995: 209). However, as a result of the transfer of both federal and shared competencies to the European level, the *Länder* were gradually being marginalised in the domestic policy-making process, as they were being deprived of their co-determination rights in federal decision-making (Börzel, 2002: 53).

This internal “participation gap” prompted the *Länder* consistently to press for greater information and participation rights in domestic processes of European policy formulation. Their greatest fear was losing significant powers as a result of European integration to the extent where they would be “hollowed out”, becoming mere administrative units (Haas, 1988: 616).

An additional concern related to the view of European policy as solely a federal issue. Domestically, the treatment of European policy as an element of foreign policy meant that the Federal Government could exercise its monopoly in that area, and had sole responsibility for Treaty-making and EC-level policy formulation. Two further constitutional provisions were used to support the Federal Government’s reluctance to involve the *Länder* in European policy – or foreign policy – formulation:

1. Article 32 of the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*), which gives the Federal Government the sole right to represent the Federal Republic of Germany abroad; and
2. Article 24 of the Basic Law, which empowered the Federal Government alone to transfer sovereign power to intergovernmental institutions.¹⁶ This constitutional provision did give the *Länder* the power to sign external treaties, provided the content fell within the remit of their domestic competencies, and that the Federal Government was in agreement. Thus, the article provided no clear legal basis for *Länder* to open offices in Brussels.

Given the very different viewpoints of the *Länder* and the Federal Government over the appropriate constitutional process for EU decision-making, allowing the *Länder* greater information and participation rights in the process of European policy formulation has been a constant source of friction between the two levels of authority in Germany. As a result, procedures have been developed only incrementally.

Länder EU information and participation

Regional rights to information on EC information had steadily improved within Germany since the signing of the Treaty of Rome in 1957, yet were only amended as a result of bottom-up pressure on the national government to improve the *Länder* access to the EC process. Demands for both early information and greater participation rights on European matters formed the basis of their repeated claims on the EU as a legitimate sub-state policy space. Particularly as the EC's activities increased during the 1970s, awareness of the growing gap between the rights of the *Länder* to participate within domestic processes for the formulation of European policy and the impact of EC legislation on their domestic role and competencies, was becoming sharper.

The Single European Act (SEA) marked a significant turning point in the domestic intergovernmental relations of Europe. The relaunching of the European integration process under Jacques Delors brought EU encroachment on *Länder* authority to a new level; European legislation was increasingly impinging upon their policy autonomy (Deeg, 1995: 203). In response to these unprecedented challenges, the *Länder* mounted a much more concerted effort to win greater participation rights. The *Bundesrat* made their consent to the domestic ratification of the SEA conditional on accompanying measures within Germany to provide greater participation rights within the domestic process of European policy formulation (Haas, 1988: 617). At this point, the *Bundesrat* acquired legally binding rights to participate in European policy formulation for the first time.

1. The Federal Government was obliged to provide the *Bundesrat* with comprehensive information on EC issues of *Länder* interest, as early as possible;
2. On issues affecting policy areas under the exclusive jurisdiction of the *Länder*, or those which substantially affected their interests, the *Bundesrat* could present a formal position to the Federal Government, as opposed to merely holding an informal hearing. The Federal Government could then only adopt a different stance where it felt significant foreign or integration policy goals were at stake;
3. In such instances, the Federal Government would be obliged to provide full justification for choosing to depart from the *Bundesrat* position;
4. The Federal Government had to include *Länder* representatives in the German delegations to working groups of the Council and Commission, in cases where the *Bundesrat* had the right to adopt a formal position. (Börzel, 2002: 66; Deeg, 1995: 204; Haas, 1988: 617).

Essentially, the *Bundesrat* procedure marked a step change in the quality of the *Länder* interaction with the Federal Government. There were signs, therefore, that the Federal Government was coming to accept the idea of "European domestic policy", widely promoted by the *Länder* at the time (Naß, 1989: 182).

The direct route to information and participation

These incremental steps to improve the flow of EC information between the levels of authority within Germany had, from the outset, been complemented by an institution which had been devised as a means for the *Länder* to access EC information directly, the *Länder Observer* (*Länderbeobachter*). Set up in the then German capital of Bonn, 1956 during the process of German negotiations on the Treaty of Rome, its primary task was defined as being to gather information on EC affairs and to pass this on to the *Bundesrat* and the *Länder* governments (Hrbek, 1991: 89); the emphasis being on speeding up the information flow, and ensuring the *Länder* had timely access to important documentation (Dette-Koch, 1997: 169).

However, by the time that the Single European Act was being negotiated, the *Observer* had come under increasing criticism for a number of structural inadequacies.

- First, the *Länder Observer's* role was only very modest at best. It operated a very small office, and had few resources to follow EC legislative developments in any great detail (Bauer, 1996; Strohmeier, 1988). Furthermore, the *Observer's* heavy workload made providing a comprehensive intelligence-gathering service for the *Länder* virtually impossible (Michelmann, 1990: 224). As a result, the effectiveness of the institution remained limited (Hrbek, 1991: 90). Thus, this channel for the *Länder* to access necessary EU information also failed to meet their growing needs for timely intelligence.
- Second, there was growing recognition of the need for the *Länder* to profile their interests in Brussels individually and to seek out EU information pertinent to their own specific needs. Clearly, the interests of the *Länder* in EC developments were not necessarily homogeneous; in areas such as accessing structural funds or attracting inward investment, for instance, the interests of individual *Länder* were likely to be in competition with one another (Borchann, 1988: 218).
- Third, rather than acting as a direct *representation* of *Länder* interests in the EC, it was felt that the *Länder Observer* was ultimately limited to a passive role in European matters (Fastenrath, 1990: 126), providing

information only “downstream” to the *Bundesrat* and the *Länder* governments. It was not its role to influence European policy-making through lobbying activities (Goetz, 1995: 103). In fact, “upstream” information provision, or even lobbying was impossible, given the *Observer*’s very limited resources (Michelmann, 1990: 224).

- Fourth, the *Observer* was physically located in Bonn, where it could have immediate access to the *Bundesrat*, and to the *Länder* governments through their representations to the federal capital. It only had a very small branch office in Brussels, a factor which was felt to hinder further its upstream engagement and influence in the EU (Stöger, 1988: 117). This was a sphere in which the *Länder* were increasingly keen to become active as the single market project progressed (Bulmer, Jeffery and Paterson, 2000: 33). Differences in policy preferences amongst the *Länder* reinforced this drive for independent profiling in Brussels.

The establishment of regional offices

It was against this background of ongoing intergovernmental tensions over the domestic politics of Europe that *Länder* offices in Brussels were first established. The inadequacies of existing domestic institutions and procedures had become glaringly apparent by the mid-1980s. Indeed, the negotiations over the SEA showed in particular that even the newest procedures by which the Federal Government informed the *Länder* about European integration issues did not leave them enough time to have appropriate influence on the process of consultations at the EC level (Neunreither, 2001: 97). Direct action in Brussels thus became seen as an increasingly attractive means of counteracting the structural hindrances to effective engagement presented by the existing system.

The debates on securing a greater role for the *Länder* in European affairs which were conducted in connection with ratification of the SEA proved decisive in determining the future of the direct representation of the *Länder* in Brussels. So whilst negotiations over the establishment of a new *Bundesrat* procedure to shore up the new constitutional role of the regional chamber on domestic EU decisions focused on improving internal co-ordination and communications mechanisms, the *Länder* were simultaneously mounting a parallel strategy to strengthen their direct engagement in Brussels.

The first line of attack mounted by the *Länder* was to seek to overhaul significantly the *Observer*. Clearly, this institution did not meet the *Länder*’s demands for a stronger role in European policy (Strohmeier, 1988: 635). Demands were made for the *Observer* to be given more

powers, and to be provided with an office within Germany's Permanent Representation in Brussels (Bauer, 1996: 417).

However, the Federal Government argued that incorporating the *Länder Observer* into the Permanent Representation would only be possible by making it responsible to the German Foreign Ministry, thereby effectively bringing the institution under their control (Burgsmüller, 2003: 4). The *Länder* saw this as a bid to curtail their own autonomous activities in the sphere of European policy. Thus, the *Observer* was no longer regarded as a viable option for securing the future protection of their interests.

Inability to reform the institution of the *Observer* into an appropriate vehicle for the *Länder's* needs on EC matters therefore prompted the second line of attack: the establishment of direct *Länder* representations in Brussels (Bauer, 1996: 417; Neunreither, 2001: 97; Zumschlinge and Sierigk, 1994: 542). The pioneer *Länder* of the Saarland and the "Hanse" coalition office of Hamburg, Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Saxony (*Gemeinsames Büro für die Länder Hamburg, Niedersachsen und Schleswig-Holstein*) opened Brussels offices in 1985 (Bauer, 1996: 417). Indeed, the introduction of a direct, individual *Länder* representation in Brussels was regarded as counteracting the inefficiencies and inadequacies of existing forms of direct representation of their interests at the EC level. They had been established to fulfil a very clear purpose from the perspective of domestic politics.

A readily deployable institutional model? Länder representations to the Federation

When they were establishing their EU representations, the German *Länder* were able to draw on the model established within Germany's federal system: their representative offices to the Federal Government (*Vertretungen beim Bund*). These served as a reference point and benchmark as the first EU offices were being established, particularly in terms of staffing arrangements and their ability to make skilled use of *soft* instruments of political influence, such as networking, lobbying and intelligence gathering.¹⁷

The offices to the federation, first in Bonn and now Berlin, provide the German *Länder* with a strong sense of self-interest and awareness of the value of maintaining permanent representations beyond their borders. Whilst not explicitly regulated by Germany's constitution, the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*), their work is part and parcel of the complex web of policy-making processes which constitute Germany's complex system of co-operative federalism. What this effectively means is that

the role played by these offices is crucial to the effective functioning of Germany's federal system.

The *Länder* missions to the federal capital today have two main roles: policy-oriented and representational. Their policy-oriented role is to mediate individual preferences into federal decision-making processes, working closely with both chambers of the national parliament, and horizontally with their 15 counterparts. Their representational role covers exhibitions in their public spaces, promotional events particularly on national days, and information events to delegations of regionally-based interests such as business and community or school groups. These do at times promote a more subtle policy-related agenda, for instance when exhibitions highlight geographical or environmentally sensitive areas that demand to be preserved, but in general, the representational role of *Länder* representations to the Federation is a quasi-diplomatic function that remains in large part non-politicised.

Awareness of the dual role that such extra-territorial "missions" can undertake in a broader political setting – both policy-oriented and representational – came to shape the operational remit of the EU representations of the *Länder*, and as such, laid down an important benchmark in the subsequent development of regional representations from other member states.

The UK

The second set of "pioneer" regional representations in the EU, British regional offices, were established not on the basis of a *resource push* but primarily as a result of *resource pull* pressures. The early British representative offices in Brussels were set up not on the basis of the German precedent, but rather, at around the same time, and as a result of a very different set of pressures, all of which served cumulatively to draw them into the Brussels arena.

In the absence of any constitutionally enshrined rights within the domestic system, British local and regional actors regarded European integration from the outset as something of an opportunity. These, then, sought to engineer a means by which to maximise the potential benefits of a robust strategy on European issues.

At the sub-state level in the UK, the capacity for independent and autonomous engagement in the EU was weak due to the internal distribution of competencies. However, the label given to the UK in the 1980s and early 1990s as one of the most centralised political systems in Western Europe was somewhat misleading. In fact, the state was

characterised by a very complex pattern of both horizontal and vertical fragmentation, a high degree of administrative decentralisation (John, 1997: 132), with the territorial distribution of authority varying markedly between different policy sectors (Scott et al., 1994: 53).

In spite of this differentiated pattern, regions in the UK did however have only a very weakly defined role on Europe. Historically the key players in channelling regional interests into the UK's line on European negotiations were the "Territorial Offices" – the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland Offices – which were endowed with substantial powers of their own as "junior" departments in UK government (Keating and Waters, 1985: 86). Their role was strengthened substantially through ministerial representation at Cabinet level. Indeed, for years, the Conservative party appeased Scottish and Welsh demands for the devolution of powers that both domestically and within the EU their best representation was to be gained through a Secretary of State with full membership of a cabinet, rather than through a regional parliament or assembly (Holliday, 1997: 227).¹⁸ Specific *English* regional interests were not represented at Cabinet level; instead, such interests were channelled through the respective sectoral ministries. Given that any divergent approaches to Europe within the UK's regions were contained within this domestic framework, there was only very limited scope for autonomous action in the EU.

It was therefore perhaps not surprising that it was at the sub-regional level in the UK, amongst local government actors, that the idea of direct European-level engagement first came to fruition. Like in Germany, it was the SEA and the completion of the Single Market, which led to a qualitative step change in intergovernmental relations on Europe. The scope for new regional action in connection with the SEA represented a chance for local government in the UK to counteract what was perceived as a "culture of Conservative scorn for local government" (John, 1997: 135). Successive Conservative governments during the 1980s had been gradually centralising decision-making powers, leading to an erosion of local autonomy. These policies had consciously sought to fragment structures for local government – the so-called "divide and rule" policy (Scott et al., 1994: 52). "Europe" therefore offered new scope for authoritative action; unlike in Germany, the ongoing process of European integration was never viewed as a threat by the regional tier of authority in the UK, but rather, as an opportunity.

By the mid-1980s, increasing numbers of local authorities had come to regard the EU as a legitimate field of activity in which both to undertake autonomous initiatives and to promote their own policy agendas.

As a result, certain more enterprising local authorities began coming up with new and innovative ways of improving their engagement with Brussels, such as buying in external expertise on the EC (Jones, 1985: 96; Mawson and Gibney, 1985: 151).

On a practical level, there were two major catalysts which underpinned the emergence of the first British regional representations in Brussels. First, frictions between tiers of authority within the domestic polity over the proper role of sub-state government were compounded by party-political incongruence at the time, with major metropolitan areas largely Labour-controlled, under a national Conservative administration. This was of particular relevance to many of the key regional players in the UK at the time, the large metropolitan borough and city councils: two of these – Birmingham City Council and Strathclyde Regional Council¹⁹ – were some of the first regional entities from the UK to set up in Brussels. The hostility of central government to regional decision-makers at the time contrasted sharply with the much more welcoming atmosphere of the European Commission, encouraging elements of British local government to speak out in favour of “bypassing” central government and dealing directly with Brussels (John, 1997: 135).

Second, beyond these political tensions, the financial incentives – *resource pull* – of the Brussels “marketplace” were ultimately more important. As one former practitioner active in the “pioneer” era of UK regional representation in Brussels “It was a question of the money stream; the EU was another game to be played”.²⁰ Because of financial constraints on British local government in the 1980s, the European Community was often associated with economic development (John, 1994c: 909). Importantly, this economic view of the EC was reflected in organisational structures. For instance, the “European” section of Birmingham City Council at the time was located within the treasury and accounts management team; EU policy was for a long time therefore purely regarded as a financial and accounting function.²¹

Whilst the decision to go to the expense of opening a regional office in Brussels represented an apparent act of conspicuous consumption in a period of fiscal austerity (John, 1994b: 2), in the wider context of new approaches to financial management below the central state level, the establishment of Brussels offices is more understandable. The mid-1980s saw a shift in the workings of regional government in the UK, with the introduction of a “challenge and bid” culture in public spending encouraging strong competition amongst regional authorities. This new ethos strengthened the innovation of local or city authorities in looking to Brussels as an alternative source of funding. Despite the absence of any

“tried and tested” and rapidly deployable institutional model from the domestic context, such as German *Länder* delegations to the federal capital a core staff of European-focused city administration officials was able to “mobilise” the combined resources necessary to underpin a Brussels office. A permanent presence in the city was regarded as one way to tap into under-exploited money streams (MacNeill et al., 2007).

Tensions within the domestic arena certainly help to inform our understanding of how the idea of regional representations in the EU first came into being. Whilst “push” and “pull” factors can still provide explanatory power when exploring the creation of new regional representations in the EU, they are complemented today by the force of historical precedent, and the model of successful regional interaction that is presented by the wealth of representative offices that function in and around the formal EU institutions. Regions from the new member states which have joined the EU since 2004, for instance, continue to be “pulled” into the Brussels arena due to the opportunities presented by the potential returns – financial and ideational – from long-term representative engagement, but also due to the weight of precedent set by regional actors from the EU15 member states. For many, as we shall see, their own foundation was supported either through trans-national partnerships with EU15 regions and their EU offices, or through the transfer of “soft” skills on EU representation, for example by seconding an official to the Brussels representation of an EU15 region as a means of learning the strategic approach required and then applying it to the home region. Complementary, then, to the *resource push* and *resource pull* thesis, we discuss the idea of a “logic of appropriateness” within contemporary regional representative activity in the EU as we move into empirical assessments in the following chapters.

The domestic narrative can help to position the emergence of the idea of regional representations in the EU as something of a tool to help solve domestic issues. How, though, were these independent offices received by national administrations? Their emergence certainly posed a challenge to the hegemonic position of national governments as the primary state actors in European integration. Indeed, in the initial “founding moment” of regional representations, there was something of a struggle to achieve a balance of representational power.

Constitutional challenges

The establishment of autonomous representations of regional interests in the EU provided many national authorities with something of a

constitutional headache. At the outset, it was not clear to the central state authorities from any EU member state as to how they ought to manage this new phenomenon. Unpracticed in the field of foreign relations, these new operations were established largely in something of a “constitutional gray zone” (Marks and Hooghe, 2001: 87). In the early “founding era” of regional representations in the mid-1980s, many regional actors encountered open hostility from their national governments as they began to set up a direct presence in Brussels. As we shall see, the German federal government officially recognised *Länder* offices only in 1993. The foreign ministries of the Spanish and Austrian governments were initially uncomfortable with their regions’ offices. The Italian government and constitutional court blocked Italian regions from setting up independent offices in Brussels until 1996 (Desideri and Santantonio, 1996). The Italian government also opposed a plan by the largely German-speaking region, Alto-Adige, to set up an office with Austrian South Tirol (Balme, 1996). However, neither the French nor the British government objected when French Picardie and British Essex set up a joint office in the late 1980s. National governments were not in principle against trans-national co-operation among sub-national governments, but they draw the line when they perceived a threat to national unity (Marks et al., 1996).

Despite the shadow of constitutional challenges, in only a small number of member states was a legal challenge mounted. Here, the issue of providing a robust legal basis for regional representative offices in Brussels came only as a result of constitutional court rulings.

Germany – from paradiplomacy to European domestic policy

The constitutional history of Germany’s regional representations in the EU is significant. Not only did the domestic legal viability of German offices set the standard for other regions as they sought to establish an independent presence in the EU themselves, but, with their own far-reaching independent constitutional rights, the German *Länder* have always been seen as in the vanguard of the mobilisation and institutionalisation of sub-national rights of participation in the EU. Thus, the German model served as something of a benchmark internationally, and provided regions in other member states with a reference point, essentially giving them the confidence to fly in the face of national governmental constraints on direct EU representation.

The German Länder representations and “paradiplomacy”

The decision of the first “wave” of German *Länder* (the Saarland, Hesse and Hanse coalition of Hamburg, Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Saxony)

to establish a representative office in Brussels was greeted with both caution and scepticism by the federal government authorities.

The establishment of the first *Länder* offices in Brussels provided uncomfortable evidence, as some observers saw it, of the development of an independent strand of *Länder* foreign policy. Politicians from the Federal Government and certain sections of the media accused the *Länder* of operating an ancillary foreign policy (*Nebenaußenpolitik*) or “paradiplomacy”, detrimental to the EU policy of Germany as a whole. Given the backdrop of ratification of the SEA, a Treaty with widespread popular support within Germany, the *Länder* were criticised for being particularist, provincial and even hostile towards European integration. Popular sentiment turned against *Länder* claims for a greater EU role as a result of perceived posturing in Brussels, along with *Länder* intransigence during the long and difficult negotiations to ratify the SEA (Börzel, 2002: 67).

More significantly, the opening of autonomous *Länder* government offices in Brussels was met with displeasure by the German Federal Foreign Ministry, the *Auswärtiges Amt*. Relations between the two sides degenerated into an open spat (Hahn, 1986) which created a great deal of public interest (Borchmann, 1988: 218; Fechtner, 1992: 157). The establishment of *Länder* offices in Brussels thus served to further damage relations between levels of government within Germany which had already become strained as disputes over the proper role of the *Länder* in European policy formulation continued.

Party politics played only a marginal role in the drive to establish independent *Länder* representations in Brussels. There were suggestions made at the time within Germany that establishing *Länder* offices in Brussels was party-politically motivated, indicative of the dissatisfaction of Social Democrat-governed *Länder*, such as Saarland – one of the “pioneer” regional offices in Brussels – with the direction of federal European policy since Kohl’s Christian Democrats had taken office in 1982 (Hahn, 1986: 105). Yet the additional intergovernmental tensions which would result from the opening of the *Länder* offices were felt to be justified by *Länder* elites right across the political spectrum. In 1987, when the Rhineland-Palatinate opened its representation in Brussels, its Minister President, Bernhard Vogel, who was politically aligned with the Federal Government at the time, regretted the establishment of such offices; he expressed a preference for exclusive federal representation of German interests in Brussels. However, Vogel acknowledged that there was no real alternative, given the increased importance of EC decisions for the *Länder* and the unsatisfactory interaction with the Federal Government on EC matters (Michelmann, 1990: 228).

The initial unease with which these *Länder* representative offices were greeted was due largely to the fear on the part of the central government that they would undermine the ability of Germany to “speak with one voice” in international negotiations, and that the complexity of the German position would serve to allow Germany’s partners to broker sub-optimal policy compromises – effectively undermining the national interest (Bauer, 1996: 417; Sturm and Pehle, 2001: 88).

More significantly, the move by the *Länder* to establish representations in Brussels was criticised for being unconstitutional. Until this point, the Federal Government had traditionally prevented the representation of *Länder* interests beyond the nation-state through its insistence on a monopoly over the international representation of German interests, as set out in Article 32 of the Basic Law (Michelmann, 1990: 227; see also Section 2.2.1). Given the legal uncertainty thus overshadowing any attempt by the *Länder* to represent German – albeit regional – interests internationally, by opening representational offices in Brussels, the *Länder* contrived to make their offices more acceptable to the central state authorities. This they did by essentially “fudging” the basis upon which the representations operated.

Some *Länder* went to the trouble of explicitly *not* establishing these offices as part of the domestic *Land* administrations, but giving them instead a private legal operational basis, at arm’s length from the *Länder* governments (Neunreither, 2001: 135). For instance, the “Hanse Office” coalition, which opened in 1985 and originally encompassed the north German *Länder* of Hamburg, Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Saxony, operated as a Belgian registered company (Mitchell, 1995: 292). The first iteration of the North Rhine-Westphalia representation in Brussels was a joint venture involving the *Land* government and the regional Westdeutsche Landesbank (*WestLB*), with the bank acting merely as a “front” (Dorn, 1991: 333); the arrangement provided an appropriate legal basis, should the constitutional legitimacy of the Brussels operation ever be challenged (Dorn, 1991: 333). Drawing on paradiplomatic action elsewhere, this model effectively replicated a system already in operation for *Länder* investment overseas (Naß, 1989), whereby offices of a *Land* bank or a *Land*-owned organisation had been set up, primarily in the US and Japan, to promote regional industrial causes and attract inward investment to the region.

Despite the fact that *Länder* had already begun opening overseas offices²² – largely for trade and economic purposes – Brussels offices presented the German establishment with a fundamental new question: did these representations contravene the provisions of Germany’s

constitution, the Basic Law? Were they evidence of a parallel – and hence unconstitutional – foreign policy? Consequently, were Brussels offices breaking the law?

The legal uncertainty over the viability of *Länder* representations in Brussels was regarded as something of an opportunity space and, between 1985 and 1989, all 11 of the German *Länder* opened representative offices in the city (Bauer, 1996: 417). In defiance of the Federal Government's position on *Länder* EU offices, both Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg opted to operate their own Brussels representations on a public legal basis from the outset (Dorn, 1991: 334). Lack of a legal challenge from the Federal Government encouraged all *Länder* gradually to move also to operations based on public law, illustrating clearly that their offices were in fact part of the home administrations (Fastenrath, 1990).

Establishing a constitutional-legal basis for the Länder EU offices

But whilst the Federal Government never mounted a direct, constitutional challenge to prevent the *Länder* from operating in Brussels, they did at least try and control their space for autonomous action (Burgsmüller, 2003). Using a strict interpretation of the constitutional limitation of direct foreign engagement of the *Länder*, the Federal Government attempted to impose specific restrictions on the activities of the *Länder* offices in Brussels. In line with the idea of the functional “segmentation” of foreign relations, seen as a means to use regional representation as part of a wider strategy to enhance foreign relations (see Chapter 2), the *Länder* EU offices were to focus solely on gathering information in Brussels, promoting the *Land's* economy, assisting with EC projects in their home *Land* and arranging information visits from interested *Land* parties (Fastenrath, 1990: 128). By sticking to these areas of activity, the Federal Government argued, the constitutionally-regulated monopoly on foreign relations would not be impinged upon.

However, the Federal Government was ultimately unable to impose this set of restrictions on Brussels offices. This was because the *Länder* refused to let themselves be dissuaded from their own vision of *Länder* representations by accusations of *Nebenaußenpolitik*. Their central argument in response was that “European policy” was not the same as foreign policy in the traditional sense, but rather European *domestic* policy (*europäische Innenpolitik*), (Hrbek, 1988: 147; Neunreither, 2001: 135), an argument which gradually won acceptance.

The intense constitutional-legal debate provoked by this issue did not find a solution in law until 1993, some eight years after the first German *Land* office in Brussels was established. An appropriate opportunity for

providing the *Länder* offices in Brussels with a secure legal status came as the twin challenges of the Maastricht Treaty on European Union and German unification brought about the drafting of a new constitutional formulation of Germany's relationship with the EC. This was to be written into the Basic Law as a new "Article on Europe" (Article 23²³), offering the *Länder* the chance to establish a more concrete basis for many of the practices on European policy which had evolved over time, amongst these, the operation of *Länder* EU representations. Despite the fact that *Länder* offices had been operational in Brussels for over six years by this point, the question of their legal status had always hung over their work. As there had been no legal ruling or a test case to challenge their legitimacy, no one had ever clarified for certain that these offices did not significantly impact upon the external representation monopoly of the Federal Government,²⁴ as guaranteed by Article 32 of the Basic Law (Dorn, 1991: 333). Finally, allowing by law for the *Länder* governments to establish permanent relations with international bodies, particularly the EU, would ultimately remove the last taboo over the European relations of the *Länder* (Fastnerath, 1990: 157).

The *Länder* leaderships were pushing for a specific reference to the *Länder* offices in Brussels within the revised text of the Basic Law as an important symbolic step in the recognition of European domestic politics, and indeed to help counter negative public opinion on the role of Brussels offices. A leading politician from the Rhineland Palatinate argued forcefully that inclusion into the new text of the Basic Law would help to show citizens that the role of the *Länder* in Europe went far beyond provincialism, and would help to emphasise, rather, the benefits of autonomous *Länder* activity on European matters (Gemeinsame Verfassungskommission, 1992a). The Commission members drawn from Germany's lower chamber of parliament, the Bundestag, were prepared to agree to the *Länder* demands on this point, provided that the offices in Brussels would not be *diplomatic representations*, and that relations between the *Länder* and the European Union would therefore not acquire a status recognised in international law (Gemeinsame Verfassungskommission, 1992a).

The legal experts who gave evidence to the Commission argued that German federalism would not be negatively impacted by the permanent presence of *Länder* representations externally, as long as the *Länder* were acting within the boundaries of their own areas of responsibility and the basic structure of the constitution was not affected by these activities (Gemeinsame Verfassungskommission, 1992d). If anything, the multiplication of contacts between the various tiers of government

within Germany and international organisations brought about by permanent *Länder* representations, could well enhance overall relations, leading to an “optimalisation” of Germany’s interests within the organisation in question; this was particularly true of the European Union (Gemeinsame Verfassungskommission, 1992d).

Yet despite the increasing acceptance of “European domestic policy” as a concept and the resultant need for *Länder* engagement in Brussels, a compromise was brokered at the last minute that removed a constitutional text on *Länder* EU representations.

Familiar intergovernmental sensitivities came to the fore during the closing debates, and suspicions that the *Länder* were indeed aiming to institutionalise a supplementary, “second strand of foreign policy”²⁵ were high amongst both Federal Government and *Bundestag* representatives on the Commission (Gemeinsame Verfassungskommission, 1992b). Dropping demands for the inclusion of regulation of Brussels *Länder* offices within the Basic Law was therefore a move intended to reassure the political elite that this was not an ultimate policy aim (Schmalenbach, 1996: 182). In the overall package of trade-offs, the *Bundesrat* representatives on the Joint Commission instead gave priority to a related issue under discussion – the right of *Länder* to send a *Bundesrat*-nominated representative to the Council of Ministers, whenever the exclusive competences of the *Länder* are concerned (Schmalenbach, 1996: 182). This provision operationalised in German law the provision included in the Maastricht Treaty as Article 146 (Jeffery, 1997a).

Thus in the end, legal recognition for the offices in Brussels came about not through a constitutional provision, but by means rather of an Executive Agreement between the *Länder* and Federal Governments, known as an “implementing law” or *Ausführungsgesetz*. The EUZBLG, or “Law on the Co-operation between the Federal Government and the *Länder* in European Union matters”²⁶ gave fuller flesh to the constitutional framework established by Article 23, and effectively meant that for the first time, the *Länder* offices in Brussels became statutorily recognised.

Paragraph 8 of the EUZBLG states that:

The *Länder* can maintain permanent, direct links to the EU institutions, so far as this serves to fulfil their legal competencies and tasks as defined by the Basic Law. The *Länder* offices do not receive diplomatic status. The position and role of the Permanent Representation in Brussels as the representation of the Federal Republic of Germany to the European Communities remains unaffected even in cases

where the execution of rights falling to the Federal Republic of Germany as a member state of the European Union are transferred to a *Länder* representative. (EUZBLG of 12.03.1993)

The text of the EUZBLG consciously avoids applying the more familiar language of traditional, bilateral diplomacy to the *Länder* representations in Brussels. The term “representation” (*Vertretung*), proposed by the rapporteurs was softened to “permanent relations” (*Ständige Verbindungen*).

The notion of “European domestic policy” was broadly accepted by the Federal Government in the ratification debates on the Maastricht Treaty, and was constitutionally established by the eventual changes made to the Basic Law in the new Article 23 (Bulmer et al., 2000: 34). Acceptance of this concept significantly enhanced working relationships on European matters between the levels of governmental authority, to the point where today this is an accepted and normative underpinning of co-operation on the EU.²⁷ The gradual emergence of this concept has also facilitated new models of co-operation on Europe in other member states, as the German constitutional solution had repercussions even beyond national boundaries.

Legal questions clouded the original operations of regional representations in the EU when these were first established, and in most instances, challenges were mounted for similar reasons to those found in the German context. First, that regional representations may either compromise national negotiating positions in the EU, or serve to undermine state-level diplomacy. Secondary fears related to the suggestion that sub-state international activity could impose obligations on the state as a whole, a legal issue with some degree of complexity. Third, challenges to the idea of independent, sub-state representation in the EU related back to the principle of power and responsibility within the domestic arena. The feeling amongst national-level elites that their sole leadership capacity in this policy area was under threat led to a number of constitutional challenges at the domestic level. The Italian government also opposed a plan by the largely German-speaking region, Alto-Adige, to set up an office with Austrian South Tirol (Marks and Hooghe, 2001). Two key instances of note are the Spanish and Italian cases.

Italy – from constraint to co-operation

Perceiving the first regional representations as a direct threat to national unity, the central state authorities in Italy went so far as to prevent the establishment of direct regional representations in Brussels (Hooghe

and Marks, 2001: 87). Prior to a change in the law in 1996, Italian regional governments were not allowed to run their own EU offices in Brussels (Desideri and Santantonio, 1997: 108). Thus, as was seen in other member states, this hostility over the establishment of regional representations was circumvented by the creation of innovative, mixed public and private-interest ventures.

Before 1996, only three regional governments were represented in Brussels, and each of their offices was cloaked in an alternative regional presence. Emilia-Romagna established an office through its regional technological agency, the region of Trentino- Alto Adige through the Chambers of Commerce of Trento and Bolzano, and Tuscany through its regional financial holding (Badiello, 1998: 336).

Since 1996, a new "Law 52" has formally regulated Italian regional offices in Brussels.²⁸ This formally permits the establishment of regional "co-ordination offices" (*uffici di coordinamento*) in Brussels.²⁹ These are intended to maintain relations with EU institutions concerning matters falling within their competence (Desideri and Santantonio, 1997: 108). In addition, this law provides for up to four representatives from regional administrations to be appointed to the Italian Permanent Representation in Brussels, facilitating co-ordination between national ministries in Rome and the regions on EU matters (Badiello, 1998: 340).

Thus, Italian regions have won gradual acceptance of their ability to engage in Europe where it affects their own policy competences. The working relationship today between the central state authorities and regional representations in Brussels is largely regarded as constructive, with officers from the Permanent Representation regularly meeting regional representatives to discuss policy issues (Badiello, 1998: 340).

Spain – a constitutional ruling on function and operation

A similar history of gradual, though reluctant, acceptance characterises the direct engagement of Spanish regions in Brussels. The opening of independent Spanish regional offices in Brussels was met with direct hostility by the Madrid government (Gomez and Carter, 2002: 15), on the grounds that their activities challenged the coherence of Spain's position on foreign affairs (Closa and Heywood, 2004: 89).

Given these tensions, as in Germany, the UK and Italy, mixed regional interest ventures therefore became a common means by which Spanish regions could open representative offices. The Spanish regional governments from the Basque country, Canary Islands, Galicia, Murcia and Valencia all set up offices in Brussels with the legal status of limited trade companies (Mazey and Mitchell, 1993: 105). The Catalan Office,

the *Patronat Catalan Pro l'Europa* was established as a registered company, and was founded by the Catalan government, three Catalan universities, the Barcelona Chamber of Commerce, banks and a local authority (John, 1994a: 745). These all served as a form of “camouflage” (Badiello, 1998: 341) for regional engagement in the EU.

The legality of one of the first Spanish regional offices in Brussels, that representing the Basque Country, was ultimately tested in Spain's Constitutional Court. This ruled in 1995 that Spain's Autonomous Communities (ACs) *could* engage in certain activities outside the Spanish state provided that they met certain key conditions:

- they would not create obligations to foreign powers, either for the region or the central state; and
- they would not impinge on Spain's foreign policy (Closa and Heywood, 2004: 89).

The Constitutional Court's decision therefore set the boundaries of regional representation in Brussels and made representative offices for the 17 ACs legally permissible (Neunreither, 2001: 137). The ruling encouraged the remaining Spanish ACs also to establish representations in Brussels; today, all 17 ACs are present in the city. Despite a great deal of organisational heterogeneity, these offices are fully integrated into each region's administration (Closa and Heywood, 2004: 89). The offices tend to be linked directly to the centre of regional political authority; nearly all offices are directly under the control of the president's private office or the department of the presidency, except for the three regions of Castilla-La Mancha, Aragón and Navarra, where they are part of the department of the economy (Closa and Heywood, 2004: 89).

The first British regional representations – limits on autonomous activity

The opening of regional offices in Brussels proved no less problematic for British national authorities than for the German federal government, despite the huge differences in the territorial distribution of competencies between the two countries at the time. As in the case of Germany, the UK's central state authorities initially tried to place restrictions on the role of regional representations in Brussels. Fears that British regional offices could become independent sources of influence in Brussels prompted central government initially to limit their work to economic rather than political issues (Bomberg and Peterson, 1998: 228; Christiansen, 1993; Mitchell and Leicester, 1999).

However, whilst representatives of English local and metropolitan authorities had been active in Brussels from the mid-1980s onwards, it is when the larger and higher profile territorial units of Scotland and Wales, the UK's historic nations, decided to establish a presence in Brussels that these channels for territorial interest mediation were openly challenged by the UK's central state authorities.

In the early 1990s, there was a groundswell of support within Scotland for the establishment of some kind of office to represent Scottish interests. Whilst the Scottish Office represented Scottish interests within British central government, it was regarded as an inappropriate vehicle for articulating Scottish interests in Europe. The Scottish Office was not felt to reflect the interests of Scotland as a whole; it lacked democratic legitimacy and was widely viewed as misrepresentative, or only partially representative of Scottish interests (Mitchell, 1995: 290) – not least because of its control by the Conservative UK government, which had only minority support in Scotland. Plans considered by the economic development agency at the time ranged from a publicly-funded body controlled by central government to a private-sector body which would act as a consultant to any interested parties including public agencies (Mitchell, 1995: 292).

Within the Scottish Office, there was concern over the future control of any body set up to represent Scottish interests in Brussels. As in Germany, fears ran high that any independent Scottish representation may undermine the UK's ability to speak with one voice in EU negotiations, and more generally, promote policy aims at odds with those of central government. Three principal dangers that the presence of a Scottish representation in Brussels might cause were perceived by national government; these were outlined in a background report prior to the establishment of what became "Scotland Europa":

1. such an office could "cut across rather than complement the Government's position";
2. a Brussels office would be opposed by the UKREP, the Treasury, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and other UK government departments "if it were seen as a Scottish Office or Scottish Enterprise organization";
3. Lastly, its value for money was questioned, as "it might be seen as an excuse for unnecessary junketing" (Mitchell, 1995: 292).

In the end, a solution was engineered which saw the creation of a private company, Scotland Europa Ltd., with development agencies from

Scotland holding 51 per cent of the equity. This would ensure that Scottish Office agencies retained a controlling influence over the representative organisation, and that it would not be at the mercy of hostile interests in Scotland (Mazey and Mitchell, 1993: 115). Its remit was “minimalist”, in that it would focus solely on economic, business and trade issues (Mitchell, 1995: 292).

This limited company arrangement highlighted the “ambiguous relationship between central and local government” over the setting up and running of a Scottish representative office in Brussels (John, 1997: 139).

Ambiguity also characterised the relationship between central government and the first Welsh representative presence in Brussels, the Wales European Centre (the WEC). The creation of a distinct Welsh presence in Brussels at around the same time met with similar challenges. Furthermore, the WEC met outright hostility from central government authorities. In the early years of the WEC’s existence, the Welsh Office was headed by a renowned Eurosceptic, John Redwood, who was determined to stamp on the “Wales in Europe” image (McAteer and Mitchell, 1994: 17).

The WEC did receive central government finance, albeit indirectly, through its core partner, the Welsh Development Agency (WDA). Nonetheless, Redwood himself, on a visit to Brussels, ordered that the Welsh dragon flying from the office’s flagpole be removed. Wales, he argued, should not be represented in such a manner.³⁰ His actions aimed at reminding the WEC that Wales had no official status in the EU independent of the UK (Bulmer et al., 2001: 139); removing the Welsh dragon from the building would thus defuse any potential nationalist symbolism, giving the WEC more of the neutrality of a mere lobbying organisation than a representation of the region as such.

The UK’s central government authorities were thus effectively able to limit the Brussels representations of English local and regional bodies – Scotland Europa, the WEC and the Northern Ireland Centre in Europe (NICE) – to economic rather than political representation. All three of the big offices were restricted in principle to providing services to their sponsoring members, and expressly prohibited from undertaking lobbying (Bomberg and Peterson, 1998: 229; Mazey and Mitchell, 1993: 117).

Despite the success with which central government was able to control the activities of the UK regional offices, interest in opening such an office was widespread. Such was the attention generated in regional representation by the pioneer offices that by the early 1990s, the overwhelming majority of UK regions were represented in Brussels in some form of regional office (John, 1994b: 3).

The UK – reshaping the legal basis in the wake of domestic territorial reform

Devolution in Britain created an entirely new set of British regional actors who sought a representative voice on the EU stage. Ultimately, devolution catalysed the establishment of a new framework of how the regions of the UK structure and manage their activities in Brussels, forcing a recalibration of established relationships and networks between permanent offices mediating British territorial interests in the EU. The framework which has subsequently been established is informative, as it sets a precedent for the EU-level representation of other territories within the EU which are moving to secure greater constitutional authority at the domestic level (Marks et al., 2008).

Although external relations – including relations with the European Union – is a competence reserved to the UK government under the devolution settlement, around 60–80 per cent of legislation passed in the devolved territories originates from the EU (NIA, 2002; Scottish Parliament 2002a). The newly devolved authorities had interests in EU policy- and relation-building which differed fundamentally from the stakeholder bodies already providing EU-focused services on behalf of UK regions in the EU. In addition, they were accountable to an elected regional authority, and were responsible for implementing key aspects of that authority's EU aims and objectives.

Initially, there was a question mark as to whether the new DAs would even need to maintain their own offices in Brussels, given the pre-existence of well-established territorial interest groupings. The 1997 White Papers on devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales flagged up precedents set by other strong European regions and suggested independent representative offices *may well* be an arrangement the new administrations would wish to implement, but it was not inevitable. The decision to open a presence in Brussels in what was described then as their own “source of information and influence” (Welsh Office, 1997) was to be left to the new authorities themselves. So, whilst central government did not explicitly promote the idea of individual DA representations in Brussels post-devolution, it did not prevent them, and conceded that the influence of European benchmarks would be difficult to ignore. The overriding view amongst the soon-to-be-devolved administrations was that existing channels for British “regional” interest mediation in Brussels would need to be adapted and indeed extended to provide the capacity for regional governmental interest mediation.

Central government did not play any steering role as the issue of EU-level representation for the new DAs developed. In February 1999, four

months ahead of “devolution day”, the Foreign and Commonwealth Minister of State at the time, Joyce Quin, remarked that whilst such offices were anticipated by the UK government, it was unclear where exactly they would be situated within the new diplomatic landscape in Brussels. Their exact shape and representational form was also unclear. Quin suggested that these:

might be inside or outside the UKREP framework. The key is that they should complement rather than cut across existing activity. (Quin, 1999: 3)

From the outset, the independent activities of the new UK DAs in Brussels remained something of an unknown quantity, and it was recognised that the relationship between regional and national representations in Brussels had been a source of tension for most member states since they were developed (Bulmer et al., 2001: 132). In a bid to limit the potential risk within any new UK arrangement, the emphasis was firmly placed upon collaboration and open lines of communication between any future DA representations and UKREP. The UK’s central government authorities could best regulate the uncertainty of this situation through an incentives scheme which tied full access to the UK’s diplomatic and negotiating machinery to an umbrella framework; key staff in the new DA representations would be given diplomatic status, would have passes to access UKREP and could attend the Council’s Working Group meetings as part of the UK delegation, in return for close collaboration, stringent adherence to the central government line (Bulmer et al., 2001: 141) and a general principle of “no surprises” (Quin, 1999: 2). This “UKREP family” arrangement firmly prevented any possibility that the DAs may use their Brussels presence to circumvent the central UK line and forge explicit strategic alignments with other member states and regions (Bulmer et al., 2001: 146). Essentially, this new scheme of incentives reflects the centralist tradition of the UK administration, which has – since the 1980s – consistently sought to control any sense of a divergent “regional agenda” in Brussels.

Concluding comments

Analysis of the “regional dimension” of the EU has long since noted how the European integration process reframes the space for political action that regions can access (Jeffery, 1997; Marks and Hooghe, 2001; Weatherill and Bernitz, 2005). Clearly, integration has expanded the coalitional possibilities of sub-national and national actors beyond the

nation-state (Ansell et al., 1997). Empirical analysis of the opening of regional representations is a useful means of assessing where in practice the idea of an institutionalised form of direct regional interest mediation came from. It elucidates the *domestically rooted* European objectives of regional actors which, combined with an expanding area for direct intervention in the EU policy space itself, prompted these to open their first representations in Brussels. Yet, the majority of the competing claims over legitimate realms of EU diplomacy and interest mediation have found their political expression and resolution within the domestic polity rather than in Brussels. This domestic lens is crucial if we are fully to understand the diverse nature of regional representation in the EU, as this dictates the principal manner in which regional representations structure and manage their operations and activities.

There is no convergence in Brussels around a single formula for regional interest mediation/regional representations. Instead, it is notable that the constitutional-legal frameworks which underpin the scope of their activities in the EU are regulated by domestic laws rather than EU laws; there are no moves in Brussels, for instance, to maintain some sort of permanent register of regional interest mediation, along the lines of recent moves to establish a mandatory register of lobbyists. The differences in actions undertaken by regional offices are identifiable on account of differences in their sending contexts; regions with constitutional authority, for instance, will set out to achieve different results in the EU arena than will the newly created, resource-poor and constitutionally weak regions from new member states, for instance.

Notably, no single model of European relations is winning because the balance of constraints vs opportunities varies from state to state. There is convergence amongst types of sub-state authority rather than across authorities.

Analysis of the domestic tensions which mobilised regional actors to pursue an independent representative approach in Brussels throws up two competing sets of pressures that play out differently in different national contexts. Is the EU regarded at the regional level as an opportunity to think and operate in new ways? Or rather, does the EU challenge and constrain regions' actions within the domestic context? When viewed as an opportunity, we can find evidence of a "resource pull" underpinning regional mobilisation, whereby the opening and maintenance of a regional representation is a core component of a strategy aimed at maximising these opportunities. This will result in an increasing level of trans-national activity. If, on the other hand, the EU is regarded as encroaching on domestic regional issues, as was the case

with the German *Länder*, then we see evidence of a “resource push” from the regional level. In order to protect domestically enshrined rights and responsibilities, wholesale engagement at the EU level was crucial.

What is less clear, however, are the conditions under which European integration today, understood here as a new space for political action, is an opportunity for regional governance actors, or a threat? To put it differently, is the EU a “problem” for regions, in need of a resolution? (Jeffery, 2005) Or is it an opportunity for extending sub-state capacity, particularly by bypassing the national set of controls (Bache, 1999, 2008; Tömmel, 1998). This fundamental fault line is an issue which separates the complex array of sub-national governmental “forms” – including stateless nations, legislative regions, administrative regions and municipalities – into those with legislative competencies and those with an executive or administrative role. This manifests itself through the strategies Europe’s widely diverse regional actors employ to engage with the EU and the integration process, and these in turn are founded upon opposing views of the nature of the European “game”. It is this fundamental fault line which helps us to categorise the diverse sets of interests which are represented through regional representations in the EU. And it is around this fault line that different types of activity model are developed. These actions undertaken by the different types of regional representation in the EU are explored in the following chapter.

4

The Activity Profile of Regional Representations in the EU

As we have seen in the previous chapters, today, it is rare to find a regional authority within the EU27 which does **not** have some form of permanent representative presence at the heart of the EU in Brussels. Yet each regional representation that has opened in Brussels has developed a core set of aims and strategies that vary in accordance with the goals and European objectives of its sending authorities, be those regionally-elected governments, collections of local authorities and city administrations, or broad coalitions of public and private-sector interests which are regionally aggregated. Whilst there are many core areas of overlap in their activities, there are nonetheless numerous differences in emphasis between their operational portfolios which underscore the differences between types of offices.

This chapter considers the various dimensions of the activities undertaken by regional offices in Brussels. It assesses the wide range of functions that these representations carry out. In doing so, it seeks to analyse the relative importance of economic activities – the idea of “resource pull” – as contrasted with the emphasis placed by regional offices on policy-shaping, or “resource push”, in the Brussels arena. An examination of the engagement by various types of regional representations in the EU on particular activities and the strength of various relationships established at the Brussels level provides core evidence relating to their differentiated nature and purpose.

There are a number of classic areas which represent the mainstay of any regional office’s work. These can be divided into five broad categories:

1. Intelligence gathering, policy interpretation and analysis [termed here as “downstream” activities];

2. Representation and lobbying: [termed here, conversely, as “upstream activities”];
3. Networking and co-operation;
4. Commercial opportunities, partner searches, funding analysis;
5. Promotional activities for the region: showcasing culture, goods, tourism and investment opportunities.

Naturally, these categories are fluid and tend to overlap. Nonetheless, it is useful to be able to categorise the work of regional representations, and this framework can help to distinguish further the various types of representative activity carried out by these bureaux. The differences in the extent to which regional offices carry out each of these particular activities are determined by the home or sending context.

Intelligence gathering, policy interpretation and analysis

For all regional offices, “information” work represents the core of their activity, and their “bread and butter” (Marks et al., 2002: 4) activity. Yet the specific type of information which is collected, interpreted and processed by regional representations will depend largely on the domestic context, that is to say, how that information will be utilised in the domestic arena. Different types of controlling authorities will prioritise the collation of different types of information; the domestic context therefore will ultimately determine the manner in which regional offices undertake this information function.

Constitutional regions

For the offices in Brussels representing regional authorities with legislative competences in their respective domestic political systems, the “intelligence”³¹ dimension of their activity forms the lynchpin of their EU operations. The Brussels offices of constitutionally-empowered regions occupy a pivotal role in the relationship between the domestic administrations and the European institutions, serving as the interface between domestic and EU policy development. As a result, their information gathering, filtering, synthesis and analysis constitute “intelligence” both for the sending regional authority and for the EU decision-makers with whom they interact on a regular basis. As the early warning mechanism on policy proposals and legislators’ viewpoints, these offices deliver tangible added value to the domestic authorities’ policy and EU strategy.³² By passing early information “downstream” to regional decision-makers, positions can be

constructed on a particular policy dossier which this type of regional representation can then promote “upstream” to the relevant actors, with the express aim of shaping policy outcomes in their favour. As the agenda setter and the main generator of policy initiatives in the EU, the European Commission is the primary interlocutor, though close relations are maintained with the European Parliament. The regions’ own MEPs are important here, though party-political differences between the local executive leadership and those MEPs elected for the region can at times strain that working relationship³³ in general, a view of how to work for the “greater good” ensures that co-operation takes precedence over partisan issues.

For the controlling authorities in the regions, their EU offices provide an opportunity to hear rapidly of proposed legislative activity and other policy-related actions of note, a sensor with which to detect issues in the policy pipeline in Brussels and the ability to assess the direction in which policy is developing.³⁴ Early flow of relevant intelligence to the home centre is widely regarded as the primary added value of an EU office and a fundamental aspect of European policy work that officials in the regional centres would find it difficult to do without.³⁵ Managed well, an EU office can provide a constitutional region with an enhanced position in Brussels policy networks, and stories of how the regional representation has secured a “success” for the region abound. By and large, this anecdotal evidence of the measurable impact of regional representations is substantiated by the “end users”, that is, the policy community within a regional administration.

The weight given to the downstream dimension of the work carried out by constitutional regions’ representations in Brussels illustrates the extent to which policy-oriented intelligence on the EU gathered by such offices is operationalised within the domestic regional administration. This is by some margin the largest area of an EU office’s day-to-day “business”.³⁶ Within Europe’s constitutional regions, the sectoral ministries across the administration have sophisticated and identifiable EU-related “needs”, that is, a demand for up-to-the-minute, relevant and tailored information that relates to the execution of their own workloads. This is clearly reflected in the structure of the Brussels offices, which have policy officials with dedicated portfolios to service the needs of different departments within the home administrations.

Whilst the emphasis was traditionally on funding concerns and EU areas of core sub-state relevance – primarily structural funds and cohesion policy – it is common now to see officials working on environmental issues, fisheries and agricultural policy, alongside areas such

as trans-European networks, information society and labour market policy.

As we shall explore further in Chapter 5, the structure of the EU offices of constitutional regions approaches a “mirror” model, whereby the portfolios of policy staff in Brussels directly replicates the departmental portfolios of the home administration; thus, the operational structure of the EU office is clearly defined by the intelligence needs of the sending authority. The sectoral portfolios of staff working within constitutional regions’ EU bases reflect clearly the key areas where EU policy and domestic competence overlap. Whilst the EU offices in Brussels are by no means expected to master all of the home administration’s policy briefs in detail, they are at the very least expected to flag up issues of importance to the sending authority.³⁷ A Brussels office therefore acts as a resource for policy development and serves to enhance understanding of EU-level matters within the home authority, whilst at the same time raising the profile of EU issues across the administration.

The ministerial intelligence-gathering function of the desk officers in Brussels is reinforced also through the personnel policy used by constitutional regions to staff their EU representations (See Chapter 5). Executive staff who are seconded to the office in Brussels have a clearly specified mandate to deliver policy-relevant information on EU developments which can be used directly by the home team; previous ministerial experience of handling EU briefs also serves to facilitate this aim. In many ways, therefore, a secondment to the Brussels office both enhances understanding of the EU and how it can affect domestic legislation, but equally, staff bring expertise from the regional administration to the office, which helps to ensure that the information flow remains firmly in line with the bottom-up needs of the administration. Personal connections reinforce this targeted information-gathering process, as does the fact that constitutional regions are privy to the internal communications flows of the home region on a daily basis through secured intranet access. Alongside the distribution of internal memos and files, a constant stream of visiting officials from the home administration also ensures that the Brussels offices are fully plugged into the domestic communications process.

One major concern that has gained increasing prominence within the workload of EU offices representing constitutional regions is to use intelligence gathering as the first step by which authorities can work to shape legislation in their favour. Given that implementation of EU legislation is the responsibility of these authorities in an increasing number of policy areas – such as fisheries, environmental protection, border

protection and policing, as well as education and culture – effective information provision at the early stage of the legislative process can help to prevent recourse to legal challenges in the post-implementation phase, and is increasingly the core focus of constitutional regions' EU offices.

Beyond their role as providers of expertise on the EU aspect of many domestic policy dossiers, the Brussels representations of constitutional regions also provide advice and appropriate linkages with partner regions on broader EU matters – the so-called “horizontal issues” – such as constitutional developments or wider strategic innovations such as the Lisbon growth and jobs strategy of 2006, and the more recent “Europe 2020” initiative for sustainable economic growth. Within the UK, for instance, the Brussels offices representing the devolved authorities of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are encouraged to take the lead and to initiate debate within the home administrations on the broader, cross-cutting European issues. For instance, during the Convention on the Future of Europe in 2002 and 2003, the Scottish Executive took the lead in drafting the UK's influential position paper on the role of regions in the future EU. This paper was then eventually submitted to the Convention by the UK's national government representative, Peter Hain.³⁸ Although the bulk of the work on the paper was carried out within the UK, intelligence channelled into the process from the Brussels representations played a background role in the drafting process.³⁹ In fact, the Welsh representative who attended meetings to finalise the text was the head of the Brussels office of the Welsh Assembly Government,⁴⁰ and so brought “on the ground” experience to the negotiating table. The role played by constitutional regions' offices in these broader EU debates underscores the qualitative difference between constitutional and non-constitutional regions in the EU.⁴¹

Information flows on EU policy issues are of course multi-directional. As has been shown, Brussels representative offices, as intelligence providers, occupy a unique position at the interface between domestic and European policy arenas. From a downstream perspective, the offices of constitutionally-equipped regions in Brussels can help to furnish the sending administrations with intelligence that can be used not only for policy decisions at the regional level, but also for pursuing specific objectives on Europe within the key arenas of intergovernmental negotiation on the EU in the domestic system. Intelligence from the Brussels office can therefore strengthen the hand of regional negotiators in domestic debates on European issues.⁴²

One of the unique functions of constitutional regional representations in Brussels, when contrasted to their counterparts from administrative regions, is their preparation of Ministerial visits to Brussels, and for the UK's devolved authorities, regional representations in the EU were set up with this function in mind – as a way of meeting the “diplomatic needs” of the new executives.⁴³ For all constitutional regions, their EU representative office provides downstream support to the administration through their knowledge of the Brussels policy arena. They facilitate contacts with other relevant institutions and actors to provide a “hands on” operational support service to Ministers from the home administration who wish to conduct meetings in Brussels and facilitate high-level meetings for visiting officials and dignitaries from the home region. This represents a core added value to constitutional regional administrations of maintaining an office in Brussels,⁴⁴ and an activity which is not replicated in other types of regional representation in the EU. On the occasions where these visits should be for the purpose of leading negotiations for the member state in the Council of Ministers under Article 9c of the Lisbon Treaty (formerly Article 203 TEU), the Brussels office takes a lead role in the preparation of policy briefs and outlines of other member-state positions, working closely with the Permanent Representation and its policy specialists. They can add value early on in the preparation phase for Council negotiations, by providing pointers during policy formulation processes within the home administrations when they believe that a particular negotiating position will not be sustainable.⁴⁵ In terms of providing operational support to the home administrations, Brussels offices therefore provide an important resource for ministers seeking to establish relations with European players⁴⁶ – in itself, a quasi-diplomatic effort.

Administrative regions

The representative offices of “non-constitutional regions”, that is, regions or meso-levels of authority which do not represent elected governments with strong legislative capacity in the domestic arena, operate slightly differently with regard to intelligence gathering, policy interpretation and analysis. Given their diversity as a group or type of regional representation, both across member states and even within them, there is a natural wide diversity of aims and representative strategies. There is less consistency of overall behaviour amongst this group of regional representations, given that the actual activity of each individual office will be determined by the intelligence needs of the subscribing partners, which vary from region to region.

The specific nature of activities in this primary area of intelligence gathering, policy interpretation and analysis varies considerably between the offices representing regions with legislative competences and those regions with administrative functions in their domestic systems, whose Brussels representations by and large involve other sets of regionally-based actors. The principal line of differentiation between actions undertaken by these two types of regional representation in Brussels relates to the nature of intergovernmental relations on Europe; whereas a legislative region has recourse to domestic channels for intergovernmental policy co-ordination on the formulation of national EU policy, administrative regions, those regions which lack legislative competence in the domestic realm, do not. Ultimately, therefore, their intelligence-gathering work in Brussels is less politicised than that of their constitutionally-empowered counterparts, as it will not be used to inform bargaining and negotiating standpoints in the domestic arena. Instead, intelligence harnessed by the Brussels offices is delivered to partners on the basis of pre-defined informational needs.

The intelligence function of administrative offices relates primarily to policy developments of note to the region's key actors – employers, manufacturers, social and environmental actors and so on – and to intelligence on funding streams of core relevance to regional players. They focus on providing tailored advice to actors in the domestic arena, in order to derive benefit for the region.

Administrative or non-constitutional regions' offices in Brussels are not controlled at a strategic level by an elected authority, and therefore lack the clear structure of policy teams within a home administration to whom intelligence can be delivered. This serves to make their downstream role more diffuse than that of the constitutional regions in Brussels. Strategic intelligence gathered by this type of regional office in the EU tends to have a more general character, given the broader make-up of the "end users" which often encompass groups of local governments as well as regional associations such as chambers of commerce, higher and further education institutes or voluntary organisations. Intelligence products tend to take the form not of answers to specific enquiries but rather are shared widely through a newsletter for subscribers or password-protected intelligence centre on a shared-use website. The end users sustaining the non-constitutional or administrative regions' EU offices themselves feel that a major added value of membership of a regional coalition in Brussels is that information produced by EU actors is tailored for their use.⁴⁷ In this sense, a regional office is viewed as a filter for the masses of EU information that is published.

Members themselves do not have to wade through endless position papers and briefings, but can instead have that information shaped to suit their own needs, in as timely a fashion as resources allow.⁴⁸

Despite being more focused on direct EU funding engagement and the exchange of ideas and expertise with other regions than are their constitutional regional counterparts in Brussels, the non-constitutional regional administrations' offices in Brussels do also devote the largest portion of their time to intelligence-gathering activity with regard to EU policy developments, and certainly more so today than in the past (Kettunen and Kull, 2009; MacNeill et al., 2007). This evolutionary trend is common to all representative offices, and an analysis of activity profiles of offices in the 1980s and 1990s⁴⁹ reveals a much greater emphasis on funds-harnessing and information-channelling – sending faxes, relevant documentation and such like – towards a more direct focus on policy expertise and added value intelligence on Europe.

Regions from the new member states

For the offices representing new member-state regions in Brussels, the intelligence-gathering function has traditionally formed a large part of their activity for two principal reasons. First, all but the most prominent papers tend to be produced only in the three principal working languages of the EU: English, French and German. This had forced the regional outpost in Brussels not only to “translate” the information into locally and regionally relevant terms – as is the case for other offices – but they also worked to publicise those EU developments themselves in the native language, as that information would not have reached the downstream administration via alternative communication channels. Whilst this function has eased somewhat, it is still a considerable task that these offices undertake.⁵⁰ As they continuously stress: “There is no impact if we just forward things to the region in English or French or German. We have to translate and interpret”.⁵¹ This translating function is even more acute in the pre-accession phase, where no official documentation on funding or cross-border projects of potential interest to such regions is made available in anything but official EU languages. For instance, the first Polish regional representation which opened in 1999 representing the interests of its two Eastern-most regions of Lubelskie and Podlaskie was forced to spend the largest amount of staff time seeking out the relevant EU information for the region and translating that information into Polish before transmitting it back to the sponsoring agencies.⁵² The translation of relevant documentation continues to shape the intelligence function even in the current pre-accession phase.⁵³

The second reason for a larger emphasis on intelligence-gathering within these regions relates to the EU capacity within the domestic administrations themselves, in the new member states. As a general rule, there tends to be little specialist EU expertise which could independently source the relevant EU information from online and official sources. Thus, the Brussels offices developed a niche role in navigating the complex EU information sources and tapping into those sources offering the most relevant and up to date policy and political information of importance for the home authorities. These two dimensions to the role of regional representations from the new member states provide the largest added value to the home administrations. Indeed, officials working within the regions' administrations regard this downstream provision of information from their Brussels representations as the offices' core aim.⁵⁴

There is at present limited expertise within the Brussels representations of regions from the new member states to provide any kind of tailored intelligence for domestic administrations on sectoral policy issues. Equally acute is a shortage of capacity to carry out such a task; most offices run with only a bare minimum of staff and whilst officials recognise the potential for regional offices to offer a greater return to the home region, particularly on account of their observation of how other regional representations carry out their work, activities are constrained by the paucity of resources. As such, the focus remains resolutely on information-gathering, which has a tangible outcome. "Intelligence" efforts therefore focus directly on harnessing know-how that relates to the other three functional aspects of regional offices: opportunities for regional promotion, opportunities to network and share best practices and experience, and alliance building within the context of EU funding programmes.⁵⁵

Representation and lobbying: "upstream" activities

The representative function of regional offices is one of their most visible roles. The very presence of a region in Brussels indicates a level of willingness and ability to engage with the wider European policy sphere. Yet the concept of "representation" as such – its goals and ultimate objectives – remains sensitive, as was shown clearly by the debates over defining a political space for regional offices to operate in Brussels (see Chapter 3).

Taken from the language of diplomacy, the term "representation" itself also encompasses the idea of interest mediation, and the ability

favourably to influence policy outcomes. In that sense, the “representative” function of regional offices’ activities covers their lobbying activity as well as a general agenda to raise their own profile in EU circles and generally to enhance the visibility of the region – referred to on occasion as the “shop window” function (Jeffery, 1997). Representation thus applies to the upstream engagement of regional offices, and the flow of information *from* the region *to* the EU institutions and to the broader Brussels policy space. Equally, territorial interest representation in the EU improves the quality of information flow to the EU institutions themselves, supplementing the national perspective and indeed that of private-sector lobbying groups, by enhancing the territorial perspective and “sensitising” EU decision-makers to regional interests.

Constitutional regions

The offices representing constitutional regions in Brussels, which are quite clear in their remit to promote the wide-ranging interests of their territories, are also clear that the ultimate control of their office and hence the overarching aim of their representative function is to present *a regional executive’s* interests in Brussels. In this sense, they are unabashed in their remit to “lobby” on behalf of their respective regional governments.⁵⁶

Upstream opportunities to engage with the European policy process relate primarily to the Commission; it is here that the representations of constitutional regions in Brussels can have the maximum impact. Opportunities to engage in the debate on forthcoming regulatory proposals are continuous, as the Commission regularly organises debates and policy seminars in which regions are invited to participate; estimates put the number of Commission working-groups today at more than 700.⁵⁷ Furthermore, the process of policy initiation can itself be long. Hence, regions benefit from long-term strategic dialogue with Commission officials where they can channel their home administration’s thinking on policy issues into the early stages of the policy process,⁵⁸ a process that is referred to by the office staff as “sensitisation” to their policy preferences over the longer-term. To maximise their effectiveness, it is vital that a region involve itself in as many of these forums as possible at the early, ideas-shaping stage.⁵⁹ At this point, the number of actors involved in shaping Commission thinking is limited, and the scope for regional representations to be more effective is greater.

For all regional offices in Brussels, a core aim of their upstream activity is to build strong personal contacts with European Commission officials as a means of uploading individual concerns at the earliest

possible stage. By the time that any given policy proposal is transmitted from the Commission to the Council and the Parliament, an estimated 85 per cent of the final decision has already been established.⁶⁰ Indeed, *official* opportunities within a constitutional region's domestic system to influence the national position on a new EU regulation or Directive only formally begin once a decision has been taken by the Commission and a proposal has been presented to the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament. Thus, by that stage, any influence will necessarily be more limited, despite the enhanced access of constitutional regions to the Council of Ministers compared with other European regions. As with lobbyists, therefore, regional offices prioritise early and effective upstream engagement with the EU institutions.

Awareness of the domestic authority of constitutional regions can shape the nature of interaction between their EU representations and the European Commission, even if it does not shape the actual frequency of such meetings. Qualitative research has shown that the constitutional regions' representations are not able to secure any kind of privileged access to Commission decision-makers (Moore, 2008; Tatham, 2008). However, the interaction between the regional offices of constitutional regions and Commission officials once that access has been secured, is shaped by a recognition of the nature of their domestic authority, and their ultimate role both in implementing EU legislation and in shaping national policy positions.⁶¹ Commission policy officers are acutely aware of the domestic constitutional resources which underpin the viewpoints presented by the EU offices of the constitutional regions, and this does have some bearing on how they utilise such contacts (Tatham, 2008). Thus, whilst the Commission does not privilege interaction with the Brussels representative offices of constitutional regions over those of other regional representatives or interest groups, nor formalise contacts through any regular meetings or structured dialogue process, they are *qualitatively* different to those relations established between the Commission and the representatives of non-constitutional regions. Policy positions delivered via constitutional regions' representations in Brussels carry the weight of their formal political power in the domestic arena.⁶²

Beyond the level of the Commission, the Parliament remains the second major upstream target to whom the constitutional regions' offices present their interests; opportunities for action are, however, limited given the Parliament's involvement at a later stage of the legislative process and the fact that any region's MEP responds to different stimuli – not least party-political objectives. However, co-operation for the

perceived “greater good” of the region’s interests does tend to be the dominant operational paradigm.

By way of example, a recent flood prevention Directive, proposed by the Commission, was calculated by the Bavarian administration as leading to an additional €250 million infrastructure investment, funds which would have to be found by the regional government itself. This came on top of their own flood-defence mechanisms, which did not fall within the criteria set out by the Commission’s proposals but were felt, on alternative measures, to constitute adequate flood protection. As the administration had only calculated the increased costs once the Commission’s draft proposals had been made clear, the Bavaria representation in Brussels focused instead on working with their MEPs to amend the first draft of the legislation on its reading in the European Parliament. This co-operative approach helped prevent the region’s administration from having to take on this additional financial burden.⁶³

The EU representations of constitutional regions also like to inform their MEPs of forthcoming legislative proposals of key relevance to the region, learning early on of their emergence within the Commission and hoping thus to secure their agreement to act as rapporteur on that particular dossier.⁶⁴

Relations between constitutional regions’ offices and the European Parliament tend to be more positive for Spanish, German and Austrian regions, where there is no domestic regional drive to separate entirely the EU policy programme of the regional executive and the regional legislature. In Belgium and the UK, however, a sharpening of regional *parliamentary* profiling in the EU over recent years has put some strain on the regional offices’ remit to represent the interest of the region as a whole.

Despite the fact that more actual staff time is devoted to the intelligence function, the lobbying function is widely promoted as the core value-added of a constitutional region’s EU representation, as a lobbying success is a more tangible output than a mass of intelligence flows. The German *Länder* offices in particular are unabashed in their drive to “lobby” directly on behalf of their home region, as the term “lobbying” does not carry the at times seedy and underhand connotations which it does in Anglo-Saxon countries (Neunreither, 2001). These offices are very clear in their stated aim of promoting the policy objectives of their home administration upstream. Indeed, there is a degree of evidence to suggest that through lobbying action, the *Länder* offices in Brussels achieve goals it may otherwise have been more difficult to realise; the

Bavarian EU office, for instance, was recently able to push through an amendment on an aspect of an EU directive on cross-border transportation which directly affected the Czech/Bavarian border. In the absence of a Brussels representative office, making the contacts necessary to push this amendment through would have been much harder if not impossible.⁶⁵

Whilst the “UKREP family” construct constrains the UK’s devolved authorities from carrying out independent policy-oriented activities in Brussels, provided that support for an issue does not run counter to the overall UK position, territorial “lobbying” has proven effective.⁶⁶ One notable activity saw the Scottish Executive’s EU Office (SEEUO⁶⁷) successfully protect Scottish industrial interests in Europe. In 2003, the EU statistics agency Eurostat officially classified traditional Scottish kilts as “womenswear”. This decision was addressed explicitly by the SEEUO in Brussels, engaging directly with the relevant EU authorities and successfully forcing an amendment to the official position – thereby saving Scottish manufacturers from hefty EU-imposed fines (The Scotsman, 11 November 2003).

The process of “lobbying” the EU institutions is therefore of crucial importance to the offices representing the interests of the constitutional regions; but given that information is the first step towards advocacy (Van Schendelen, 1993: 4), this “upstream” function and the “downstream” function are intricately bound up in a process of continuous information flow. These offices’ intelligence and policy *interpretation* function is to identify the relevance of EU developments for governance in the home region, to pass that information on to the relevant policy teams in the domestic authority. Subsequently, the EU offices will have to articulate “upstream” a position defined domestically on how to respond to those EU policy developments. Thus whilst the EU offices of constitutional regions in themselves do not define their region’s response to new policy initiatives from the Commission, they are instrumental in ensuring that the right information reaches the relevant domestic policy teams, and helping to advise on the best information and tactics for an upstream response.

When it comes to upstream lobbying, constitutional regions are at a clear advantage over other regional actors in the EU. Given that they are generally established to serve the domestic administration’s needs, with policy officers in place to interact with policy teams in the home region, there are direct linkages in place which can be mobilised instantly to generate a response to EU developments. Effective lobbying can only take place with a specific mandate from the home region; thus, with a

clear position to defend and promote to the EU institutions, lobbying is for the constitutional regions' EU representations a much more straightforward process than that of many other types of regional offices. Along with their democratic strength as the representatives of a sub-state *government*, this ultimately places them at an advantage within policy networks in Brussels, and the constitutional regions' representations in Brussels have sought actively to situate themselves firmly within the key channels of information flow, agenda-setting and policy development in and around the European institutions.

For all regional offices, one of the major benefits of a presence in Brussels is the so-called "shop window" function, by which their interaction with various networks in the city can help to shape general perspectives of a region, raise awareness of specific cultural or economic features and showcase regional products and services. For the constitutional regions, this particular function equates to a quasi-diplomatic role, whereby they can seek to represent regional governments within a network of public and private-sector actors. The offices representing the UK's relatively new devolved executives in Brussels, this semi-diplomatic function has helped to profile the transformation of governance in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland under the devolution programme. "Some people I speak to aren't even aware that Wales has a regional government".⁶⁸

Administrative regions

Administrative regions' representative offices in Brussels have a less clearly defined representational function than constitutional regions. As these offices lack a specific regionally-elected government whose interests they represent directly, they lack the quasi-diplomatic function of constitutional regions' EU offices. Indeed, the complexity of their subscriber base can often make their representational profile difficult to communicate in anything but the most basic terms. "Unless the Brussels representations are backed by an effective directing partnership with political support at home, it does not matter who or what the office represents" (Swedish official, quoted in Berg and Lindahl, 2007).

The provision of information and policy preferences upstream to the Commission and other EU institutions is again necessarily a more diffuse and ad hoc process than that of constitutional regions. With a wide membership base and in most cases, no equivalent grouping within the home region to serve as a focal point or at least offer regular interaction and meetings, establishing a "common position" to promote upstream in the relevant policy networks and debates in Brussels is a complicated

and time-consuming process. Those regions with more clearly delineated governance structures or a regional body mandated to take decisions on their behalf have a more rapid response time. For the Brussels representations of regions where similar structures are not in place, they are often frustrated by a lack of common agreement on proposed EU legislation, and hamstrung in their ability to shape the policy development process.⁶⁹ Thus, whereas constitutional regions' offices in Brussels work to implement an EU policy that is defined within the home administration, albeit in discussion with experts in the Brussels office, administrative regions' representations are often implementing only a weakly articulated strategic policy agenda on Europe. More vaguely articulated aspirations of "influence" and "relationship-building" can limit the scope of the upstream function of these Brussels offices, as can an emphasis in the home region on other dimensions of their work, particularly funds-seeking.

As with all types of regional representation in the EU, the Commission is for the administrative regions the key target for the upstream representation of interests in Brussels. But the lack of democratically elected *regional* government is in no way a hindrance to the upstream actions of these offices, particularly in instances where the Commission relies on regional players for the provision of what is termed "expert knowledge" (Bouwen, 2001: 1).

Being located within broader EU policy networks, the regional representations themselves often take the lead in constructing a regional lobbying position, mainly in collaboration with other regions with shared policy interests. The Brussels offices have been instrumental in establishing a number of advocacy coalitions which have served to impact on the drafting of EU legislation. During early negotiations on the drafting of a new Integrated Maritime Policy for the EU in 2007, businesses and social partners with interests began to work closely with the regional administration in South West England and to use the region's Brussels office as a means of generating a broader EU-wide coalition on their own policy position through partnership building. The largest and most active policy networks constructed by the regional representations themselves have been effective in acting as effective interlocutors with policy-makers and indeed, in shaping Commission thinking at the early stage of the legislative process.⁷⁰

In regions where there is no formal process in place to structure and define a policy on the EU, the Brussels representations themselves very often take on a key role in the shaping of general objectives on Europe through their activities to explain the EU to partners within the home

region. On issues of general concern, longer-term alliances of interests have been constructed in the region through the active engagement of the Brussels office and its staff in explaining the European policy landscape in areas such as sustainable development, environmental policy, reform of the structural funds, CAP reform and the Lisbon agenda and, in doing so, “translating” of ongoing EU policy debates into locally relevant terms. The Brussels offices can generate increased awareness through workshops and seminars both in the region and in Brussels, acting as a hub for public and private-sector organisations – and individuals – who want to know more about Europe. The emphasis is placed on policy areas where the EU can offer benefits to the local economy. In this way, the EU offices of administrative regions can serve as a focal point on key issues around which coalitions of territorial interests can coalesce. Often, by increasing members’ awareness of both funding and policy issues, these types of actions serve to enhance the office’s subscribers’ engagement with the EU.

Swedish officials feel that their own Brussels offices have a more prominent role to play as “regional”, rather than trying to carry out the same mission as county council representations in the EU (Berg and Lindahl, 2007). As officials both in Sweden and in the Swedish regional representations in Brussels have noted, on issues relating to the political management of a regional development issue, it makes more sense to contact the EU institutions through the regional representations, whatever the political foundations of that level of authority within the domestic polity. Importantly, these officials cite the precedent set by many of the EU member states with a longer history of regional engagement in Brussels; “This is in line with what it looks like in several other European countries where an office usually represents a political region” (cited in Berg and Lindahl, 2007). This shift in thinking on Swedish regional interaction with the EU institutions through the medium of a Brussels office underscores the socialisation factor that is so crucial in the broader pattern of regional representation in the EU. The existence of regional representations at the Brussels level is now commonplace; and as such, these bureaux have become part of the common currency (or language) of the EU/ of regional engagement in the EU.

However, there is a growing sense throughout administrative regions in the EU that as policy made in Brussels increasingly affects their own region, they need to become more pro-actively engaged in policy debates through their representations in Brussels, “taking the lead on these rather than following” (West Midlands in Europe, 2004c).

New member state regions

The regional offices from new member-states do very little upstream lobbying work at present, on account largely of their differing priorities. Hampered by a lack of personnel and any sense of domestic positioning on broader EU policy issues that the office could mediate within Brussels circles, they invest virtually no time and effort into upstream lobbying, other than what they can do in partnership with other regions or through collective regional groupings, such as the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) or the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR).

By their own estimation, the work of the new member-state regional offices falls far short of the kind of strategic intelligence gathering and policy advocacy work conducted by many of the more mature and better-resourced representations of regions in the older member states. Some commonly heard complaints include: "What we do is not lobbying; we just don't have the resources"⁷¹; "I don't do lobbying, but I do monitoring!"⁷²

There is a sense amongst staff working within the representations of regions from the new member states that they could become more actively involved in policy debates, given the remit and additional resources in future to do so.⁷³ Yet the views of the highly EU literate and engaged personnel in the Brussels offices on what a regional representation can achieve for the region are not widely replicated within the domestic regional administrations themselves. This domestic view of the proper role and function of a regional representation, more narrow and instrumental in its scope, serves not only to constrain further the budgetary and human resources devoted to an EU presence, but undermines the offices' own efforts to focus more sharply within the Brussels arena on policy issues of concern to the region where they see scope at present to do so. Through interaction with colleagues from other representations of regions from the EU15 in particular, staff in the new member-state representations in Brussels are keenly aware of the opportunities for upstream policy-shaping action and the impact a Brussels office can make. However, within the home regions, discourse on a regional presence in the EU has tended so far to centre on measurable outputs and results, and these have been largely financial rather than policy-oriented. Indeed, in some regions with more Eurosceptic party leaderships, questions are raised periodically as to the need to maintain any form of Brussels base, further undermining these offices' attempts to develop their regions' EU activity portfolio.⁷⁴ And whilst the regional

authorities in the new member states, with their relatively weak domestic power bases, do not have a clearly articulated view of European policy, there is thus no specific set of EU objectives that their regional representations in Brussels can be charged with implementing.

Regional administrations in the new member-states acknowledge that the inability of their Brussels office to drive forward EU policy agendas and to promote regional policy viewpoints upstream ultimately stems from a weakness in their own internal processes: "The problem is on our side; we are just not able to provide our EU office with a clear line and are unable to co-ordinate our positions or our responses. So in terms of interaction with the EU authorities, it's all one-way communication at the minute".⁷⁵ Engaging in policy debates through the medium of the Brussels representation remains an "ideal" for the future; "for now the aims are much more pragmatic: about promoting our projects and talking to the right people and getting money from the EU".⁷⁶

Finally, whilst there is limited scope for formal lobbying by the representations of new member-state regions in the EU, engagement in Brussels does offer a potential channel of upstream influence for future policy agendas to be promoted. Within the domestic frameworks, there are at present no formal mechanisms for the inclusion of regional viewpoints within processes of national EU policy formulation. If, as is likely given the intra-state dynamics of European policy within other EU member states, sub-state preferences on EU policy agendas are to be more sharply defined in the future, then the networks established by representative offices in Brussels may offer potential opportunities for lobbying and influence over the longer-term.

The second dimension of upstream representation is of more significance to the EU offices of new member-state regions. The buzzword amongst regional representations from the new member states is very much that of "promotion", and by this they mean self-promotion, or branding their own regional identity within Brussels circles. As relatively new administrative constructs, their names have low levels of recognition within EU circles: few Western Europeans – who make up the majority of Commission staff and officials in interest groups based in Brussels – have any idea that West Pannon and Eszék-Alföld are regions in Hungary for instance, or where in Poland the Lubuskie region is, whereas they may well have an idea where the Salzburg region or the Midi-Pyrénées region is situated. This in some senses justifies the model adopted by Slovak and Hungarian regions to co-locate in one building, though such collaboration has drawbacks in preventing regions from presenting individual profiles to Brussels circles. As a direct result of

this promotional agenda, upstream activities such as the CoR's "Open Days" featuring stands with regional food, staff in regional costume, music and general tourist information, occupy a much more prominent position in the calendars of the new member-states' regional offices than many of the EU15 regions.

As one Polish diplomat put it, regional representations are able to complete the picture of territorial diversity in the new Europe.

Poland in general benefits from having its regions represented here in Brussels. As a new member state, this is a part of Europe which is not yet completely discovered by the Western Part of Europe. Poland is a big country with different specific regions and lots of regional diversity, so it's important to show the whole picture to the outside world of Poland's 16 regions. Poland is not just Krakow and Warsaw; there are agricultural regions, the growth region of Wrocław, the Baltic sea region. For Estonia and Slovenia, this regional diversity and explaining the regional diversity of the country is not so important. But for Poland, regional representations in the EU are like filling in a map. Their work is the promotion of Poland in its full diversity, so complementing our job at the Permanent Representation really. It is all favourable for Poland.⁷⁷

It is likely, therefore, that the current limited scope of regional representations from the new member states, is a transient phase only. Evidence from the history of EU15 regions' representations in Brussels suggests the existence of a developmental trajectory in the activities carried out by these offices, where the upstream engagement in the EU political space has been strengthened as a function over a number of years. Like the representations of new member-state regions today, the earliest iterations of regional offices from the EU15 were concerned with transmitting intelligence on EU developments to the home centre, and with promoting the regional interest in the Brussels marketplace, be that in terms of tourism, regional products, culture, or in fostering economic development through specific linkages (Jeffery, 1997; Marks et al., 1996). Over time, these offices have generally narrowed their activity portfolios and begun to engage more closely with issues surrounding policy development of importance for the region (Berg and Lindahl, 2007; MacNeill et al., 2007). Particularly for those regions with strong regional governments in the home centre, promotional activities have now become a thing of the past, and have been devolved to other regional agencies based in the city alongside the regional offices

(Moore, 2006a). Thus, in addition to an extended personnel, it is likely that in future, and as their regions grow in recognition within the public and policy-making circles in Brussels, the EU offices representing regional interests within the new member states will tend to become more focused on policy issues. Indeed, this is already an expressed aim of these offices, necessarily restricted by lack of resources. Resources at present are thus necessarily invested in profile-raising, both at the European level and within the region, spreading broader awareness of the office, its resources and its capacity for furthering engagement in Europe by actors within the region.

Networking and co-operation

Constitutional regions

Relationship-building forms a core element of the activity remit of all regional representations in Brussels, and is considered by officials in the representations themselves to be almost as important as gathering information (Huyseune and Jans, 2008). But as the debate on the future of Europe intensified in the wake of the 2001 Laeken Declaration, the notion of networking and collective engagement began to take on a much larger role within the constitutional regions' EU activity profile. This exercise in delineating competences within the European sphere encouraged more co-operation between the constitutional regions' Brussels offices than ever before, as they worked to carve out a unique collective position as regions with legislative competence. These alliances are today formalised through collective groupings such as RegLeg, which has promoted the recognition of the different status of constitutional regions across a wide range of policy fields, or are ad hoc, built around specific issues such as the EU budget proposals or future agendas for the structural funds. Whilst membership of these regional-level international groupings is not dependent upon a permanent base in Brussels, a Brussels office is felt to provide enhanced access to such a network. Close working relationships with other regions through their Brussels representations provides early access to discussions which may lead ultimately to the creation of future such groupings.⁷⁸

The legislative capacity of these regions has in recent years become the focal point of their self-promotion within the Brussels arena, and has consequently come to define their relational and networking strategies. This stems from two main factors. First, as the number of regions in the EU of 27 has swelled, and enlargement has made administrative, non-constitutionally empowered regions the overwhelming majority

type of sub-state or regional authority in the EU, those regions which *do* have legislative capacity in their respective arenas have felt a need to articulate more clearly their fundamentally different status amongst the regional level. RegLeg and related initiatives have put paid once and for all to any notion of a “Europe of the Regions”, or even to a “Europe *with* the Regions” (Elias, 2008; Keating, 2008). Instead, the EU offices representing constitutional regions pursue an agenda today to promote the idea of a “Europe with *some of* the Regions” (Moore, 2008), suggesting that their constitutional status affords them privileged access to decision-making and governmental forums that administrative regions cannot and should not access. Second, as debates on how to re-constitute the European Union’s decision-making architecture intensified over the course of the 2000s, an increasing emphasis began to be placed on the idea of an enhanced role for elected *parliaments* in the EU, primarily national parliaments, but by extension also regional parliaments, where these exist. The promotion of the idea of a “subsidiarity watchdog” system enshrined within both the Draft Constitution and the subsequent Lisbon Treaty further bolstered the constitutional regions’ rhetoric of difference between themselves and the mere administrative regions.

This sense of difference has underscored the heightened programme amongst offices representing constitutional regions in the EU to engage primarily with each other as a means of strengthening the constitutional regional voice and pursuing a common agenda. In terms of their current networking strategies, they invest a huge amount of effort into dismantling generally held assumptions about ambitions to establish a “Europe of the Regions”, which is largely found to be unhelpful to the constitutional regions’ agenda.⁷⁹

Beyond the substantive questions of capacity and status in Europe, more quotidian demands see constitutional regions’ EU representations interact on a regular basis. Networks established between the offices representing the constitutional regions in Brussels bring a number of important *value-added* benefits. First, immediate access to offices representing other regional *governments* in the EU helps to disseminate best practice in terms of policy co-ordination, strategy and interaction with the EU institutions.⁸⁰ This has implications for the successful monitoring of EU developments which touch directly on constitutional regions and their core shared aim to advance their EU role and secure privileged access to the EU policy process. Early access to information can mobilise the necessary resources to formulate a joint policy position, either within the framework of a formalised network such as RegLeg, or through an informal and ad hoc constitutional regions coalition.

Inter-regional office networks also spread information on funding opportunities of note to the constitutional regions.

Second, the relationships established through contacts built in this arena provide a basis for many policy-oriented activities conducted by the offices themselves. As with so many aspects of relationship-building, the “soft” benefits to be derived from inter-office partnerships in Brussels are the construction of contacts that can be leveraged at some later stage to derive intelligence benefits or support in horizontal alliance-building on specific EU issues.

Besides promoting a specific constitutional agenda to secure greater say and influence for regions with legislative competencies, the EU representative offices of strong, constitutional regions in Europe do also engage with other types of regional representations on policy-specific collaborations. Where benefit can be derived for a domestic policy objective, then horizontal networking with regions in Brussels can prove valuable, irrespective of the type of office involved in such a partnership.

One of the most notable networks established by the German *Länder* facilitates the horizontal co-operation between all 16 such offices in Brussels themselves. A range of different policy working-groups have been set up to provide a streamlining of research activity and a more efficient use of resources. These working-groups meet on average once per month and bring together all Brussels *Länder* office staff working on a particular policy area, along with the relevant desk officer from the Commission. That particular Commission official thus has only to present information on one occasion, rather than potentially being bombarded by 15 separate *Länder* requests for information.⁸¹ The responsible official from the German Permanent Representation will also often attend, providing information on preparations for Council meetings or the outcomes of previous meetings.⁸²

These information networks exist in the full range of policy areas covered by the *Länder* offices, even in more sensitive areas which are likely to engender greater divergences of opinion. For instance, a marked cleavage of opinion between the East and West German *Länder* concerning the future of the EU's structural funds post-2006 did not disrupt the information-sharing practices these offices had established. The policy-oriented activities of the *Länder* offices themselves do not take the *content* of the intelligence into consideration, and the information and resource-sharing *processes* established amongst the 15 offices do not break down as a result of divergences of opinion.⁸³

Party-political differences between regions of one member state also play a lesser role in the EU networks established between representations than in the domestic arena. Any impact on preferences for networking and co-operation is marginal at best, and horizontal relationships, even at the most senior levels of authority, between heads of office, are de-politicised and are based on mutual interest.⁸⁴ For instance, the German *Länder* representations do not favour closer contact with other offices representing other *Länder* offices whose home governments are of the same party-political hue as their own; rather, co-operation is based on similar policy preferences and strategic agendas.⁸⁵

Finally, the Brussels offices of any regional authority can further facilitate region-to-region co-operation, by acting as a bridge between officials within various regional administrations. The regional office of Catalonia in Brussels has regularly been used by Catalan government officials as a resource for forging links with other European regions. A Catalan desk officer was recently charged with finding out how the Scottish Government manages its sustainable development agenda and practices. For an official located in Barcelona, the idea of getting hold of someone or some specific piece of information in the Scottish Government in Edinburgh can be a daunting task; where do you even begin to start finding out where policy on sustainable development is made? The Brussels network of regional offices can therefore act as an accessible entry point, and this route to information is quite common between regional representations.⁸⁶

Administrative regions

The creation of horizontal alliances is a necessary first step for many of the EU objectives of regional representations in Brussels; establishing good relations with like-minded regions from other member states is therefore a core task of any regional office in the EU, regardless of its "type". With regard to policy initiatives and the exchange of information and expertise, particularly through the establishment of partnerships between individuals or organisations in the home regions, the type of office is a minor concern. Constitutional resources – or lack of them – do not determine access to these kind of policy-related networks.

For the representations of administrative regions, horizontal relations can facilitate good information flows, allow for the exchange of experience and best practice, and ultimately can be mobilised to establish the kind of formal partnerships that will allow for the creation of innovative projects and drawing down EU funding. Innovative networks for the exchange of policy best practice and sectoral expertise are established

between regional representations irrespective of constitutional powers; for these kinds of relationship, the ability to connect relevant and well-informed partners in the home regions is the target goal. Successful collaborative partnerships established between the offices themselves have even begun to shape how the European Commission regards and manages its incentives for regional collaboration on particular policy issues. In the area of Research and Development policy, a collaborative venture known as ERRIN (European Regions and Innovation Network in Brussels) began life as a concept developed by a number of regional offices. As the partnership and its exchange of skills and expertise grew in size and in strength, it began to liaise with officials in DG Research who developed a funding programme which could support this project: the “Regions of Knowledge” pilot action. The initiative has grown now to be self-funded, and is supported by financial contributions from the 70 Brussels regional offices who are members.

This kind of semi-formalised and policy-focused network has become increasingly common amongst regional representations in the EU over recent years, in line with their growing status as policy partners both in Brussels and in the regions themselves. Since the publication of the Commission’s White Paper on Governance in 2000 and the subsequent drives to encourage better governance and law-making in practice – not least the “Plan D” initiative launched by Commissioner Wallström in 2005 – the Commission, the Committee of the Regions and even the Parliament have begun to involve the Brussels representations of regional authorities much more closely in seminars, workshops and early-stage debates.⁸⁷ This sense of new opportunities for enhanced “bottom up” regional involvement in EU policy deliberation has encouraged further formalisation of networks established between regional offices themselves. For instance, in early 2001, the Commission’s DG Environment held a hearing with regional representations in Brussels on developing some form of group focused on EU environmental policy and its regional dimension. This in turn led the regional offices themselves to establish a more formal structure for horizontal co-operation between each other on environmental policy issues. As a result, a network called the “European Platform of Regional Offices” (EPRO), was established as a means to provide early intelligence on Commission thinking and increased networking opportunities in environmental policy.⁸⁸ This group of regional representations in Brussels has now developed a semi-formal structure: it meets every two months with speakers from the Commission or regional experts who provide information on specific topics of interest. The network itself aims to foster long-term interaction

between regions on specific policy issues and allow for the further exchange of ideas and best practice. Collectively, the group delivers policy initiatives upstream to the EU institutions; a recent policy paper emerged from the EPRO group on air quality, which fed into discussions on legislative proposals debated in the European Parliament, Committee of the Regions and the Council Presidency, as well as the Commission.

Collaborative ventures of this kind can also open doors that individual regions cannot, given the Commission's established preference to engage with trans-national groups of actors. EPRO holds an annual meeting with the Environment Commissioner and Director General of DG Environment, providing a direct line of contact to the highest level of political authority, unmediated by national governments – the Permanent Representations of member states to the EU are not engaged in this network. Chairmanship of the EPRO group rotates amongst the members. Whilst DG Environment facilitated the creation of this group, it holds no formal or political mandate; its role is simply to act as one speaking partner among many in the policy development forums established by DG Environment.⁸⁹ The success of this collaborative venture has led to a similar effort in the area of enterprise.

EPRO's genesis and history is a common one. With increasing frequency, policy-focused networks consisting of regional representations have been created on the basis of an individual policy theme or a specific collaborative agenda. If successful, this partnership has then been extended to a larger number of regional offices, most often through personal contacts in Brussels. If the theme is then supported by the Commission, or is in line with a longer-term Commission goal, then the network has most often sought out funds to develop a permanent organisational capacity in Brussels itself – with a policy remit or memorandum of understanding to which all partners sign up – an office and secretariat. Further examples of this practice include the EUREGHA⁹⁰ network of regional and local health authorities, or the project-oriented European Healthy Regions Network (ENRICH).⁹¹ The Commission's increased drive to engage in what it terms "structured dialogue" with stakeholders, including regional representatives in Brussels, has opened up a number of new, albeit limited, opportunities for regional collectives to take similar initiatives forward.⁹²

A second policy-focused networking dynamic between regional representative offices in Brussels is the ad hoc or issue-specific alliance which emerges in relation to a specific piece of EU legislation. Again, symmetry of regional constitutional authority is in no way a pre-requisite for membership. The REACH chemicals legislation (on the

Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemical substances), finally concluded in 2006, was one such example of a large piece of EU legislation with significant consequences for regional industries, employment and economies. The East German region of Saxony-Anhalt, for instance, with a large chemicals industry of its own, actively utilised its Brussels base to bring together EU-wide regional interests in the chemicals industry, in order to help shape the policy debate during the progress of the REACH Directive. Mobilising connections made through its Brussels office, the region launched an initiative to bring together a “Congress of Chemical Regions”, allowing regions facing similar challenges to discuss a collective response and an expressed aim to draft a joint position paper to be submitted to both the Commission and the European Parliament on the Draft REACH Directive.

But even this ad hoc venture has had longer-term spin offs beyond the life cycle of the REACH legislation. Collaborative policy mobilisation was felt to be of longer-term benefit to these self-designated “chemicals regions”. Not only is the congress now an annual event, but a more formal collective organisation known as the European Chemical Regions Network secured financial support from the Commission’s INTERREG funds and has become a membership organisation in its own right in Brussels – the European Chemical Regions Network.⁹³ Other additional benefits of this alliance has been the fostering of links between individual chemicals companies across Europe.⁹⁴ In total, these benefits encourage regions to pay membership fees to remain part of this network. Clearly, a shared sectoral profile can also engender closer working relations between EU regions over the longer-term, not simply in relation to an individual Directive or regulation.

Access to policy groups such as these is one major benefit to administrative regions of maintaining a permanent presence in the EU, as policy-focused initiatives succeed largely on the basis of what they deliver to members. Upstream actions are a welcome, but secondary, output of such organisations, and as such, the constitutional resources that members bring to the party is of limited impact within the collaboration. Ultimately, on issues related to joint policy concerns, the value of co-operation outweighs differences in constitutional status.

New member state regional representations

Horizontal networking and co-operation forms a mainstay of the activities of regional representations from the new member states. Given that their overarching objectives relate primarily to funds-seeking, project development and deriving benefits to the home region from the

experience and expertise of other regional actors, alliances with other regional representations are a crucial task in their activity portfolio. Wielkopolska's EU team in the regional capital, Poznan, for instance, feel that "the main goal of having a Brussels office is to increase the intensity of contacts with EU institutions and our partner regions".⁹⁵

At present, the networking of regional representations which fall into this bracket aims firmly to derive tangible benefits to the region which can be mobilised quickly. For instance, the region of Silesia in Poland is heavily involved in actions undertaken by regional representations in Brussels to harness the knowledge and skills of other regional authorities in Europe which have had a longer experience of managing initiatives in this area. Thus for Silesia, the aim of this networking strategy is to transfer experience and knowledge on clean coal technologies, in particular, carbon capture and storage. However, what is noticeable is that whilst they actively participate in these networks established between regional representations in the EU, the new member-state regional representations do not, as yet, initiate these actions, though that is a longer-term aspiration.⁹⁶

Relations established between the representations of new member-states' regions and those with a longer history of interaction in the EU serve to bolster further these offices' primary Brussels objectives of "promotion" and funds-seeking. This occurs across two dimensions. First, the practical side of relations established with other EU regions can serve to enhance the flow information, ideas and expertise to the newly created offices. This can both strengthen and consolidate their own activities, allowing them to learn from practices employed by other regions, as well as to improve the quality of intelligence transmitted downstream to the domestic centres of authority in the region.

Second, partnerships established at the Brussels level are fundamental in the pursuit of EU programme-specific funds. These partnerships advance these region's aims to draw down such funding assistance, but they are also crucial in the management and implementation of the funding schemes themselves. The office head of the Czech regional representation of South Bohemia, for instance, represented his region's Chambers of Commerce on an EU-funded trans-regional project on innovation and technology clusters, as it was not economically viable for the Chambers themselves to travel to Brussels for a single meeting.⁹⁷

Thus, the alliances developed by the representations of regions from the new member-states reflect the objectives set for them by their sending authorities, and these emphasise heavily a form of "return on investment in the office", that is, delivering tangible or measurable outputs

and benefits for the home region. Yet, whilst building good relations with other regions is a necessary first step towards securing the vast majority of project funds, even the most basic networking activities can prove problematic to the offices of new member-state regions in Brussels. Scope for Brussels staff to engage in autonomous activity-building does tend to vary, but in those offices with a more sceptical domestic regional administration, questions do still tend to be raised as to the value of EU office staff attending large numbers of conferences and events in Brussels, asking directly “what’s in it for us?”⁹⁸ A lack of mainstream European experience within the regional administration often means that the skills needed to manage an EU office effectively are not well understood; thus, the differences between local administrative culture and the approach required by an EU representation are often not appreciated by the sending agencies.

Given this tight control over activities in Brussels, the pursuit of policy-related aims tends to be marginalised by new member-state regional offices. They lack both the expertise and the capacity to pursue policy-related alliances to the extent that offices from regions from the EU15 do. The chronic lack of resources that affects so many of the representations of regions from the new member-states dictates that attention be focused first and foremost on delivering the objectives set for them. With often only one member of staff, these offices struggle to meet even the most basic requirements of networking and relation building.

Whilst there is a recognition amongst staff within the regional representations from new member states that they could undertake a much greater degree of horizontal co-operation, such as forming strategic alliances on policy issues with other regional offices, the views within the domestic regional administrations on the “proper” role of the region’s outpost in Brussels have to date limited further the capacity of new member-state regional representations to engage fully in horizontal policy-related networks. As a result, these regional offices are often, in name, members of the policy groups which interact regularly with the Commission, such as EPRO or EUREGHA, but in practice, they play only a very limited role in such groups, given that they can commit so few resources to such undertakings. Overall, the two chief constraints on the representations of regions from the new member states – lack of resources and a limited view on representative scope within the domestic administration – lead to a qualitative difference in the activity profile of these offices when contrasted with those of both constitutional and administrative regions from the EU15.

Relations established between the regional representations from individual member-states vary in nature and intensity. The Czech regional representations in Brussels meet together on a monthly basis, and even have an informal arrangement to try and avoid competing for the same EU money.⁹⁹ Polish regional representations, on the other hand, do not have such strong working relations with each other, and directors have often not met their 15 counterparts from the other *voivodships* based in Brussels, referring to them directly as “the competition”.¹⁰⁰

A new question for these regional representations is that of resource *pooling*. Regions from Slovakia and Hungary both share a joint regional house in Brussels, as do those from the Netherlands; here, a functional model exists which sees the individual offices pool their collective resources so as to maximise information gathering and information flows. But there are clearly advantages and disadvantages to each approach, and other new member states have thus far been reluctant to follow this model. Whilst a joint Czech house could offer benefits in terms of resource-sharing, knowledge-pooling and a combined greater “hitting power” in Brussels circles, it may also result in a weaker ability to position each individual Czech region as a separate player on the EU stage, to raise their own visibility and awareness of the different *kraje* as regional actors.¹⁰¹ As a half-way measure, in October 2007, eight of the 14 Czech *kraje* took up residence in the newly-opened “Czech House” in Brussels, which is also home to the Czech Permanent Representation to the EU and several Czech business agencies. The creation of this focal point for Czech interests in the EU has offered an opportunity for those regions which previously did not have any form of office in Brussels to launch an EU representation. Notably, those Czech regional representations which had greater resources, a longer history of operating in Brussels and larger staffs, such as both Prague and the region of Central Bohemia, have remained in their own offices rather than joining in this new venture.

In the Czech case, given the small size of the country and its relatively small population (10.3 million), a joint Czech regions’ representation would serve to mediate the interests of a territory roughly equivalent to the German *Land* Bavaria, though not in terms of regional GDP. That the Czech regions regard collaboration as equating them to a single German region with a similar population to that of the Czech Republic as a whole underscores clearly the differences between regions across the EU and indeed the wide variation in individual structure and operational remit of what are generically referred to as regional representations in Brussels.

Given the larger number of players involved in Polish regional interest mediation in the EU, it is perhaps unsurprising that as yet, the idea of a joint house of Polish regional representations in Brussels has not gained much support. Whilst the longer-term cost-saving benefits are clearly recognised, the initial start-up costs appear to be prohibitive, and would demand the concerted efforts of one or two regions to drive the initiative forward, something which no region is at present willing to invest the resources to do so. The general sentiment amongst Polish regional actors is that they would be willing perhaps to join such an arrangement, but are unwilling or unable to invest the necessary resources to implement the project themselves. A further factor hindering the success of the Polish regional house could well be the size of the country and the divergent interests of the 16 *voivodships* themselves; already there is marked contrast in the level of co-operation in Brussels between the regional representations from Poland, when compared with co-operation amongst the Czech regions. The Czechs form a closely-knit group where resources and intelligence is exchanged freely; the heads of office meet together on a monthly basis, and even have an informal arrangement to try and avoid competing for the same EU money.¹⁰² The Polish office directors tend not to have met all of the other Polish representatives, and in fact refer to them as “the competition”. Polish regions in Brussels regard access to intelligence and resources as prized elements of comparative advantage, much more than do their Czech counterparts.

Commercial opportunities, partner searches and funding analysis

Constitutional regions

Economic promotional activity rarely forms a core feature of the activity profile of constitutional regions' offices in Brussels today. Instead, the activity remit of constitutional regions in the EU has been driven largely by the demands of the domestic politics of Europe, with economic issues a secondary element of their work profile.

Thus, both trade and investment work along with direct EU funds-raising through some form of regional tendering and project application support forms only a very marginal element of the constitutional regions' interest representation in Brussels, if indeed at all. As with other aspects of regional offices' activities, an evolutionary trajectory is in evidence in this regard; during the early 1980s – prior to the 1988 overhaul of the EU's structural funding regime – many key decisions

were taken by Brussels actors, and certainly, the larger constitutional regions' EU representations – from Germany, Spain and Italy in particular – were established *in part* to set up and maintain funding flows to the region (Badiello, 1998; Heywood and Closa, 2004; Jeffery, 1997b). Indeed, one of the first offices to open, that representing the German *Land* of Saarland, was named the “*Bureau d'Information et de Promotion économique*” – the Saarland information and *economic promotion* office,¹⁰³ only changing its name to the representation (*Vertretung*) of the Saarland in the late 1980s. This shift in the context of regional representative activity in the early 1990s is significant; at around this time, the new East German *Länder* began to establish their own representative offices in Brussels. Like their West German counterparts, they also made the protection of domestic competences the core motivation for the establishment of their new EU representations, despite being eligible for much greater EU structural and other funding assistance than the West German *Länder* (Zumschlinge and Sierigk, 1994: 542).

Today, direct funds-seeking remains only a marginal activity of the constitutional regions in Brussels. They do not provide downstream EU “funds-harnessing” services to individual companies or to organisations in their respective regions. This is reflected in the job profile of the staff employed in these representations; none of the constitutional offices employs a dedicated EU funding officer, whereas many administrative regions do invest in such a post. Similarly, few constitutional regions' offices conduct “partner searches”, a common activity of regional representations in Brussels and directly related to the pursuit of project support grants for the home region. For the German *Länder*, the constitutional regions with the longest history of direct interest representation in Brussels, these resource-intensive direct EU funds-seeking services have increasingly been sidelined in favour of a stronger focus on policy.¹⁰⁴

Yet whilst constitutional regions' representations in Brussels do not offer any kind of paid-for service to regional constituents in seeking out EU funding streams, they do regard themselves as responsible to the wider electorate in their region for communicating possible EU funds and partnership opportunities. A number of constitutional regions' offices do produce regular EU updates or bulletins, which, once approved at Cabinet level within the home administration, are then distributed to a wide range of regional actors with an interest in EU issues, such as individual companies, regional trade associations and universities. In this sense, the constitutional regions' offices fulfil an

important communications function in allowing all economic groups from the region to access EU information which may prove beneficial.

Despite this indirect focus on commercial opportunities for the home region, the “economic” dimension of the constitutional regions’ activities in Brussels continues to be further downgraded. The majority of constitutional regions’ representations have gradually been moving to devolve responsibility for EU funds-seeking to other regional bodies based in the city; many universities and associations of groups of higher education institutes have a representative voice directly in the city, for instance, and as such are active in harnessing their own set of EU funds and project opportunities from available schemes. Other principal actors carrying out this kind of “economic” work for the region more broadly include city representations and local authority groupings, who are opening their own representative offices in Brussels in increasing numbers (Burgsmüller, 2003: 172). Sub-regional representative offices, such as local authority groupings and city representations now tend to take responsibility for providing assistance on EU-funded projects within their home regions, offering basic services such as filling in EU project and funding applications.¹⁰⁵ All of this activity frees the constitutional regions’ representations in Brussels themselves from any such responsibilities and allows them to focus purely on policy-oriented issues.

A good example of how the “constitutional” dimension of these offices’ role in the EU has superseded any economic function that regional offices may once have fulfilled, is provided by the UK, where the new representations of constitutional regions have had to carve out a new role for themselves alongside pre-existing regional coalition offices, which placed a greater emphasis on the economic dimension of representative activity. When the UK’s new devolved authorities came to establish their EU offices in the late 1990s, it was clear from interaction with the existing UK regional representations and from the experience of other EU-regional representations in Brussels that a functional separation of responsibilities would be required. The “economic” aspects of regional interest mediation could be left to the broader regional consortia who would continue to offer an EU representation to a coalition of sponsoring agencies. As a result, the resources of the UK devolved administration representations in Brussels are dedicated to policy support activities, leaving the wider territorial interest coalitions in Brussels to carry out direct EU funds-seeking.¹⁰⁶ Thus, whilst the UK’s devolved administration representations in Brussels aim to promote the interests of their territory in Brussels in the wider sense, through the indirect

benefits of lobbying and networks established with other regional representatives based in the city (OFMDFM, 2004b: 21–22), their core objective is to promote the interests of their sponsoring authorities in the EU, that is, *governmental* interests. Their political remit is paramount. As a result, their resources are dedicated to policy support activities, leaving the wider territorial interest coalitions in Brussels to carry out direct EU funds-seeking.

Administrative regions

At a practical level, the day-to-day work of the EU representations of administrative regions is driven by the demands of a broad subscriber base rather than a single regional administration. This type of regional representation tends largely to provide information and advice downstream to more than a single agency in the home region. Thus, their activities relate largely to the *services* provided to members, and it is here that EU offices of non-constitutional regions differ most clearly from their constitutionally endowed counterparts in their activity profile.

One of the main services such offices can offer to stakeholders in the region is a regular communication on funding streams of relevance to regional actors. This consists generally of regular briefings on funding opportunities, as well as finding appropriate partners with whom joint applications to EU funding programmes can be submitted. This is widely regarded as a key task of such regional representations, and on their own websites, the majority of French, Finnish and Swedish regional representations, for instance, list this service as one of the core benefits of their presence in Brussels.

Although the subscriber-driven regional partnership offices in Brussels offer services to their client base in the home region, ultimately the level of membership determines the precise level of service which each member can receive. The general rule is that larger subscribers have greater access to the service provision of the office. Services provided as a matter of course to core funding partners may be provided at a cost to lower level members (Berg, 2007), or take a lower priority.¹⁰⁷

A further core service provided to subscribing members is a regular EU news bulletin and general information is publicly available on the organisations' websites. However, access to much of the most important information on funding opportunities is provided only to members; in many instances, this will be available instantly online, using a password-protected area of the website.¹⁰⁸

Facilities provided by the regional offices in Brussels are an important service which these representations provide to their members. "Hot

desks" for partners to use when they are visiting Brussels are particularly appreciated, as is the use of meeting rooms.¹⁰⁹ The hosting of seminars which enable members to learn how to engage better with the EU and its institutions, as well as to access funding streams, is also a core objective of these regional offices.¹¹⁰ Further services, such as hosting meetings in Brussels, tour programmes and information seminars may also be arranged for subscribing partners.

Where regional economic development agencies form a core element of the alliance underpinning regional representations in Brussels, funds-seeking and partnership activities form a central part of the activity profile of the office. This is particularly true in the Scandinavian model (Berg, 2007; Kettunen and Kull, 2009), and indeed for a number of French representations.¹¹¹

Historically, within the subscribing partnerships which determine the activities of these regional representations in Brussels, economic development agencies have tended to play a key role,¹¹² and this has had an important impact in defining the manner in which UK regional offices have traditionally engaged with the EU.

Today, the regional economic development agencies of the UK all remain core partners within the memberships of regional offices. Scotland Europa, for instance is part of the Scottish economic development agency, Scottish Enterprise. Within the English regional offices, the regional development agencies are leading partners. Thus, the economic development of the region maintains a high profile in the overall strategic direction of UK non-devolved regional offices in Brussels.

Nevertheless, the strategic engagement of UK regional partnership organisations on the EU scene has "matured" to encompass broader, upstream policy-shaping activities alongside the traditional aim of securing access to EU funds,¹¹³ largely as a *result* of the creation of the English RDAs and their role in the regional office partnerships in Brussels today. As agencies with a broad, policy-focused remit in the UK, they have encouraged wider strategic engagement with the policy process in Brussels, as too has a recognition of the fact that the UK's eligibility for EU structural funding will inevitably decline over the next few funding periods.¹¹⁴ This history of British regional engagement in the EU, and the evolution of representations of British regions in Brussels, underscores how changes in the domestic governing system are ultimately reflected in the pattern of interest mediation in Brussels.

However, a purely "economic" or funds-raising rationale of even the partnership-driven regional representations has ebbed since they were first established. Early investigations estimated, for instance, that

50 per cent of the WEC's work came from private companies looking for markets in Europe (John, 1994: 743). Today, few if any UK offices provide this kind of direct business service. Their membership base rarely extends to individual companies, but rather to broader regional industrial associations, or enterprises with an explicit public service remit. The WEC itself notes that a purely economic focus has become *less* important within the organisation's overall activity remit at the Brussels level since the organisation was first founded in 1992 (Gray, 2002: 9).

For subscribers in the region to the Brussels office, the EU represents a huge opportunity to find support for collaborative projects with other European organisations. Finding a suitable partner is one of the core pre-requisites for drawing down funding from EU programmes. Thus, partner searches on behalf of sponsoring organisations constitute a core service delivered by regional offices.¹¹⁵ The now defunct Wales European Centre (the WEC), for instance, was regularly dealing with over two hundred targeted partner searches per year, and maintained a database of over 600 contacts in the region to be able to match up potential project partners quickly (Gray, 2002: 24).

Whilst many of the above services have an economic dimension, other services provided by subscriber-driven organisations are more overtly *economic* in their focus. Scotland Europa regards its main role today as being to deliver "intelligence, policy analysis and strategic *funding advice* [my emphasis] about the European Union and its relevance to Scottish organisations" (Scotland Europa, 2004a). The Scotland Europa partnership even has a further team of officials based in Scotland who are focused solely on EU funding (Scotland Europa, 2004b).

Thus, the provision of direct EU funds-harnessing assistance forms a core element of what subscribers to these regional offices expect from their membership. The expectation that these offices deliver returns on members' investment is highlighted further by the fact that regional partnership offices in Brussels are more likely than the regional governmental representations to produce an annual report outlining achievements and successes in financial and other terms.¹¹⁶

New member state regional representations

Whilst all regional offices would claim to be the "eyes and ears" in the EU of their home or sponsoring agencies, those eyes and ears will be following different information flows, as a result of the differing objectives set for them in the domestic arenas. For the offices representing the new member-states' regional authorities in Brussels, the focus is

resolutely on pursuing information streams that relate to forthcoming funding opportunities for the region as opposed to new policy proposals, for the time being. As a result, the “economic” dimension of their activities forms the lynchpin of their whole operations.

The regional representations from the new member-states understand their remit not simply in terms of feeding information and intelligence downstream to their sending authorities, but in delivering relevant and targeted intelligence on funding opportunities to other key actors in the region, such as universities, research institutes and other public or semi-public agencies. The explicit aim of this activity is maximising the inflow of EU money for broader regional development via, for instance, project partnerships, bids under various EU programmes for capacity building in policy sectors such as the environment or transportation projects, along with funds drawn down from formal INTERREG, cross-border financing schemes, all of which can be bid for only through joint partnerships with other EU regions. Regional administrations in the new member states are unabashed in their pursuit of EU monies through their Brussels offices: “Here in the region we decide on projects and we send our Brussels team out in pursuit of assistance to those projects, for instance, developing our regional airports, hospitals and so on. Our team in Brussels should then find money to support this”.¹¹⁷ These EU-funded projects also allow for the transfer of knowledge and expertise into the region through collaboration with more experienced teams elsewhere in Europe.¹¹⁸

Given low levels of awareness and recognition of the new regions’ concerns in much of “old” Europe, for the new member-state regions a foothold in Brussels also offers an opportunity to showcase the region and its economic profile to a wide audience. Regional representations therefore work to connect key economic actors in the region with those in other regions with similar economic profiles for the exchange of knowledge, expertise and experience, framed within an EU context. For instance, the region of Silesia in Poland, with a large coal mining industry, has actively cultivated relations with Wales through contacts between the respective Brussels offices, in a bid to transfer knowledge and expertise on regeneration in post-coal mining regions. The Silesian region’s decision to focus on adapting its coal mining industry towards a leading edge technologies on carbon capture and storage has led its EU office to lead seminars and conferences on these technologies in Brussels, again with the express aim of deriving direct benefits to the region as a result of this networking and expertise.

Promotional activities: culture, goods, tourism and investment

A representation in Brussels has long been seen as an attractive means by which regional entrepreneurs could present themselves to a wide European and global marketplace. Brussels remains the single biggest meeting point of commercial and other economic interests outside Washington DC (Jeffery, 1997b: 195), and is therefore an attractive arena in which to maintain a “shop-window” display for the region. Profile maintenance on the Brussels scene is therefore a key means by which regions can position themselves within European networks.

Constitutional regions

Whilst not a central element of their role and function, constitutional regions do engage in a certain degree of cultural promotion through their Brussels representations, usually in conjunction with other regional or local organisations. Many will on particular dates of note host exhibitions, receptions or other cultural events to promote their own individual region and its heritage or industries amongst a targeted audience of invitees. This forms part of the “soft” agenda of the constitutional regions’ diplomacy in the EU, creating informal connections and good will amongst partners that may prove useful in future negotiations or intelligence gathering.

As noted above, interest representation is multi-dimensional and regional self-promotion can have spillover benefits in a large number of other areas of constitutional regions’ Brussels activities.

However, the trend in recent years has been for constitutional regions’ EU offices to carry out fewer explicitly “promotional” activities, as a sharper and more politicised focus to their Brussels work has become paramount – most notably in connection with the drafting of the Lisbon Treaty and the formation of the RegLeg grouping. Whilst constitutional regions’ offices remain keen to exploit opportunities in Brussels for “regional promotion” in all its guises, they retain tight control over the expenditure of resources in this area. Those with a more direct policy relevance will be favoured over the “cultural” promotion efforts favoured by other types of regional representation. Equally, a gradual shift over time in the accountability for resource expenditure has also led to an increasing sidelining of promotional activities. The recent shift towards the integration of Brussels offices into the strategic directorate at the heart of political control in the region, such as the Minister President’s Office, has also seen increased limitations on

cultural and promotional activities in favour of a more policy-oriented approach.

Ultimately, however, the level of resources dedicated to regional promotion through these kinds of activity will depend on the strategic involvement of the *Länder* administrations. Indeed, the head of one German *Land*'s European affairs division firmly believes that for constitutional regions' representations in the EU, the "shop window" aspect could be entirely cut from their remit. Other directors of constitutional regions' Brussels offices refer dismissively to exhibitions and related cultural promotion work as "a drain on resources",¹¹⁹ resources which could be better utilised in activity with more immediate policy relevance.

Administrative regions

Promotional events form a more substantial element of the activity remit of the administrative regional offices in Brussels than they do for the constitutional regions, though this activity has been waning in recent years. On occasion, representations of administrative regions host plays, art exhibitions and music performances by regional groups visiting Brussels, or organise thematic evenings around a cultural or ethnic dimension of their own region such as a specific national or regional day, a food or wine event or some other such cultural issue. These occasions are used as important profile-raising opportunities, as well as a chance to network with invited guests.

Such events often have a broader aim. Cultural events serve as a "hook" by which other actors in Brussels can be made more familiar with the region, its specificities, geographical location and heritage.¹²⁰ Naturally, these offer opportunities for broadening out to encompass aspects such as industrial or demographic profiles, issues which have a more explicit business "promotional" underpinning. This ultimately serves to disseminate more widely amongst European partners a sense of what the region can offer in terms of tourist or investment potential.

New member state regional representations

For the regional representations from new member states in Brussels, the catch-all term of "promotion" remains their highest priority,¹²¹ though this particular term is understood in a specific way by this type of regional representation. "Promotion" in this sense relates to raising awareness of the existence of the region in the first place, establishing name recognition or regional branding so to speak¹²² as well as then engaging European partners with the various historical, cultural and geographical issues which they feel it is important to convey as

part of a profiling drive. In this area, the new member-state regions are facing something of an uphill battle; not only were most of the territorial entities which today operate as “regional” actors in member states such as Romania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland created only in the late 1990s as part of a broader agenda of political restructuring, but their names are often unfamiliar to many of the actors they are trying to connect with. As tourism in these regions is also less developed than in many of the older member states, individuals working in the key institutions have an even lesser sense of who the new member-state regional actors are, or what the region consists of. To that end, “promotional” activities undertaken by the regional offices of new member states in Brussels have a huge task to carve out for themselves a foothold and to establish themselves as reputable partners with those regional offices which have simply been in the game longer.

Whilst partnership arrangements with EU15 regional representations have undoubtedly helped to fulfil this objective, name recognition remains a barrier to effective horizontal engagement with partners, and indeed, with the EU institutions themselves. The promotional work undertaken by the new member-states’ representations in the EU therefore serves to paint a broader picture of the relevant challenges within each of the new regions in the member states which joined the EU in 2004 and 2007.

The greater emphasis on the broad objective of “promotion” that underpins these offices’ very existence leads to a very different activity profile within new member-state regional representations than those of the majority of EU15 regional representations. For instance, these offices make great efforts to maximise the “open doors” opportunities made available by the EU institutions, such as the Committee of the Regions’ Open Days and other events that celebrate regional diversity, cultural traditions and heritage. Conversely, such actions tend to be sidelined by many of the constitutional regions’ EU representations. Equally, staff working in Brussels at the representations of new member states are often requested by their home administrations not simply to focus on the EU and its agenda, but also to engage in commercial opportunities for “promotion” which take place in Brussels. They therefore regularly man stands at tourism trade shows and other trade and investment fairs in the city.¹²³ This activity does not form part of the remit of constitutional regions’ representations in Brussels; equally, the majority of administrative regions’ EU representations also do not factor such activities into their office activity plans.

Concluding comments

When we begin to unpack the varied nature of what is generally termed the “regional lobby” in Brussels, it is evident that there is a highly differentiated pattern of activities and interactions undertaken by the different types of regional representations in the EU which operate today. The activity profiles of these representative bureaux vary in accordance with their status in the domestic polity, and the varied European ambitions of the regional actors which sustain such representative offices.

As to whether or not the activities of regional representations, then, constitute governance, multi-level or otherwise, the picture is – predictably – varied.

The upstream activities of regional representations in the EU are at the margins of governance – in some instances. Where the activities of a regional representation in the EU serve to pursue a specific outcome with regard to the EU legislative process, or to shape thinking on a specific piece of legislation, or even at the informal ideas shaping process through the Commission’s renewed emphasis on what it terms “structured dialogue” with stakeholders, then regional offices are very clearly part of a broader understanding of what constitutes EU governance. Equally, the downstream perspective also allows for an accommodation of governance. Where the activities of a regional representation derive the necessary political goods – informational, ideational and strategic – to interact effectively within domestic intergovernmental policy negotiations, then again, they can be viewed, broadly, as one element within a much bigger picture of what constitutes “governance”. Certainly, regional representations do make an impact in policy debates and help to formulate policy solutions which can inform the final texts drafted within the EU institutions. Yet this impact remains unsystematic and varies in accordance with policy sector, the nature of the debate and the broader salience of regional concerns.

Is, then, what new member-state regional offices do really about governance? Measuring influence directly is an inexact science, as competing interests may each be lobbying for the same policy outcome. There is no clear benchmark of influence in the complex EU polity. The logic of continued representation in Brussels however suggests that a willingness by sponsoring authorities to finance such endeavours over the longer-term equates to a perceived added value return on that investment. A more precise analysis of these lines of accountability is presented in the later sections of this book.

If, however, what regional representations do is simply about funds and creating relationships that will generate some form of useful feedback for the home region – learning from how other regions do things, or specific linkages in a sector such as high-tech industries, connecting businesses in a number of regions in the high-tech economy or such like, learning – as do Silesia and Wales – what best to do in a post-coal-mining region – then this is not about contributing to “multi-level governance”. At best it is the stimulation or the creation of “multi-level interactions”, facilitating relationships, the sharing of knowledge and expertise and, given the right conditions, generating new funding streams from European programmes.

We can use this information now to flesh out the map of related institutional forms, building up a fuller activities-based model for our understanding of regional representations in the EU (Tables 4.1–4.3).

We can see already that whilst many activities do cut across all types of regional representation in the EU, there are certain areas, notably the level of “customer” assistance for the region and interaction with

Table 4.1 Modelling the activities of regional offices: comparison with embassies¹²⁴

Activity	State embassies	State to multilateral embassies	Multilateral to state embassies	Permanent Representations to the EU	Regional representations in the EU
Information gathering (downstream)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Information provision (upstream)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Consular assistance, that is, to individual nationals	✓	×	×	×	✓
Business assistance, that is, “consumer oriented” diplomacy	Partially	×	✓	×	Dependent on type
Self-promotion, that is, carving out a role	×	×	✓	×	Dependent on type

Table 4.2 Modelling the activities of regional offices: comparison with EU lobbyists

Activity	Single interest offices	National organisation	Eurogroups	Direct membership EU organisation	Ad hoc coalitions	Regional representations in the EU
Forming ad hoc pressure groups on single issues	✓	✓	✓	✓	–	✓
Providing tailored, selected information to membership base/HQ (downstream)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Networking for access to key decision makers (long-term effort)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Providing information to EU institutions (upstream)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
EU institutional change advocacy/Treaty lobbying	×	×	×	×	×	Dependent on type

the national permanent representation, which do vary across type of regional representation. This is to be expected from our understanding of the differentiated nature of these offices' aims, as defined by the national context.

This analysis of the activities of regional representations in the EU has further underscored the wide disparities between the various types of such offices, and the extent to which their operational remit is underpinned by domestic factors. This differentiation is further substantiated by divergent approaches to the resourcing and management of regional representations, that is to say, the manner in which they are provided

Table 4.3 Modelling the activities of regional offices: comparison with regional missions overseas

Activity	Regional trade mission	Regional representations in the EU	
Trade promotion services to business	✓	Dependent on type	
Partnership searches for business needs	✓	Dependent on type	
Promotional activities in cultural realm such as exhibitions, receptions	✓	Dependent on type	
Networking with and exchange of best practices with other like-minded regional offices	✓	✓	
Formal role in high politics	×	×	– though informally for constitutional regions’ representations through relations with Permanent Representations
Informal political communication	✓	✓	

with a toolkit through which to carry out their activities, as presented above. It is to an assessment of resources and resourcing policy that we now turn, in order to uncover further how and why regional representations differ so widely from each other.

5

Resourcing and Organisational Principles

One of the most effective means of capturing variation between types of regional representations in the EU – those representing the interests of regions with legislative competences, those representing regional administrations with no formal constitutional role or a group of subscribing interests, and the bureaux representing regions from the new member states – is through an understanding of their resourcing and organisational principles. These dynamics provide a means of exploring the extent to which the different types of EU representations operate as functional tools of domestic administrations, or rather, whether they aim primarily to provide services to end users or clients. Analysis of the downstream relationship between Brussels office and domestic agency offers insights into what a region aims to achieve through active representation in the EU, and how that strategic aim is delivered. These differences in turn underpin variation in objectives and outputs.

The organisational aspect is a key area of difference between the contrasting types of regional office in the EU; whilst some offices enjoy bountiful supplies of staff, budget and upstream information, others struggle to cope with the quotidian demands of opening mail and answering emails. These differences can be understood through divergent domestic sending contexts; the more that these offices are tasked with achieving, the greater the resources they are provided with to achieve those aims.

We can begin to get an insight into this variation by considering the principal resources with which regional offices in Brussels operate, namely their human resources. The human capital deployed via regional representations in the EU is an under-examined aspect of their role, yet it potentially offers insights into variation between the types of regional representative activity in Brussels, the offices remits and their

impact. Considering human capital in the round allows for a broader understanding of the manner in which regional representations fulfil their remit and offer initial insights into variation between types of office. Staffing policy and practice in turn can be assessed across three dimensions: first the *level* of staffing in Brussels regional offices, and the evolution of Brussels-based teams over time. A second dimension relates to the *profile* of those staff members in terms of education, training and professional background. Third, the *role of staff transfers* to and from the Brussels office can be assessed as a key means by which organisational practices and cultures are transferred from domestic contexts to the EU, and how this in turn shapes the role and function of certain types of regional offices.

But staff alone do not constitute the full “resources” of regional representations in the EU, and analysis of resource variation has to consider the primary dimension of financial resources. Resources impact on regional offices’ operation and indeed on their levels of engagement in the EU. Put simply, regional representations are hamstrung without financial support to carry out the duties demanded of them by their sponsoring agencies.

However, there is a strong argument to suggest that the comparative analysis of human resourcing issues is a more insightful measure than a study of spending capacity alone, for a number of important reasons. First, methodological issues prevent effective comparison of financial resourcing. The budgets of regional representations in the EU are not transparent, nor are they comparable across the board. Some include the staffing costs only of locally engaged staff and the high-level, more permanent, managerial positions, whereas others include the salaries and associated costs of seconded staff, financed largely by individual departments within the home administration.

Second, even a fleeting examination of regional representations and previous analyses of their operation supports the view that there is no directly discernible and measurable correlation between financial resources alone, and *effectiveness*, however that is understood. Activities in Brussels deliver variable results to the home or sending authority, dependent on the manner in which the available funds are deployed. More money alone cannot guarantee more efficient and effective representation.

The same evidence also suggests, however, that *human* resources can and do impact upon the overall effectiveness of regional representation. In terms of the information resources which a regional representation in Brussels has at its disposal, it is fair to say that the greater the human

resources capacity of an office – in other words, the larger the Brussels team – the greater its intelligence gathering capacity will be. This is simply because there are more “hands on deck”, and therefore there are more people able to follow developments and network on the Brussels scene, thereby “raising the game” in those areas of interest to the home region.¹²⁵ Furthermore, the quality of the individual staff members has a marked impact on an office’s capacity to fulfil its remit in Brussels.¹²⁶ Thus, human resources policy can provide initial evidence concerning the “effectiveness” of regional representation in Brussels.¹²⁷

Third, whilst the overall financial resources available to a regional administration may well have a bearing on their approach to EU policy, they are not the only factors which dictate the main features of that administration’s EU work. It has been argued elsewhere that limitations imposed on regional administrations by financial and budgetary constraints at the national level can be compensated for by strategic application of other resources, such as leadership (both personality and level of interest in European affairs), alliance-building capabilities and intentions, and constitutional legitimacy, including the relationship between an administration and civil society (Jeffery, 1998; 2000; Palmer, 2008). Evidently, a strong team of any size and skilful direction of a representation can overcome a number of deficiencies elsewhere in an office’s resourcing. Analysis of the budgetary resources alone therefore does not provide direct evidence for the “hitting power” of regions as facilitated through their Brussels bureaux, nor does it correlate to the offices’ upstream or downstream effectiveness.

Finally, it is also illuminating to consider the physical manner in which regions choose to represent themselves in the EU. Not only is a regional representation a “shop window” for a region to the audience of partners and investors in Brussels, but the EU office itself can set out the European aspirations of a given region. Whilst this dimension of a regional representation’s operation is as constrained as staffing policy by the availability of financial resources, the office that a region chooses to run as its regional representation, where it is situated and who it is co-located with, all set out markers of a region’s intent within the European Union.

Human resources policy in regional representations

Organisational theory suggests that there is an identifiable, causal link between human resource management and organisational performance (Hiltrop, 1996; Rynes et al., 2007). A fuller understanding of how

the most vital resources of regional representations are determined and deployed strategically helps to flesh out the more nuanced understanding of types of regional representations that this book explores.

Let us turn now to consideration of the three primary dimensions of human resourcing policy: staffing levels, profile of the workforce and the role of staff transfers, that is, secondments to the EU representation.

Staffing levels

The number of staff deployed within a region's EU representation offers a proxy of the importance attached to an EU operation and profile by a particular region. A quantitative analysis of the number of personnel employed in regional representations thus allows for some assessment of "the *intensity* of regional investments in Brussels" (Blatter et al., 2008: 483), which differs across types of regional representation operational in Brussels.

Constitutional regions

The staffing levels of constitutional regions' EU representations tend to be amongst the highest across the member states, but this is variable. As with all types of representative office, the level of staff in this type of regional representation has grown significantly over the years since their inception.

The discernable trend in the staffing of the constitutional regions' representations in Brussels today is that personnel levels are continuing to increase. An increased number of policy officials have been deployed to the regional representations in the EU since their inception, in order to monitor strategically selected fields which reflect the administration's policy competences within the domestic sphere.

The development of German regional representations in the EU is informative, given their long and extensive history of engagement in the Brussels sphere, and indeed as they continue to set a benchmark in regional representation to which other constitutional regions aspire.¹²⁸ Staffing levels have steadily been increasing since the first *Länder* offices in Brussels were opened in the 1980s. The original forms of German *Länder* offices were opened with only the minimum of staff and resources, usually a three-person team: one director, one assistant policy officer and one secretary¹²⁹ (Fechtner, 1992: 158). This model then evolved and expanded over time; as the *Länder* offices gradually developed greater policy competences, their staffing levels increased. Workloads could then be divided up, to be dealt with by specific policy officers, enabling the *Länder* offices to deal more comprehensively

with their information and communication tasks.¹³⁰ By 1994, the average German regional office in Brussels had seven members of staff (Zumschlinge and Sierigk, 1994: 543).

The population size of the home or sending *Land* was not the key variable in underpinning this development. Amongst the first offices to develop policy-focused teams in Brussels largely reflecting the distribution of competences within the home administration, were the Hanse Office and the Rhineland-Palatinate office, both small operations, alongside those of Bavaria and Northrhine-Westphalia (Fechtner, 1992: 158). The approach to strategic engagement with Europe adopted by the individual *Länder* governments was therefore much more influential in determining how the individual *Länder* representations in Brussels expanded over time.¹³¹

This model of starting small and then gradually growing the core staff is common to most constitutional regions' representations. For instance, the offices established by the UK's newly-created constitutional regions in the late 1990s, all operated with relatively modest teams at the outset; the Scottish Executive European Union Office (SEEUO) opened in 1999 with a staff of six (Bulmer et al., 2001: 135), the National Assembly for Wales Office¹³² (NAWO) had two full-time staff with diplomatic status (NAW, 2000), and the Office of the Northern Ireland Executive in Brussels (ONIEB) had one head of office and one secretary (OFMDFM, 2004a). Subsequently, all of these new representations have gradually established a weightier presence in the city. All three DA offices have seen their core teams expand significantly since 2001. Likewise, the Belgian region of Bruxelles-Capitale was staffed only by two full-time officials and a part-time support assistant on its inception, and now has six full-time members of staff (Mbaye, 2009).

This rise has been driven largely by an expansion of the policy portfolio adopted by constitutional regions, in line with the expanding competences of the EU itself since the founding era of regional offices in the mid 1980s (Table 5.1). Most recently, the key aim underpinning the staffing patterns of constitutional regions' representations today is that one official from each home ministry within the *Land* administration should be seconded to the Brussels office – the so called “mirror model”, whereby the work of the Brussels team should directly reflect the work of the sending authority.¹³³ There are, however, significant variations from what staffers in the constitutional regions' offices refer to as an “ideal model”¹³⁴ and it remains a representative pattern which only the larger and more well-equipped offices manage to reproduce exactly. The availability of resources thus dictates that certain ministries may not be represented in the Brussels office,¹³⁵ or that individual members of staff

Table 5.1 Increases in staffing levels within constitutional regions' representations

Regional representation	Country	Year of establishment	Number of staff on inception	Staffing level 2009
Saxony Anhalt	D	1992	4	12
Baden Württemberg	D	1987	2 full-time policy officers and 1 part-time support staff	26
Thüringen	D	1992	4	8
Bruxelles Capitale	B	1994	2 plus 1 part- time	6
Emilia Romagna	I	1994	3	13
Catalonia	E	1986	4	16
Scottish Government	UK	1999	6	12

Source: Mbaye, 2009.

in the representation may have joint portfolios. Two ministries of the Saxony-Anhalt administration – the Interior Ministry and the Ministry of Justice – have in the past co-sponsored one official seconded to the *Land* representation in Brussels¹³⁶; likewise, Saxony's Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Home Affairs have co-sponsored a policy official in Brussels. These individuals split their workloads between the sponsoring agencies in the domestic arena.

At the other end of the scale, policy areas of major significance for a constitutional region may be allocated greater human resources within the Brussels team; for instance, two staff from Saxony's Economics and Labour Ministry are currently on secondment to the Brussels office.¹³⁷ The larger regional administrations, notably Bavaria, are likely to send two and possibly even three officials from home ministries to work in the Brussels representation, giving them the largest staff of any German – or indeed other member-state – regional representation in the EU with a team of 30. In the eyes of their peers, the greater personnel resources means that the Bavarian office is better equipped to provide up-to-the-minute information on all policy areas to the relevant home administration, so that ministers in Bavaria are fully versed on all the latest developments.¹³⁸ This arrangement is felt to provide a more effective means for channelling EU experience back into the home or sending administration.¹³⁹

The teams of policy staff based in the region's EU representations therefore extend domestic administrative structures; officials based in Brussels feed directly into the relevant policy teams within the home administrations, enhancing the EU dimension of their work.¹⁴⁰

Staffing increases in the constitutional regions' representations in the EU are a direct reflection of the growing relevance of the EU's expanding policy portfolio for sub-state politics in the member states. Whilst the Single Market undoubtedly expanded the EU's policy remit into fields of domestic policy responsibility previously the sole domain of sub-state authorities, the key major new area in which the constitutional regions' representations are currently investing within their Brussels representations is that of Justice and Home Affairs (JHA). Not only is this an increasingly sensitive and politicised field of domestic policy responsibility in the legislative regions, but current estimates suggest that up to 70 per cent of legislation in this field is determined by EU law.¹⁴¹ Whilst few offices employed a policy official to cover this policy field only a few years ago, this is currently the single most significant area of investment within regional representations.

Quite clearly, there is a direct correlation between the level of staff in a constitutional region's EU office and the amount of expertise that can be fed "downstream" into the administration's domestic work, and equally "upstream" into the policy forums and opportunities for direct interest mediation that exist in Brussels. Team expansion in Brussels is generally regarded as having an almost immediately discernable effect. The Scottish Government for instance notes that, as a direct result of an expanded team in Brussels, the external relations division as a whole has become much more capable of carrying out work on horizontal issues – beyond its traditional sectoral focus.¹⁴² Similarly, the effect of an expanded Brussels team was felt almost immediately within the EU team of the WAG in Cardiff, with staff noting an upturn in emails and other communications concerning possible options for engaging further in EU developments.¹⁴³ From a constitutional region's point of view, a key advantage of maintaining a Brussels office comes from having dedicated staff who can devote their time solely to European issues, rather than as a shared function, as is often the case in the regional administrations themselves, particularly in the smaller administrations.

Administrative regions

There is a degree of commonality regarding the staffing levels of constitutional regions' Brussels representations and those of administrative regions or subscribing coalitions of regional partners. The common

factor is that these offices have increased their staff over the years since their inception, and that the trend in staffing remains upward, not downward (Kettunen and Kull, 2009; MacNeill et al., 2007). This type of representation has also become increasingly “professionalised” in that they too have developed a model of a team of policy officers who each cover one aspect of the representation’s business, though this does not necessarily replicate a dedicated policy team within the region.

As Table 5.2 indicates, staffing levels within administrative regions’ EU representations remain generally lower than within constitutional regions’ representations offices in Brussels, but, like those from the legislative regions, have also generally followed an upward trajectory.

Again, like their constitutional regional counterparts, this type of regional representation has increased its staff profile in line with the expanding policy remit of the EU itself and, as a consequence, in accordance with the demands of its membership base for increased information and expertise. The expansion of policy officials in Brussels is also in part due to increased recognition by organisations within the region that direct engagement in the EU offers opportunities for policy-shaping, and increased demand within the region for access to these forums has equally driven expansion of many regional representations in Brussels (Kettunen and Kull, 2009; MacNeill et al., 2007). The dynamics of this trend are revealing; staffing increases have been instituted

Table 5.2 Increases in staffing levels within administrative regions’ representations

Regional representation	Member state	Year of establishment	Number of staff on inception	Staffing level 2009
Central Denmark	DK	1990	1 full 1 part	5 full 2 part
South Denmark	DK	1996	2 full	13 full
Ile de France	F	1999	4 full 1 stagiaire	7 full
Languedoc-Roussillon	F	2006	2 full	3 full
Irish Regions Office	IRL	2000	1 full	2 full
South Netherlands	NL	1999	1 full 1 part	4 full 1 part
Noord Brabant				
West Sweden	S	1994	2 full	12 full 1 part

Source: Mbaye, 2009.

not as a result of greater “pull” towards the EU institutions or a demand on their part for additional input from regional representations. The demand load, rather, has come from the downstream direction, that is, actors within the region itself. Their increased demand for knowledge and intelligence of the Brussels EU marketplace has been the major catalyst for growth in the administrative regions. Equally, the expansion of the EU’s policy and funding portfolio and its increasing relevance for regional businesses, enterprises, voluntary groups and local authorities has also meant that in order to fulfil their remit effectively, this type of representation has needed an extended and enhanced team (Kull, 2007). These kinds of pressure have led directly to increases in staff, such as at the House of the Dutch Provinces, where the original model of 12 members of staff (one per province) has grown to a team today of 18 (Mbaye, 2009).

Overall, the staffing expansion within administrative regions’ EU representations has not been concentrated in any one particular policy area, but has been a general extension of existing capacities in core fields of administrative regional representations’ business.¹⁴⁴ These tend largely to focus on trans-national projects that can achieve significant benefit for the region through access to EU funding resources, in areas such as skills, innovation, research, or the more formal projects financed under Commission INTERREG programmes, or involve substantial benefits to the region through knowledge transfer and the delivery of “soft” skills benefits to the region.

More recently, administrative regions have begun to develop larger regional profiles in Brussels, by bringing on board other organisations from the region which may also have established an EU presence. That is to say, some city administrations or associations of local government actors have linked up with other regional partners such as individual companies, regional banks, universities and such like, to form wider regional partnership offices. This trend is pronounced in the UK, where it has been driven largely by regional restructuring within the domestic political arena (Moore, 2007), but is also in evidence in France and within the Scandinavian regions (Berg and Lindahl, 2007). The large number of British regional representations that were set up in the late 1980s and early 1990s – such as County Council offices, City Council offices, or various consortia of public sector actors¹⁴⁵ – were consolidated into representations with a more specifically *regional* focus in the wake of the reorganisation of responsibility for regional development within England and the creation of nine Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) in 1999. This era was also the boom time in the expansion of

operational remits for UK administrative regions, raising staff numbers in the Brussels offices considerably. Expansion of staffing levels since then has been more limited and depends largely on individual policy objectives and funding opportunities.¹⁴⁶ A similar development is in evidence for other administrative regional representations. In the case of the Stockholm Region office in Stockholm, the partnership has been extended gradually over the years to bring on board increasing numbers of locally-based actors, although these have been restricted to the governmental sphere. Whilst operated from the outset in 1996 as a partnership office for the City of Stockholm, Stockholm County Council and the Association of Local Authorities in Stockholm County, the platform for representing regional interests in the EU has since been extended through various partnership agreements to other county councils in the region, such as Mälardalen, Sörmland, Västmanland and Uppsala.¹⁴⁷

The figures set out in Table 5.2 indicate that most administrative regional EU office do tend to be smaller – on average – than constitutional regions’ representations, though there are of course exceptions to this general rule (Mbaye, 2009). Finnish offices have around three members of staff, along with a number of stagiaires, though limited resources have generally meant curtailing the office’s activity to fit the staff as opposed to increasing the staff and expanding the activity remit (Kull, 2007). Most Swedish and Danish regional representations have between five and seven employees, having grown in number over recent years (Mbaye, 2009).

New member state regions

Staffing levels within new member-state regional representations in Brussels are marginal when contrasted with the larger and more resourced teams from the EU15.

The current model is to have an average of two members of staff per representation. This tends to be made up of a director or head of office, along with a trainee (stagiaire), although the biggest offices from new-member state regions have three to four members of staff along with a number of trainees; some struggle with one member of staff only.

Whilst staffing levels in the EU offices of new-member state regions are lower than those for regions from the EU15 across the board, though where there has been change over the limited time of their existence in Brussels, the trend is notably upward (Table 5.3).

It is generally felt that the limited human resources in these offices constitute a hindrance to the offices’ general work.¹⁴⁸ One Polish official complained that as she was the only member of staff employed by the

Table 5.3 Increases in staffing levels within new member-states' regional representations in the EU

Regional representation	Member state	Year of establishment	Number of staff on inception	Staffing level 2009
Lower Silesia	Poland	2001	1 full	2 full-time 1 part-time
Presov	Slovakia	2003	1 part-time	2 full-time
Podkarpackie	Poland	2006	1 full	1 full-time 2 part-time
Kujawsko-Pomorskie	Poland	2004	1 full	2 full
South Transdanubia	Hungary	2006	1 full	1 full
Trencin	Slovakia	2005	1 full	1 full
Presov	Slovakia	2003	1 part	2 full
Liberec	Czech Republic	2005	2 full	2 full
Wielkopolska	Poland	2003	3 full	3 full
Central Bohemia	Czech Republic	2004	1 full	3 full
South Bohemia	Czech Republic	2004	1 full	2 full
Pilsen	Czech Republic	2006	1 full	2 full

Sources: Mbaye, 2009; own research.

region in Brussels “I have no assistant, so I spend 25 per cent of my time opening emails and post”¹⁴⁹; equally, a one-person Estonian regional representation stated that “there is only me and that is not enough” (cited in Kull, 2007).

Understandably, low staffing levels limit the amount of activity that regional representations can undertake, and it is the representations of the new member-states' regional authorities which at present are most hamstrung in this regard. Whilst co-location remains an option that can facilitate resource sharing, this is not the common paradigm. Polish offices in particular feel particularly limited in their ability to deliver an effective regional representation on account of low staffing levels.¹⁵⁰

Before moving on to assess the qualitative dimension of the staff in regional representations in Brussels, the counterpart to the above assessment, we can however stress that regional representations in the EU, cumulatively, have changed the *qualitative* nature of territorial interest representation in the EU. Collectively, the sheer *number* of employees

in the *regional* representations of any member-state outnumbered that of their respective *national* Permanent Representation. Ultimately, this strong presence of regional personnel in Brussels can be said to undermine the “gatekeeper” position of national administrations, at least regarding the flow of information in the multi-level system (Blatter et al., 2008: 483).

But whilst the level of staff in regional representations offers an informative insight into the level of investment regions are prepared to make in their EU presence, the calibre and quality of that staff need to be considered alongside these statistics. Here we can see that different types of regional representation prioritise the investment in different sets of core skills and professional profiles amongst their workforces.

The staff profile of Brussels offices

Constitutional regions

For the offices in Brussels which represent the interests of constitutional regions in the EU, staff engagement is part of a broader and longer-term human resources strategy. There are direct and managed linkages established between the Brussels teams and the policy teams operational within the domestic regional administrations. This differentiates the constitutional regions’ EU representations significantly from their non-constitutional or administrative regional counterparts.

The overwhelming majority of policy officers in the larger and better staffed offices in Brussels are today seconded from the relevant ministries within the home administrations, with only operational staff such as porters, office managers and such like locally employed from the Brussels pool. The policy staff who work for the constitutional regions’ representations in Brussels are therefore mainly civil servants recruited through the normal recruitment procedures within the domestic system. These have been seconded to Brussels by means of an open selection process. By and large, there is no standardised procedure within the regions’ administrations for the selection of staff to be seconded to Brussels, and actual procedures are determined largely within the ministries themselves rather than having rules available across the board.¹⁵¹ Practices therefore vary widely and ministries ultimately decide themselves who they send.

But this has not always been the case, and as with so much of what today counts as standard practice amongst constitutional regions’ Brussels representations, this reliance on seconded staff has emerged only over time. Given the legal and constitutional difficulties over their

establishment (see Chapter 3), the pioneer German *Länder* offices in Brussels were staffed not by *Land* civil servants but by former EC officials or by *Länder* civil servants who were technically on leave from their official duties (Michelmann, 1990: 227). The first Northrhine-Westphalia liaison office in Brussels, which opened in 1986, was staffed by two civil servants of the *Land* administration who had been granted special leave to establish the office. Although these individuals were technically employed by the other key partner in the venture – the state bank, the *Westdeutsche Landesbank* – in practice they were responsible to the Head of the Minister President's Office (*Staatskanzlei*) (Dorn, 1991: 333–334).¹⁵² This was a calculated move dictated by the circumstances of the time, as noted above, allowing the *Länder* administrations to argue these were not official extensions of the *Land* bureaucracy, and hence did not provide evidence of parallel *Länder* foreign policy or a threat to federal primacy in foreign relations (Michelmann, 1990: 235). But with the resolution of the legal and constitutional position of the German regional representations in Brussels, the *Länder* administrations were quickly able to develop and operationalise a staffing system that would facilitate the EU objectives of the domestic teams.¹⁵³

It is today the case, then, that the EU office is staffed as an operating component of the domestic administration. Not only are their activities mutually reinforcing (Chapter 4), but the EU branch is inextricably linked to the home team through a targeted personnel policy of exchange of knowledge and experience. The main criteria for selection to a secondment position to a constitutional region's representation in Brussels is that an official must know the home administration and their own ministry well, so that they bring to their Brussels post a network of relevant contacts within the domestic system.¹⁵⁴ They should also be familiar with the working procedures and practices of the home ministry, in order to maximise the flow of information to the target audience.¹⁵⁵ Hence, it is likely that anyone sent to Brussels will have been working within the home administration for a number of years prior to their EU secondment, will have been thoroughly schooled in the working practices and behaviour of the home administration, and will thus remain very much part of the sending team, even after they take up their new post in Brussels. This socialisation aspect is a lynchpin in the logic of the secondments system operated by regional administrations, and applies from junior policy staff right up to director positions, where heads of constitutional regions' representations in particular tend to be high-ranking civil servants from the regional civil service, who also have extensive knowledge of the EU machinery.

There are, however, certain exceptions to this general rule of thumb, and certain positions will be made available to new staff on the strength of their European experience. Such experience is, however, generally specific to the region and its administration, such as having worked for some other regionally-focused institution in Brussels, a regional MEP or on relevant policy issues within the Commission.¹⁵⁶ Nonetheless, Brussels experience is highly valued, even at the most senior levels; a recent deputy director of the Rhineland-Palatinate office in Brussels was recruited for his Brussels experience and had not previously worked in the *Land* administration. The head of the Scottish Government EU Office is a UK civil servant with experience of national government administration.

Administrative regions

Recruiting from the Brussels pool is today the common pattern amongst the administrative regions' representations in Brussels; positions are awarded to staff who can demonstrate the most relevant skills and experience for the position. Whilst experience of professional roles in the home region is a preferred attribute,¹⁵⁷ knowledge of the Brussels scene, as well as links to the EU institutions and other organisations in the city, is highly valued; even more so than local linkages.¹⁵⁸ For the Finnish regional representations, for instance, professional skills in lobbying and experience are more valued personal assets than contacts with the home region (Kettunen and Kull, 2009: 126), though being able to demonstrate some relevant experience in the home territory certainly counts as an advantage in the selection process.¹⁵⁹ The educational profile of the staff therefore varies greatly, with no single educational or professional background dominant in the recruitment process.

Furthermore, whilst the constitutional regions' representations in Brussels are able to draw on a pool of staff who have spent a period of secondment in one of the EU institutions, primarily the Commission, or in the national Permanent Representation, this is a useful resource to which the administrative regional representations do not have access. Their staff, therefore, are highly unlikely to have that kind of background experience of senior engagement in the Commission or the Council of Ministers. Nevertheless, Brussels experience generally implies contacts within the EU arena, and these are highly-valued assets in the recruitment process.

For the Finnish regional representations, for instance, the emphasis in appointment of Brussels office staff is that these should preferably

already have experience of engaging with EU programmes and international issues (Kull, EUSA, 2007).

The diversity of the recruitment paradigms deployed by administrative regions' representations in the EU means that office personnel come with a wide range of EU skills and experiences, and it is often the case that only a minority of the staff actually have first hand experience of the region or indeed, regional or local government at all. Given the diversity of administrative frameworks being represented by this type of regional representation in the EU, the staff in these offices do not arrive equipped with the networks and linkages around the region or regional administration, as is largely the case with staff working in constitutional regions' representations. By and large, officials in this type of regional office have been socialised into the Brussels culture of information exchange, policy networks and informal relation building. For such staff, the key challenge to taking on a role in an administrative region's representation is learning about the region and subscribing partners' demands of an EU office. Few of the Brussels office staff have career ambitions within the region, but rather in Brussels, and as such there is a greater potential for a clash of cultures between the directing partnership in the region and the Brussels office dynamic than within the constitutional regions' representations.

New member state regions

The new member-state regions are at something of a disadvantage vis-à-vis their EU15 counterparts in that despite regional reforms domestically which have established new regional authorities with few autonomous powers and resources, there is at yet no fully-fledged civil service at the regional level such as is found in the larger member states. This means that there is limited capacity in these regions to draw on staff resources in the region to operate a Brussels representation. This type of regional office, like those representing administrative regions from the EU15, are still heavily dependent on skills recruited from the Brussels pool of talent.

These offices remain small, and whilst more junior staff tend to be hired locally, the most senior positions do tend to be politically supported appointments, and as a result, these individuals generally have some level of skills and training within the domestic regional administration, which is not necessarily the case within all administrative regions' EU representations. Office directors have commonly been recruited and seconded from the area of the domestic administrations responsible for managing the EU offices. As with the offices representing

constitutional regions, these officials would then be “sensitised” to the intelligence needs and collaborative demands of their colleagues in the region, thus ensuring, it was hoped, a more effective regional representative office in Brussels.

However, given the relatively short period of their existence, it is not surprising that there has been rapid change in the model of regional representation adopted by regions from the new member states. There is currently a sense that a new organisational paradigm is emerging within the offices representing new member-states’ regions. At the outset, there was a drive to secure staff quickly in order to open a regional presence in Brussels rapidly and to secure the relevant information, carry out profile-raising and networking and so on. It was this demand for intelligence, combined with the necessary language skills and a set of relevant contacts, that led to an initial emphasis on locally recruited staff. However, this rapid-reaction approach has receded in recent years, and the offices are now increasingly relying on deployment from the regional administrations as a means of staffing their Brussels representations. There is an increasing preference for this procedure, as it brings the advantage of local knowledge, familiarity with the internal workings of the regional administration along with relevant contacts in the region beyond the administration, that is, with the NGO sector, with voluntary organisations, community groups, educational actors and so on.¹⁶⁰ However, this pattern is variable, and it depends very much on the individual priorities of the regions themselves.

Yet staff turnover within the regional representations from the new member states has been high. The staffing policy which currently governs regional representations from the EU’s new member-states lacks any kind of coherent and longer-term approach. Domestically, regional administrations have had no longer-term policy to allow staff to develop a Brussels-based career, nor to take on a specifically EU-focused role when they return to the region, meaning that there are greater incentives for individuals to quit the regional office and deploy their skills in one of the numerous Brussels-based organisations, either public or private sector. Staff turnover has been high in all but a handful of these offices. This proves problematic on a number of fronts; not only is it hard to develop the capacity of an office when the knowledge and skills gained from managing it are lost to other sectors of the Brussels marketplace, but that capacity also cannot then be channelled back into the domestic regional administration and used to promote further European engagement by those regional actors. No human resources policies are in place, as is often the case in old member states, to second

members of staff to Brussels for a limited period of time, and to reward time spent there with promotion on return to the home administration. It is noticeable that the offices where staff have been retained for a period of time are considered to be more efficient and effective operations. These offices, notably that of Poland's Wielkopolska region, are regarded as leaders among their peer group precisely on account of that stability (Moore, 2008b).

Staff exchanges and “administrative capacity” on Europe

Seconding personnel to Brussels from the sending region, its administration or other regionally-based public- and private-sector organisations, is an increasingly common way in which to staff regional representations in Brussels. This indicates that whilst there is a concern that the representations themselves accumulate experience and capacity, the home regions value rotation as well in order to bring EU knowledge and expertise back to the home institutions (Kettunen and Kull, 2009: 126). As such, secondments have a “sensitisation” effect in both directions: anchoring regionalised concerns more fully within the overarching operation of the regional representation, and encouraging greater awareness on the ground in the regions themselves of how to interact more effectively with the EU policy arena and Commission funding schemes.

Constitutional regions

For the offices in Brussels which represent the interests of constitutional regions in the EU, staff engagement is part of a broader and longer-term human resources strategy. The overwhelming majority of policy officers working in this type of regional representation are today seconded from the relevant ministries of the home administration, with only operational staff such as porters, office managers and such like locally employed from the Brussels pool.

Staffing levels have been increased within the representations of EU constitutional, in order for them to implement something approaching the “ideal” or “mirror” secondment model set out above, whereby an official from each ministry of the administration works for the home team from within the Brussels representation. This emergent “rotational secondment” system means that today, the majority of policy officials are seconded from ministries of the domestic administrations for a fixed period of time, normally around three years.

Thus, despite a small minority of exceptions, the overwhelming recruitment paradigm to the offices representing constitutional

regions in Brussels is that of a rotating secondment system from the home administration. Director and deputy-director level positions do, however, tend to be more permanent, Brussels-based positions, offering some degree of overarching, leadership capacity to the office as a collective enterprise. In terms of organisational culture and practices, this staffing policy serves to underscore the nature of constitutional regions' EU representations as being firmly rooted within the domestic administrations. The framework established to second delegate from home departments of the administration on a regular basis reinforces this logic; it also serves to boost the overall European capacity of the domestic regional administrations.

Within the constitutional regions' administrations themselves, secondments to the EU, both to EU institutions and the representative offices in Brussels, are regarded as important tools in facilitating the flow of intelligence between the EU and the regional level.¹⁶¹ Secondments therefore serve as one of the primary means by which a regional government can put in place its own policy strategy on the EU.

The keyword amongst German *Länder* offices in Brussels is very much that of "sensitisation" (*Sensibilisierung*) for EU affairs. This relates to their activities in both directions: both the upstream "sensitisation" of the EU institutions to the policy preferences and objectives of the individual *Länder*, as well as downstream sensitisation of the domestic administration to the opportunities and challenges presented by the European decision-making process.

The HR policy pursued by the German *Länder* is a core element of this "sensitisation" process. Through a strategic application of human resources policy, the sending authorities can exploit EU experience and knowledge across the administration as a whole. Following a spell spent as a desk officer in Brussels, staff return to their home ministries with a sharper understanding of the rules of EU policy engagement and the implications of certain sectoral developments in Brussels, as well as a host of relevant contacts. Officials thereby act as "multipliers" of EU knowledge and awareness on their return from secondment to Brussels, and serve as a fundamental element in facilitating communication between the *Land* and the EU institutions.¹⁶²

By virtue of their status as public servants of the member states, a number of seconded staff working within the constitutional regions' representations in Brussels have come directly from a period spent working in the European Commission as "Detached National Experts" (DNEs) – positions which are paid for by the sponsoring organisation, and therefore have a dense network of both formal and informal

contacts within the Commission as well as the home ministry of the domestic administration. This is regarded by many leading officials from the constitutional regions as an optimal career path for the policy officers within their Brussels offices.¹⁶³

The general staffing model of the constitutional regions' representations in Brussels today is that there is a core team of staff which is then augmented by officials seconded from – and therefore sponsored by¹⁶⁴ – various ministries within the home administration. As these are people seconded directly from their home ministries, they “know the ropes” and are aware of areas where direct EU information can be useful. They work very much for that ministry throughout their secondment to Brussels, and are regularly in contact with people back home. Representations in Brussels are today staffed in a manner which dovetails as far as possible with domestic administrations, so that staff are seconded from home ministries and therefore have specific portfolios. Each ministry funds their seconded staff in Brussels; ministries thus have to find the funds from their annual budgets and need to plan for them each year.¹⁶⁵

EU experience tends to be regarded as a long-term benefit within German *Länder* administrations, meaning that EU departments do not face institutional obstacles to secondments. Indeed, the high degree of support for EU secondment means that financial resources are invested in creating a reserve of European expertise. Within most *Länder* administrations, civil servants can receive specialist training on Europe, in order to prepare them for a possible future secondment to Brussels (Fechtner, 1992: 158). The *Land* of Saxony, for instance, runs its own specialist training school for public servants, a “public further education college” (*Öffentliche Fortbildungsschule*), in conjunction with the Maastricht-based European Institute of Public Affairs (EIPA). This is used to train Saxony's civil servants in EU politics and public administration. Graduates form a “pool” within the *Land* administration who can then be called up rapidly when an opportunity arises in one of three potential areas¹⁶⁶: as a DNE within the Commission, Saxony's own *Land* office in Brussels, or to sit the EU *concours*.¹⁶⁷

Whilst secondments are generally viewed by constitutional regions as the most effective means to build administrative capacity in Europe, there is debate as to the optimal length of a secondment to the region's EU representation. To carry out the role of desk officer in a regional representation in the EU it is fundamental that an individual develops a set of personal contacts within the EU institutions, other public

bodies in Brussels and indeed, in other regional representations. As one official stressed “This does not come overnight. You cannot simply go like a bull at a gate and say, hello, here I am. There is the social and functional dimension. I would say you need about a year to know how things work” (Kull, 2007).

The German regional administrative system has one of the most well-developed systems for the integration of EU skills and experience within the home teams, and stands out as the benchmark for other constitutional regions in the EU.¹⁶⁸ The ministries within the home administration encourage their staff to view Brussels as a step up the career ladder, rewarding staff potentially with a promotion on their return from secondment in Brussels, though this depends very much on individual circumstances.¹⁶⁹ Of course, those selected for secondment have generally shown a wide range of skills in order to be sent to the Brussels representation, such as a well-rounded education, aptitude, and a willingness to work hard, given the long after-hours engagements required of Brussels staff. It is therefore no surprise that they have managerial qualities, and can fit easily into high-level managerial positions on their return.¹⁷⁰

Despite being pioneered by the large-scale machinery of Germany's 16 regional administrations, this logic of secondments to the EU and the creation of a pool of EU expertise within constitutional regional administrations is a system which other constitutional regions certainly aspire to emulate. For the new constitutional regions of the UK, for instance, secondments to Brussels are regarded as an important instrument for developing a wide basis of EU skills and knowledge within the domestic authorities, one which helps to “mainstream” a focus on EU issues across all areas of the home authority. Equally, a “sensitisation” to EU issues and the creation of a pool of EU experience within the home administration is widely cited as one of the major reasons for encouraging secondment to the EU.¹⁷¹ The Northern Ireland Executive, for instance, has been taking steps “to ensure, with personnel officers, that individuals who have benefited from an experience in Brussels are deployed usefully when they return” (NIA, 2002). As there has to date only been limited experience of staff returning home from the DA representations in Brussels, mechanisms for channelling their experience have yet to be fully established. However, the view is taken that EU experience can certainly enhance an official's portfolio of skills, which will be looked on favourably when that individual then goes before a promotion board within the administration. This has always been the case with staff returning to the Scottish Office from secondment to UKREP,¹⁷² for instance.

Thus – despite the lack of formal procedures – there is a great deal of support amongst the EU directorates of the DAs for establishing effective channelling procedures for staff returning from a spell in Brussels. There is need across the board for EU skills, not least within the EU directorates themselves, and not to target that need would be strategically inefficient.¹⁷³

Express support was given to EU secondments in concordats – the legal agreements in the UK between the central government and the DAs, which act as ground rules for administrative co-operation. The Common Annex to the Concordat on Co-ordination of European Union Policy Issues notes that “staff of the devolved administrations will continue to be eligible for secondment to UKREP and to the institutions of the EU.”¹⁷⁴ The view was therefore taken within the new administrations that extensive benefits would be derived from secondment programmes to UKREP and the EU institutions, but that these could be enhanced through secondments also to the new DA representations in Brussels themselves.¹⁷⁵

But whereas, prior to devolution, secondments to Brussels had taken place largely on the basis of a piecemeal approach, the introduction of a regional government has sharpened thinking on the added value of EU experience and expertise. Currently, the DAs are working to establish a joined-up management strategy to Brussels placements, both to the regional representations and to the EU institutions,¹⁷⁶ aligning secondments more explicitly with policy priorities.¹⁷⁷ Beyond this, the DAs are looking to expand the number of positions to which officials can be seconded. The positive evaluation of early pioneer ministries within the new administrations, who have already seconded staff to Brussels, has encouraged other ministries to follow suit. For instance, despite a long history of funding-related interaction with the EU, the Northern Ireland Department of Agriculture decided to fund a post directly within the ONIEB. This has added value to the home Department’s work on EU matters; even though the Department already knew the Brussels “game” relatively well, they have *increased* that understanding by having one person operating directly in Brussels for them.¹⁷⁸ In the long-term, it is hoped that positive feedback of funding a position within the Brussels office will spillover and encourage further departments to fund similar positions.¹⁷⁹

However, secondment to the Brussels office of the home administration implies certain cost implications, which are usually borne by the individual department from which an official is seconded. In many instances, the cost-benefit rationale of departments’ financial controllers

can lead to secondments being viewed in terms of their financial implications alone (NIA, 2002): not only does an official's salary need to be paid in Brussels, along with additional overseas allowances, but the official also needs to be replaced within the home department, at a cost.¹⁸⁰ As a result, departments can often be very reluctant to circulate trawl notices for secondment to the EU.¹⁸¹ Alongside the financial issues, secondments necessarily imply that a team in the sending administration will be losing an important member of staff with a certain skill set, and replacing that individual can often prove quite difficult.¹⁸² The financial implications and the practical imperatives of losing a team member are some of the issues which European policy officials are currently seeking to address within the new DAs.

Administrative regions

Whilst the core staff of administrative regional authority representations in Brussels tend primarily to be permanently EU-based, there are commonalities between their approach to human resources management and those of the constitutional regions. Given the fundamental difference in the sending context – primarily the lack of a regional executive and fully-fledged civil service – no subscriber-driven or non-constitutional regional office operates as sophisticated a rotational secondment model as those implemented by the constitutional regions' representations. Even those representations which rely primarily on local authority involvement tend to operate only a sporadic and ad hoc secondment system. However, a system of secondments and placements to the Brussels representation is common practice in many of the administrative regions' EU offices, with the added value also seen as an ability to "sensitise" the domestic organisation – of whatever shape or form – to the challenges and opportunities of engagement with the EU.

Most of the regionally-based public and private-sector organisations which buy into the services provided by representations of administrative regions in Brussels look to send staff to those offices to gain direct EU experience and to facilitate contacts. These will either be paid for entirely by the subscribing agency, or will be project-oriented, with funds derived from a particular EU programme. However, the majority of such secondments tend to be shorter than the secondments system operated by constitutional regions' representations, as these act primarily as fact-finding missions. For the stakeholder-driven representations, there is a clear emphasis on the direct value-for-money aspect of secondments; for instance, time spent in Brussels will give a member of staff the skills to be able to manage a project more effectively.¹⁸³

But there is a discernable tension between the aim to “skill up” staff working in organisations in the region for a specific project, for instance, and the need to have a regional representation with a clear strategy and a focus on achieving a clearly defined set of objectives. So whilst the subscribing partners to such regional representative organisations in Brussels often recognise the attractions of secondments, they also voice concern about the strategic benefits for the Brussels organisation as a whole. Subscribers to the former Wales European Centre (the WEC), for instance, were in 2002 found to be anxious that heavy reliance on secondments may have a negative impact on the WEC itself, leading to “parochialism and a rapid turnover of staff” within the organisation (Gray, 2002: 8), a fear which manifests itself periodically within many representations.¹⁸⁴ An optimal staffing model therefore needs to balance an overarching policy agenda and management framework for the Brussels office with the number of placement opportunities within the representation to which subscribing partners can second staff.

Full three- to four-year secondments to the subscriber-driven organisations in Brussels are more unusual than to the EU offices of constitutional regions, though they are not unheard of, particularly within the larger and more well-resourced representations of the administrative regions. In May 2004, for instance, the West Midlands in Europe Office in Brussels took on two new members of staff, both of whom had been seconded from regional organisations which subscribe to the office partnership. A new European Health Policy Advisor’s position in the Brussels office was sponsored by the University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust; the new position of European Transnational Advisor within the office is occupied by an official seconded from the Government Office for the West Midlands (West Midlands in Europe, 2004a).

New member state regions

As noted previously, many of the offices representing regions from the new member states were opened by staff seconded from that part of the regional administration responsible for managing EU monies, particularly EU structural funds. This pragmatic move allowed the new office to connect its work directly to the primary EU-focused activities of the home region. However, this staffing model was set up primarily on a “needs must” basis, rather than as part of an overarching strategy to develop further the EU capacity of the region, such as the transfer of skills and networks established in Brussels back to the regional administration itself. To that end, experienced staff who originally took up positions in the new

regional representations have now been lost to other organisations in the city, and to the private sector.¹⁸⁵ In other cases, office directors have been used as political scapegoats by more Eurosceptic political parties, and have been called back to the home region at short notice when that party took control of local and regional council seats.¹⁸⁶ In these instances – where the work of the region's Brussels representation has been politicised in the domestic context – valuable skills and experience have been lost as a result. For the majority of regional representations from the EU15 member states, the head of office position is a non-political appointment, ensuring a greater degree of stability than in a number of the representations of regions from the newer member states.

Whilst there is a recognition on the part of the administrations in the new member-states' regions themselves that the current situation is far from ideal,¹⁸⁷ there are few schemes in place that aim to attract staff from the Brussels offices back to the region after a number of years in post. An incentives structure that would aim to capture this EU expertise and use it as a means to "sensitise" other parts of the administration to the EU, remains for the time being a longer-term aspiration.¹⁸⁸ Domestically, regional administrations have had no longer-term policy to allow staff to develop a Brussels-based career, nor to take on a specifically EU-focused role when they return to the region, meaning that there are greater incentives for individuals to quit the regional office and deploy their skills in one of the numerous Brussels-based organisations, either public or private sector. Inevitably, with no overarching human resources policy in operation to manage the regional representations in Brussels, EU skills acquired by the staff of the Brussels office, are not harnessed strategically as a means to boost administrative capacity on Europe within the regions themselves. Instead, those skills are generally taken back into the Brussels marketplace by the individuals concerned and redeployed elsewhere in private and public sector organisations.

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, staff turnover has been high in all but a handful of these offices. It is noticeable that the offices where staff have been retained for a period of time are considered to be more efficient and effective operations. These offices, notably that of Poland's Wielkopolska region, are regarded as leaders among their peer group precisely on account of that stability (Moore, 2008b).

Budgetary resources of regional offices

Clearly, the level of financial resources which any regional representation to the EU possesses ultimately determines both the office's size and the

level at which it can engage in both upstream and downstream activities. But, as noted previously, comparison of office resources – whether of the same type, from one member state or across national boundaries – is complicated by the different measures of “budgets” on which offices rely. With salary costs generally the largest single item of office expenditure, those offices which calculate salary costs as part of their own budgets, as opposed to elements of the budgets of individual ministries within the home administration, on paper run much larger operations. But the actual figures belie the reality of the situation. The discussion, below, throws up the key features of regional office’s budgets that are worthy of note.

Constitutional regions

Even regional offices of this particular type in Brussels do not share a single approach to budgetary resourcing and financial management. The governing authorities in constitutional regions manage the budgets for their European arms in very different manners, making effective cross-national comparisons difficult, if not impossible. Neither the Spanish regional administration nor their German counterparts separate out the actual annual costs of maintaining a Brussels representation from other spending figures¹⁸⁹ for that particular part of the administration. For instance, the overall cost to the *Land* Saxony of its office in Brussels could theoretically be established through examination of the financial statements produced by its individual ministries. As the majority of staff working in German regional representations to the EU are seconded from individual ministries, this would need to be derived from ministerial budgets.¹⁹⁰ The Spanish Autonomous Communities and the Belgian regions and communities do not itemise spending on their individual EU representations through the production of any kind of “annual report” on the scale of those published by certain UK regional representations, and would regard such a task as an unnecessary additional burden.¹⁹¹ The cost of their representation to the home administration can therefore only be approximated through analysis of the number of personnel employed, and the size and location of their representations. Periodically, however, challenges to the validity of regions’ approaches to their EU representations have highlighted features of their budgetary arrangements which are valid for this investigation. This point is reflected in developments in Britain in the wake of constitutional reform.

Contention in devolved Britain

The political salience of both the international and EU engagement of the UK’s new devolved authorities has meant that the resourcing of

Brussels representations has become an area of considerable discussion and debate. A Parliamentary Enquiry launched five years after devolution in 2004 into “Scotland’s Representation in the European Union”, concluded that the representation of the Scottish Executive – and subsequently, the Scottish Government – in Brussels should produce an Annual Report on its EU activities. It is the first and thus far only of the UK’s DAs to do so.

The issue of the funds directed towards the EU representations of the newly-created DA offices in Brussels have on occasion been politicised in the domestic arena. Periodically, queries have been raised as to the cost of running a DA representation at the EU level. For the most part, these were raised by opposition parties within the new regional legislatures of the UK, thus had an apparent party-political dimension, though these debates must be read against the background of a general public climate of Euroscepticism in Britain. Equally, the political parties which raised these queries have since ascended to leadership in each of the devolved administrations, yet neither has moved to either close or even reduce in size their EU representation.

In 2003, a Conservative Party Member of the National Assembly for Wales (AM), Glyn Davies, asked in a written question to the First Minister what the projected total costs relating to staff and premises at each of the Assembly’s locations outside Wales would be to the Assembly Government or its agencies during 2003–2004.¹⁹² The reply illustrated that the costs to the Welsh Assembly Government of an EU representation are higher than any of their other overseas offices. This was felt to be justified, given the greater reach and scope of an EU presence and the high domestic impact of EU policy, contrasting with the direct business and investment strategy of the other WAG overseas representations.¹⁹³

Overall, the cost to the Welsh Assembly Government of running an EU operation has increased almost 10-fold over the first decade of its existence (Table 5.4). The annual spending figures as set out in Table 5.5 illustrate how the largest increase in expenditure came in 2002–2003, the transition year during which the parallel subscriber-interest regional representative body – the “Wales European Centre” – ceased to operate. As a result, a number of its representative functions were absorbed into a much larger Welsh Assembly Government presence which was created at that point. Nonetheless, spending on Wales’ governmental presence in the EU has continued to rise since then.

A similar query into the cost to Scotland of running the SEEUO and subsequent Scottish Government EU Office in Brussels was put to the Scottish Executive in 2004, five years after the representation had been

Table 5.4 Projected cost of Welsh Assembly Government overseas presences, 2003–2004¹⁹⁴

Representative office	Cost
Brussels	£542,000
Chicago	£54,800
New York	£391,300
Singapore	£81,400

Table 5.5 Cost of running the Welsh Assembly Government Office in the EU since its inception

Financial year	Totals (£)
2000–2001	89,012
2001–2002	142,948
2002–2003	172,288
2003–2004	463,673
2004–2005	570,003
2005–2006	651,929
2006–2007	761,495
2007–2008	823,134
Total	3,674,482

Source: Welsh Assembly Government, 2008.

set up. Again, the question was put to the Executive by an opposition party member at the time, Richard Lochhead of the Scottish National Party (SNP). Thus, both Conservative opposition – with its traditional unionist focus on less not more British regional representation abroad – and regionalist parties, in support of their aim of “independence in Europe”, have questioned the issue of the value for money of funding DA representative offices in Brussels.

Andy Kerr MSP, the 2004 Minister for Finance and Public Services – the ministerial portfolio at the time, which also covered external relations – provided a written answer illustrating how the costs of operating the SEEUO over the first five years of its existence had almost tripled during that period, from £320 000 in the financial year 1999–2000, to £875 000 in the year 2003–2004. The Minister’s view was that the large increase in expenditure over that period had been due to the representation’s relatively rapid growth, and operating costs would most likely level off thereafter.¹⁹⁵ As the figures below show, Kerr’s view was borne out in practice; a marginal increase in expenditure was followed by a levelling-out.

Table 5.6 Operating costs of the Scottish Government EU Office in Brussels

Financial year	Office expenditure
2005–2006	£1,005,425
2006–2007	£993,082
2007–2008	£1,012,799

Source: Scottish Government, 2008.

The figures set out in Table 5.6 would appear to indicate that the initial period of growth of the DA offices, led by the Scots, is now leading to an era of consolidation. Just as staffing levels have all grown for the DA offices (Section 4.2.1), the budget for the Scottish Government EU Office would suggest that DA representations in Brussels have now reached a levelling-off point.

In defence of their budgetary resources, the EU teams of the home administrations have pointed to the need to spend money on conveying a certain quality of image in Brussels, to have premises located conveniently to the EU institutions and to have the capacity to produce a certain number and standard of papers for the FCO.¹⁹⁶

Administrative regions

The funding of subscriber-based regional representations in Brussels tends to be much more transparent than that of the constitutional regions' offices. This is due to the overall rationale of these offices to provide stakeholder value, transparency and accountability in every aspect of their operation and to fulfil a clear remit, defined by the subscribing partnership.

One of the largest administrative regional coalitions in Brussels, the UK's "West Midlands in Europe" regional representation, derives between 70 and 80 per cent of income from annual subscriptions to the organisation. Further income is also sourced from rental agreements and fees, as the organisation acts as landlord to a small number of tenants in Brussels (Table 5.7).

The same pattern of financing holds for the vast majority of subscriber-driven regional offices in Brussels; the largest element of their budget is derived from subscription dues paid by members.¹⁹⁷

For other administrative regions, the costs of running a EU representative office vary greatly, and do not correlate to any aspect of either their political role or ambitions. Rather, a region's EU representation is financed simply in accordance with the strategic aims for the office,

Table 5.7 West Midlands in Europe Financial Statement 2007: detailing largest items of income and expenditure

	2007	2006
Total	1,490,667	1,600,085
Of which:		
Subscriptions	1,174,918	1,161,990
Rent receivable	253,043	368,943
<i>Expenditure</i>		
	2007	2006
Total	1,485,733	1,593,947
Of which:		
Staff costs	675,179	694,848
Occupancy costs	526,599	624,954

Note: INCOME (EUROS).

Source: West Midlands in Europe, 2009 – online.

Table 5.8 Annual running costs of administrative regions' EU representations

Name of regional representation	EU member state	Annual running costs (€)
Central Denmark	Denmark	650,000
Zealand	Denmark	400,000
Ile de France	France	425,000
Campania	Italy	700,000
West Sweden	Sweden	1,600,000
Scotland Europa	UK	1,000,000

Source: Mbaye, 2009.

as these are determined in the domestic context, by the governing partners (Table 5.8).

New member state regions

Budgetary resources available to this type of regional representation in the EU are minimal – in contrast to those of most EU15 regional representations – though the pattern has changed in recent years, with an upward trend now noticeable. That said, the low levels of financial resources with which new member-state regional representations are equipped has largely dictated both how they operate and how they structure their activities (see Chapter 4). Co-locating with regions from the EU15 in their Brussels offices offered – for the majority of new

member state regional authorities – the most cost effective solution in the initial start-up phase, allowing them to benefit from further spillovers from this relationship, such as the construction of partnerships for joint project applications or more broadly, an opportunity to learn through observation and engagement how to run an EU office. By way of example:

- South Bohemia (CZ) originally shared an office with the region of Lower Austria (A)
- Pilsen (CZ) originally shared with the East Midlands of England (UK)

Only a handful of regional representations from the new member-states established an independent regional presence in Brussels from the outset. Most were able to mobilise in Brussels thanks to generous partnership arrangements from more established EU-regional offices. These arrangements generally provided office space at a reduced rate, technical assistance on project applications and information monitoring, and offered the opportunity for fostering a stronger partnership over the longer-term. The benefits were mutual; the existing regional office could benefit from an enhanced partnership with a new member-state region, and could potentially derive business or project linkages from that relationship, whilst the new member state could learn – through observation and experience – about good practice in the operation of a regional representation. The limited resources available for EU offices has meant that many operations are today still housed within the offices of partner regions; only a handful of representations from the new member states have been able to establish offices as independent entities. This has advantages and disadvantages.

The resource issue remains crucial for the regional representations of new member-state authorities as they work to establish a profile in Brussels. As one frustrated Polish official noted, “without resources, there is a limit to what we can do”.¹⁹⁸

Broadly speaking, the EU representations of regions from the new member states are financed in ways which mirror their EU15 administrative regional counterparts. Budgets are decided in the region, though to a greater or lesser degree, heads of Brussels offices are involved in the budgetary decision-making process (Table 5.9). Those offices which are directly tied to the domestic administration are financed by the global regional administrative budget, as is the case for instance in most of the Polish regional representations. Those offices on the other hand which service and ultimately report back to a subscribing coalition of

Table 5.9 Sample yearly expenses required by regional representations from new member states to maintain staff, facilities and activities

Name of regional representation	EU member state	Annual running costs
Central Bohemia	Czech Republic	250,000
Liberec	Czech Republic	120,000
Pilsen	Czech Republic	180,000
South Transdanubian Region	Hungary	60,000
Lower Silesia	Poland	275,000
Pomorskie	Poland	330,000
Podkarpackie	Poland	150 000
Wielkopolska	Poland	200 000
Žilina	Slovakia	80 000

Sources: Mbaye, 2009; Moore, 2008b.

regional interests are financed through subscribers' dues, along with whatever financial contribution the regional administration makes to that coalition. Finally, those offices which have chosen to employ private companies to represent their EU interests – such as the Czech region of Zlin – have a direct client/service relationship, and so simply pay those companies for the services they receive.

By way of example, the Polish region of Lower Silesia began operating its EU representation in partnership with the UK's West Midlands in Europe office, renting two rooms from that organisation. However, the home administration in Wrocław took the decision to scale back that investment, renting instead only one room for the representation. This move was driven by tight financial constraints in the region and the growing pressure of party-political challenges to the EU office. However, the domestic administration began to realise that their decision may have been short-sighted, as they were unable to offer secondment or stagiare positions to partner organisations in the regions, such as universities, city administrations or chambers of commerce, which would have the long-term benefits of both building European capacity for the region and maximising inward flows of EU project monies.¹⁹⁹

Despite the precedent set by regions from the older EU15 member states in maintaining a permanent representation in Brussels, the national Permanent Representations of the new member states did not provide any financial assistance to facilitate the creation of regional representations in Brussels in the early phase between 1999 and enlargement in the mid-2000s. There were, however, numerous instances of softer

practical support being offered by the Permanent Representations, such as facilitating connections within the Brussels arena, providing a venue for crucial meetings and removing administrative hurdles to the establishment of the new representations.²⁰⁰ The Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the EU, for instance, actively supported the establishment of Czech offices, in all their guises – private companies representing regional partnerships of public and private-sector interests, regional authorities co-located with partner regions from the EU15, individual regional presences – with the Ambassador facilitating key contacts that would advance their work and operation in Brussels.²⁰¹

“Locational synergy”: is maintaining an individual or a joint presence better?

One of the biggest questions facing any regional representation is whether to bear the costs of maintaining an individual presence, or to pool resources in a joint representation, either with other regions from the same member state, or partner regions from another country. Shared facilities will generally include a reception area, conference and meeting rooms, photocopying facilities, utilities such as electricity costs, and IT support services (Mbaye, 2009). The sharing of information between representations is more problematic, and whilst most co-located regions in Brussels see access to information from their co-located partners as a key benefit of that arrangement, for others, particularly constitutional regions’ representations, the flow of information is a sensitive issue that requires cautious management.

Co-locational experiments have been around for some time. In the early 1990s, project collaboration around the English channel led the French region of Picardie and the English region of Essex to establish a joint regional representation in Brussels, a partnership that has since been dissolved. Similarly, a 1990s French-Spanish Centre-Atlantique (Centre-Poitou-Charentes, Castile-Leon) has now also been disbanded (Hayward, 1995: 186). Such alliances tend to be created on an ad hoc basis and many have had only limited life spans.

Yet today, there are a growing number of joint regional presences in Brussels, and it is worth exploring the dynamics underpinning this trend.

Four models of co-location

Alongside the individual regional offices, which remain the most common form of regional representation in the EU, four different models of co-location have emerged in recent years. These do not fall into a

clear constitutional regions/administrative regions/ new member-state regions pattern; there is no identifiable or predictable logic to the choice of co-locational form on the basis of regional type. Nonetheless, co-location is an important element of the overall dynamic of increasing representation in the EU and illustrative of strategic responses to an increasingly crowded Brussels interest marketplace.

i) Co-location of all regions from one member state

The first model of co-location brings together all regional representations from a member state under one roof, a model adopted by the Dutch regions in the shape of the "House of Dutch Provinces" (*Huis van de Nederlandse Provincies*) in Brussels, established by the partner authorities in 2000. Internally, the 12 Dutch provinces are clustered into four regional partnership collaborations, whereby the Dutch northern provinces (3 provinces), eastern provinces (2 provinces), Randstad Region (4 provinces), and southern provinces (3 provinces) operate as mini-clusters within a greater umbrella operation. (online publication "The Dutch provinces and Europe", www.ipo.nl/scripts/download2.php?publication=612) Clearly this arrangement offers the advantage of an increased force, a national flag around which the regional representations can coalesce and a recognisable "presence" in the European ecology of interest representation.²⁰²

Given the resource constraints facing regional representations from the new member states, this particular model of co-location has been explored by a number of the ten states which joined the EU in 2004 and 2007. The Slovak regions have emulated the Dutch model of a shared presence at the heart of the EU, establishing a joint representation for the eight Slovak regions (*kraje*) in 2005. Prior to this point, three of the Slovka regions had already managed individual representations in the EU (Batislava, Kosice and Presov), but the benefits of a combined presence along the lines of the Dutch House model proved attractive enough for these regions to move into a shared location.

But this particular model of co-location is not without its tensions. In the case of the 14 Czech regions (*kraje*), by contrast, the suggestion that they might share a joint presence in the city proved something of a headache. Throughout 2005 and 2006, plans were mooted to establish a joint "regional" presence for the Brussels offices from the Czech republic.²⁰³ Given the country's small size and its relatively low population of 10.3 million inhabitants, a joint Czech regional presence in Brussels would serve to mediate the interests of around the same number of inhabitants as the German *Land* of Bavaria. A Czech house could, it

was argued, offer benefits to the regions in terms of resource sharing, the pooling of knowledge and a combined greater “hitting power” in Brussels circles (Moore, 2008a; Moore, 2008b). By contrast, however, a joint presence, others argued, could also result in a weaker ability to position each individual Czech region as a separate player on the EU stage, to raise their own visibility and awareness of the different *kraje* as regional actors.

Whilst regional actors from the Czech Republic did investigate the practicalities of this model of a shared presence in Brussels, aiming to launch this in time for the Czech Republic’s first ever presidency of the EU, in 2009, not all of the regions were willing to participate in this joint venture. In October 2007, eight of the 14 Czech *kraje* took up residence in the newly-opened “Czech House” in Brussels, which is also home to the Czech Permanent Representation to the EU and several Czech business agencies. The creation of this focal point for Czech interests in the EU offered an opportunity for those regions that previously did not have any form of office in Brussels to launch an EU representation. Notably, those Czech regional representations that had greater resources, a longer history of operating in Brussels and larger staffs, such as the Prague representation, remained in their own offices rather than joining in this new venture. As a result, the Czech regions are clustered together into three joint ventures in Brussels, with only Prague retaining an independent representative focus.

Given the larger number of players involved in Polish regional interest mediation in the EU, it is perhaps unsurprising that the idea of a joint house of Polish regional representations in Brussels, by contrast, gained little traction amongst the established regional (*Voivodship*) representatives in the EU. Whilst the longer-term cost-saving benefits were clearly recognised, the initial start-up costs were seen to be prohibitive. The general sentiment among Polish regional actors in 2005 and 2006 was that they would be willing perhaps to join such an arrangement, but were unwilling or unable to invest the necessary funds. A further factor hindering the creation of a Polish “regional house” was the sheer size of the country and the divergent interests of the 16 *voivodships* themselves; already there is marked contrast in the level of co-operation in Brussels between the regional representations from Poland, when compared with co-operation among the Czech regions. The Czechs form a close-knit group, where resources and intelligence are exchanged freely; the Poles tend not to have met all of the other Polish representatives, and in fact refer to them as “the competition”.²⁰⁴

ii) Co-location of trans-national partner regions

A second model of co-location is more common, and sees partner regions sharing offices within one building. This has advantages in that it allows regions that co-operate on large EU-funded projects to work closely together, interact on a regular basis and share information directly, thus giving them powerful opportunities to strengthen that co-operation by putting together joint bids for future collaborative actions.²⁰⁵ Constitutional status is not a factor which pre-determines this co-locational model, as the representations are operationally distinct. Co-location simply allows for more regular interaction and resource sharing with a number of core “partner” regions in Brussels. This model has been adopted for instance by the German Land of Hessen, which shares premises in Brussels with the Polish region of Wielkopolska, the Italian region of Emilia-Romagna and the French region of Aquitaine. Equally, the Austrian *Land* of Steiermark shares premises in Brussels with the Polish Voivodship of Kujawsko-Pomorskie and the Hungarian region of West Pannonia.

This particular model of trans-national “partnership” co-location of regional representations in Brussels was popular amongst regions from the new member states in the early phase of their mobilisation in Brussels but, over time, many of these relationships have been dissolved in favour of either co-location with other regions from the same member state – as was the case with the South Bohemia Brussels office – or in order to form part of a larger or more favourable partnership.²⁰⁶ As noted above, many of the new member-state regions were only able to mobilise in Brussels and to set up their own regional presence in the EU courtesy of generous cross-national partnership arrangements with EU15 regional representations; the Czech region of Pilsen located with the East Midlands of England on this basis; similarly, the Polish region of Lower Silesia set up its first representation within the West Midlands of England EU office. Without these generous funding opportunities, such as cheaper rents, alongside the ability to learn how to manage a regional presence in the EU, it is doubtful whether these regions would have established an EU office quite as early in the accession process.

This model of co-location is felt to help increase the profile of the individual regions involved in the partnership.²⁰⁷ Not only is the combined presence physically larger and generally more centrally located, but footfall in and out of the building is increased, which itself raises the visibility of a partner region’s presence. Joint representations can therefore act as something of a hub for networking activity.

As a model of representation, this partnership approach is proving increasingly popular, although it has emerged largely on the basis of ad hoc and pragmatic agreements between project partners, rather than as a result of any strategic plan. As a Lithuanian regional representative within one such partnership put it, “this is an international house: my colleagues here meet my partners, I meet their project partners, that develops into mutual partnership with joint projects, conferences, information sharing, help, support communication and so on” (Mbaye, 2009). An official from the Polish regional representation of Kujawsko-Pomorskie indicated that co-location had allowed them to apply for project funding with their office partners (Mbaye, 2009).

Co-location within one building is not exclusively restricted to non-legislative regions, though the issue of shared information can complicate the pattern (see Chapter 6). Some constitutional regions favour this kind of locational partnership arrangement. Successful co-location partnerships do operate – such as that established between the German *Land* of Saxony-Anhalt, which shares with both its fellow German *Land* of Mecklenburg Vorpommern, and the North-East England representation; Poland’s Podkarpackie region and the Austrian *Land* Burgenland are co-located, as are the German *Land* of Lower Saxony and the French region of Haute Normandie.

These collaborative ventures are often initiated on the basis of a joint project, and the established partnership outlasts the original project. Equally, they may facilitate collaboration on broader EU dossiers of relevance to the territories themselves. without a pan-regional focus; the “Baltic Sea House” – in the EU district of Brussels – is home to the regional representations of North Sweden, South Sweden, the City of Malmö and Warmia Mazury and owes its formation largely to the growing focus on a “Baltic Sea Strategy” as a policy area of note – and increasing financial relevance – to municipalities and local and regional authorities in and around the Baltic.

iii) Co-location of a host of regional organisations

The third model of co-location involves a shared presence for all players from a particular *region*. Both Scotland and Wales maintain a distinct, physical regional presence in the city, with their DA and subscriber-driven partnership organisations sharing facilities in one building, alongside other key regional players such as their elected assemblies, local authority groupings and higher education collectives. Whilst operationally distinct, this “locational synergy” (Bulmer et al.,

2001: 134) provides for a much stronger regional presence in Brussels and prevents fragmentation of the regional voice.²⁰⁸ It also provides a single point of contact in Brussels for EU partners (Janet Davies AM (Plaid Cymru), in National Assembly for Wales Record of Proceedings, 2 May 2002), avoiding any possible confusion.²⁰⁹ A shared location is felt to enhance the impact of any one region's presence in the city. It has been suggested that visitors to Scotland House in Brussels may well sub-consciously be exposed to a "Scottish experience", which is greater than any individual organisation based within the building could offer on its own (Bulmer et al., 2001: 137). Co-location facilitates collaboration and co-operation in areas where non-sensitive material can be shared, particularly in the management of regional promotional activities. All partners within Scotland House and Tŷ Cymru for instance assist in the annual "Scotland Week" and "Wales Week" in Brussels: a series of cultural events and policy seminars, which aim to promote the profile of the region more broadly.

Furthermore, the sharing of a physical presence in Brussels by all regional players may help the governmental representations fulfil their broader remit in an almost ambassadorial sense, namely that of establishing contact with other regions and promoting the general interests of the home territory within the wider community (Bulmer et al., 2001: 137). Collectively, the representation of the "region", or rather, the various organisations that have bought into the Brussels presence, whatever the dynamics of internal co-operation, is physically larger, more impressive, and is generally able to locate in a more prestigious location.

This model is, however, case-specific. For many German *Länder* representations, they themselves undertake most of the communication on EU issues with regionally-based organisations such as universities, NGOs, the voluntary sector or business associations, relations which under the new arrangements for the representation of sub-state interests from the devolved UK fall under the remit of separate organisations. As such, there are limited opportunities in Brussels for the German *Länder* to share office space with other organisations from the region. Nevertheless, where constitutional regions do share with other regional bodies under one roof, the outward appearance of a single regional representation on the Brussels scene under one flag obscures the fact that internal divisions of competencies do in fact exist; within the entire building of Scotland House, visitors and staff from the various organisations can walk freely between the offices, but to enter the SEEUO, they must have a swipe-card – which is issued only to staff – or be invited in.²¹⁰

iv) Co-location of sub-regional representations

The fourth model of co-location is provided by the shared services at the “House of Cities, Municipalities and Regions”, inaugurated in 2007. This model is less favoured for the purposes of individual *regional* representation, but instead offers the benefits of co-location to sub-regional actors, cities, associations of local and regional government authorities, and collective groups of sub-state actors – such as the EUROCITIES network – and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions. Despite the name, then, this fourth model offers something of an agglomeration of territorial interests, but does not offer regions the representational framework for their individual interests provided by the other three co-location options.

Whatever the precise model of co-location adopted by a regional representation in Brussels, the benefits of co-operation under one roof are largely the same, and can be summarised as follows:

1. Reduced overall running costs; economies of scale
2. Exchange of information and “proximity of advice”; people with relevant experience are on hand to ask questions of informally
3. Visibility and profile – creating a “stronger address”, as one Czech regional representation put it
4. Organising joint events
5. Building new partnerships and project development
6. Exchange of best practice
7. Co-operation on relevant issues; joint lobbying (Source: Mbaye, 2009).

For every benefit of co-location, there are as many drawbacks, and it is the constitutional regions in particular which have struggled to locate with other regional partners, due to the sensitivity of regional governmental concerns. As the Welsh case study showed, governmental information flows demand a certain degree of protection that is difficult to manage in a shared facility (see Chapter 6). An enquiry undertaken by the National Assembly for Wales in 2002 into the effectiveness of its own EU-level representation stressed the need to emulate the Scottish model of a “locked door between official civil service ambassadorial office and the stakeholder body” (Moore, 2006; National Assembly for Wales, 2002), as a means of securing the flow of sensitive information. The representation of the Austrian *Land* Niederösterreich for instance shares its premises in Brussels with a state bank, in a partnership which lowers the region’s own costs for maintaining a Brussels office. Some

type of co-location was the preferred option for this region's EU representation, given the economies of scale and reduced costs to the administration. However, the partnership was established with a private organisation, simply because the regional executive would not agree to formal meeting rooms being used by ministerial-level officials from other regions. Despite strong collaborative agreements in Brussels with both other Austrian and EU regions, "for political reasons it is simply easier to have our own infrastructures" (Mbaye, 2009).

Location and impact

Whilst it is clearly important for regions to be "in the game" in Brussels, it also matters what exactly they do (activities: Chapter 4), who represents them (staffing issues: Chapter 5), who calls the shots (lines of control: Chapter 6) who they do it with (co-location discussion, above) and indeed, *where* they do it. Unlike for private-interest lobbyists, the physical presence which a region portrays in Brussels and the statement that this makes to its EU partners is a significant dimension of the whole package of the business of "regional representation". Thus the size of an office can be regarded a significant dimension of regional representation in the EU (Marks et al., 2000), but only when this is considered alongside both the issue of co-location, and the choice of location.

The physical size of a region's representation is related not only to the strength of its team, given that members of staff will need their own work spaces; the buildings themselves also provide meeting and function rooms which can form the hub of the region's activities in Brussels. Put simply, if the region has aspirations to shape thinking on particular policy areas, or to co-ordinate on joint EU-funded development projects, then it needs the capacity to host reasonably large-scale events in-house.²¹¹ Thus the drive to be better situated, to increase visibility and to make a greater impact through better premises in which to host conferences, seminars and visiting delegations is common to all types of regional office, and is determined by the level of investment made by the region itself.

The history of regional representation in the EU shows that, over time, most regions have chosen to expand their Brussels teams, and have as a result moved offices to accommodate further staff. Whilst on occasion, moving address in Brussels may have been precipitated by pragmatic factors, such as the need to find new premises once a lease is up, or to physically "co-locate" with a partner office (see above), in most instances, a move of office equates to a shift in thinking within

the home region; a larger Brussels staff is the result of a decision to invest greater resources in the EU representation, and a sense that a stronger team can deliver additional value to the administration back home. Of course, a larger team will mean an ability to engage with a larger number of policy areas, greater input into collaborative initiatives and policy forums, alongside an ability to generate an increased information flow back to the sending administration. The representation of the Belgian region of Wallonia has moved four times since its inception in 1998, each time to accommodate more staff; the Basque country's representation has moved twice since its creation in 1996, again for the same reason (Mbaye, 2009).

Given that a decision to expand the team signals a greater desire on the part of a regional authority to engage with EU partners through its Brussels office, it tends to follow that such a move of office will position the region's representation in a more prestigious address or more visible location. This motivation has encouraged the regional representation of the Europaregion Tirol Südtirol Trentino – a cross-border territorial co-operation unit established with EU financial assistance – to relocate to premises “better situated in terms of vicinity to EU institutions”; similarly, the representations of Baden Württemberg (Germany), Pomorskie (Poland), and the Hanse Office (Germany) have all undertaken moves recently to situate themselves closer to the heart of decision-making power in Brussels. As a “shop window” (Jeffery, 1997) for the region, the Brussels representation can be used to create a favourable impression of the region and in this way to establish connections with partners, over and above those which would be generated by staff based solely in the region.

In September 2004, the Bavarians set an important new precedent for regional representation in the EU, moving from a series of nondescript townhouses in a Brussels backwater to a newly refurbished €30 million representative office in the former Institut Pasteur, situated in a prestigious location between the European Parliament and the EU Commission's new headquarters on Rond-Point Schuman – the biggest and most flamboyant representation to date. This move has upgraded Bavaria's status in the EU, as it makes their presence very difficult to overlook. Crucially, it underscores Bavaria's ambitions in the EU, as a representation at the heart of the EU institutional quarter demands that they be taken seriously as a region with substantial constitutional and economic power in the EU.

Moving into larger and more impressive presences in Brussels, in good locations near to the key EU institutions, may indeed offer greater scope

for hosting regional profile-raising events, but this can only happen if the office has the necessary team, that is, human resources to carry out such events.²¹² Thus, there may indeed be a limited relationship between the budget allocated to a region's representation in Brussels – hence its *size* in terms of both its office space and staffing levels – and a region's desire to influence political outcomes in the EU (Marks et al., 2002: 11), but its ability to do so will ultimately be determined by the calibre of the office's staff and its ability to operate a targeted human resources policy.

Concluding comments

Examination of the resourcing of types of regional representation in Brussels illustrates clearly how the domestic institutional framework of the regions which those Brussels offices represent, determines their shape and structure. The comparison of resourcing presented above has distinguished a clear dividing line between *the resourcing policy but not the resources themselves* of the offices representing elected regional governments – that is, constitutional regions – and those offices representing subscriber-based coalition of regional interests. The complexity of this picture is increased by closer analysis of the newest offices, those representing the new member states' regional authorities. Here we can see that a chronic lack of resources effectively hampers their activities, and that this under-resourcing has its roots in the domestic political view of regional representation in the EU and its objectives.

As has been shown in Tables 5.1 to 5.9, there is no clear causal relationship between regional power within the domestic polity and size of office, measured in terms either of human or budgetary resources. This finding directly contradicts the conclusion presented by Marks et al. (2002) that “the greater the authority of a region in its national polity, the better financed is its office in Brussels” (Marks et al., 2002: 11). Thus, the extent of a region's “power” – constitutionally defined – within the domestic polity does not necessarily mean that it will run a physically *larger* office in Brussels; the EU representations of constitutional regions are by no means better resourced than those representing administrative regions. The causation, rather, runs directly between a region's *objectives* of its representative office in Brussels. A strong subscriber base with a wide range of interests in Commission funding schemes, EU policy developments and collaborative initiatives with other EU regions – such as that operated by the West Midlands in Europe office in Brussels – can result in a much larger EU footprint than

that managed and directed by a less ambitious region with a high level of political autonomy in the domestic polity.

However, on the indicator of resourcing arrangements, which are of course determined within the domestic political system, we can observe that policies vary in accordance with territorial governing arrangements in the home region. Thus, approaches to recruitment and staffing vary around the regional government/regional interest group axis. A staff in Brussels comprised of rotating secondments from home departments or ministries, facilitating the transfer of knowledge into the relevant policy teams within the home administration, is the common pattern amongst the constitutional regions' representations in Brussels. For those regional offices which report to a fully-fledged regional administration, the rotational secondment of personnel to Brussels is therefore emerging as the favoured method of staffing, and is a natural means by which the two offices can be integrated functionally. This replicates the established pattern operated by bilateral embassies, whereby skills and expertise are channelled back into the sending administrations. Lobbying groups and other interest representations, by contrast, rely on a steady stream of EU skills and expertise to staff their bureaux, much as the representations of non-constitutional regions in Brussels do.

The fact that individual policy staff positions in those Brussels offices operating a rotational secondment model are funded by the seconding ministries themselves, encourages the view of the Brussels office as an integral element of the home policy teams. The secondment model has advantages in that staff recognise the operational needs of the home authority and have an informal network of contacts within the sending framework with whom EU-level knowledge can be shared easily. Staffing the Brussels arm from the home authority ensures that the office operates effectively as an extension of that authority; staff are members of the home policy teams, have detailed knowledge of the operational mechanics of the domestic teams and therefore also have greater insight into their EU-level needs. As the evidence presented here has underscored, it is the calibre of the staff, not the pure resourcing of regional representations, from which any office's *effectiveness* will ultimately be derived. A strong and well-managed team can deliver a "multiplier" effect on the EU, achieving impact and helping to implement the region's strategy on Europe both upstream and downstream.

The policy on resourcing Brussels offices, which underpins the manner in which regional offices in Brussels are staffed, therefore clearly depends on the shape and scope of the home or sending authority. The national context of regional offices ultimately determines their

structure. Fully-fledged regional administrations have different requirements of their Brussels staff than do the customer-focused territorial coalition offices, supporting further the primacy of the relationship between regional governing arrangements in the home polity and operation in Brussels. The fact that subscriber-based coalition offices recruit primarily from the Brussels pool emphasises the importance for their work of EU-level contacts and experience. These subscriber-driven regional representations, or those representing the interests of regions which lack legislative power domestically, continue to vie with Brussels-based lobbying organisations for EU talent when selecting their teams.

Analysis of the resource profile of regional representations in the EU remains one crucial component of the overall assessment of variation within the “regional lobby” in Brussels. But it is not a stand-alone frame of reference for the understanding of variation between types of regional representation in the EU. If anything, an appreciation of the resourcing policies which underpin the operation of regional representations leads us to question further the nature of control. Who, at a strategic level, makes the decisions on resourcing levels which ultimately shape a region’s EU footprint? Lines of accountability are crucial in this analysis of variation between regional offices as these can explain decisions taken on both resourcing policies and equally the activities in Brussels which those resources are supposed to underpin. Of course, it is a truism that no rational actor will ever waste resources by investing in an operation that does not deliver any form of return, and indeed – given the increasing demands on public actors to account for spending arrangements – it is of little surprise that there is an overarching emphasis on *value added* within each of these frameworks for accountability. This point is considered further in the following chapter, as we now turn to an assessment of the overall management and accountability of regional representations within the domestic context.

6

Strategic Direction and Accountability

The complexity of the domestic arrangements underpinning the work of regional representations in the EU is not well understood. To the contrary; analyses of European integration, lobbying and interest mediation as well as studies of the dynamics of multi-level governance tend to group together the “regional lobby” or the regional voice in Europe. A more nuanced analysis of the partnership arrangements within the domestic system at the regional level yields essential data which can help to distinguish various sets of motivations and goals amongst Brussels regional representations. Breaking down regional representations into types shows the extent to which such motivations diverge.

But the political control of regional representations in the EU is a fundamental issue that determines their precise nature and function. To understand fully the scope of regional offices’ activities and to interpret their role and function today, we need to assess the domestic accountability frameworks within which regional offices operate. If we are to understand the differences between types of regional representations in Brussels, then clearly we need first to understand how regional offices are controlled at a strategic operational level and how they are held accountable for their actions. By developing a cross-national and cross-type comparison of regional representation, the relationship between the Brussels office and the sending authority can be explored through an analysis of where the EU representation is located within the overall organisational structure at a domestic level. Equally, we can consider how any regional representation’s operations are controlled by its sustaining members. This angle of contrast can provide insights into why such wide disparities exist between regional offices’ activity portfolios and strategic agendas.

It is therefore clear that the notion of a “regional” set of interests is very broadly understood. Any region’s voice in Europe varies with the different understandings of who legitimately constitutes the region’s strategic European partnership. Yet these partnerships are crucial for our understanding of regional offices in the EU. As Chapters 4 (activities) and 5 (resourcing) have explored, it is these varied constellations of actors, governmental and non-governmental, public- and – to a lesser degree – private-sector interests within a given region, which determine both the resources allocated to the regions EU representation, and drive its mission in Brussels. These partnership arrangements are therefore crucial in any assessment of regional representations in the EU or the “regional lobby” in Europe.

The importance of understanding the lines of operational control underpinning regional representations in the EU is highlighted by periodic episodes where public disputes over accountability and lines of responsibility have come to the fore. As we shall see, tensions have arisen both within the member state and at the Brussels level as competing sets of interests have sought to carve out lines of responsibility at odds with the original intentions.

Before moving on to explore accountability frameworks in detail, a few common points can be made. Whilst the different types of regional representative offices in the EU are controlled by a broad array of subscribing partners in the home regions, all of these are responsible for dictating operational strategy and lines of accountability. Control frameworks are located in the regions, not in Brussels. Irrespective of the nature of political governing arrangements in the domestic region – be they federal, decentralised, unitary or other – a few common features are determinable:

- Representations in Brussels operate according to a business plan that is determined in the home region, in consultation with the EU office leadership.
- To a greater or lesser extent, the strategy implemented by the Brussels office is complementary to broader strategic policy objectives of the home administration(s), both with regard to Europe and to sectoral concerns.
- A reporting function will demand that regional offices account to the stakeholders for their action, and offer an overview of the achievements and deliverables secured by the office, normally on an annual basis.

Whilst the actual shape and scope of operations and control processes vary widely, these basic principles go some way to ensuring return, or “value-for-money”, to the end users in the regions.

Various strategic and operational relationships are established between types of regional representation in Brussels and the sponsoring agencies within the domestic regions to which the Brussels offices ultimately report. On closer examination, we find core differences in the approach taken by regional actors to the control of their EU presence, differences that can be related primarily to the levels of resources – governmental, constitutional, financial, ideational – that the regions themselves have at their disposal within the domestic systems.

Many of the functions delivered by regional representations in the EU are “soft” benefits, such as the creation of networks, shaping policy proposals and ideas at an early stage in the EU legislative process, or bringing school and citizen groups to European Parliament debates – few of which are measurable in financial terms alone. It is for this reason that quantitative analysis of inputs and outputs remains a highly unsatisfactory approach to explaining why regional representations continue to exist (Marks et al., 2002). Whilst measuring their added value in precise numerical terms is necessarily an impossible undertaking (Heichlinger, 1999; Jeffery, 1997; Reilly, 1997), it can be assumed that regional offices are delivering value of some kind if they are fulfilling the objectives set for them by the sponsoring authorities; the *effectiveness* of regional offices in relation to their operation is probably best defined as “whether they really get what they want”. If those objectives are set only at a low level, then they may be more easily obtained than more ambitious goals (Heichlinger, 1999: 19). The objectives of regional representations necessarily vary in line with the characteristics of the end users who demand some form of return on investment from their EU office. Thus, an appreciation of the divergent stakeholders who run regional representations in Brussels is crucial in understanding the full complexity of the (“so-called”) regional lobby in the EU.

Yet despite the huge methodological issues presented by the question of “effectiveness”, it is possible to begin putting forward an assessment of the downstream effectiveness of a regional representation to its sending authorities, by considering how those authorities ensure that the Brussels representation fulfils its objectives. What sort of accountability frameworks are established to monitor and control the activities of a region’s EU representation? Do the sponsoring agencies feel that they get what they pay for? What kind of deliverables are measured and

assessed? The manner in which lines of accountability and reporting frameworks are structured is therefore illustrative of the home authorities' expectations of their representations in Brussels. We can explore this best through assessing the two dimensions of accountability and control that shape regional representation in the EU: political control and functional or operational control.

The political control of regional representations in the EU

Constitutional regions

Lines of political accountability are strong and transparent for constitutional regions. Indeed, the most robust accountability frameworks shaping regional representations in the EU is to be found amongst the constitutional regions' representations. The role of this type of office in Brussels is to act as a *tool* of the sending authorities; their resources are dedicated primarily to policy and operational support activities, delivering the European strategy of the home executive and assisting the home executives in carrying out their EU-related business. They report to Ministers on EU intelligence and the delivery of the regional Executive's European strategy in Brussels.²¹³

Rather, then, than acting as autonomous political agents, the Brussels representations of constitutional regions in the EU are "operational service arms"²¹⁴ of their domestic administrations, and are thus integrated components of the regional executive structure. Their activities, resources and strategy are subordinate to the demands of a regional executive. Thus, the EU representation of a constitutional region will be situated within part of a broader European strategy and operational team, and its information and intelligence work serves to support the full remit of the region's EU strategy, such as engagement in networks of legislative regions, horizontal network-building and the cultivation of strategic alliances. This process is consolidated by the staffing policy of rotating secondments (see Chapter 5). But, by being part of a broader strategic approach to the EU, the Brussels representations of constitutional regions have a clear remit to pursue and implement the aims of that regional executive's policy on Europe, whilst at the same time filtering into the EU institutions the policy preferences of their sending authorities. From the perspective of the home region, the representation in Brussels is a functional and operational extension of the home administration.

In response to the growing overlap of regional and European-level competences, and indeed the increasing importance of EU issues to the

regional administration, the strategic control of regional offices has gradually been moved closer to the highest level of political authority within the sending administration. The general pattern of operational control today is that regional governments control the operation of their Brussels office from the centre, most likely a Prime Minister's Office or equivalent. For the majority of constitutional regions' authorities in the EU, they are tasked with increasingly politicised issues, notably issues which will allow the regional authorities to implement EU legislation on time and thus avoid recourse to costly legal action or fines,²¹⁵ and indeed, mitigating JHA decisions. The increasing political salience of European decisions for parties' political fortunes in the regions themselves has further driven a recalibration of control procedures, bringing the Brussels offices much closer to the hub of decision-making in the regional executives.²¹⁶

Yet this position at the heart of regional government is relatively new for regional representations. The history of regional offices' operation in the EU is marked by a progressive movement within the domestic administrations to bring these offices' operational remit ever closer to the centre of political authority. The history of the offices representing the interests of both German and UK constitutional regions in Brussels illustrates this dynamic.

Germany

By way of illustration, the history of the representative office of the German *Land* North Rhine-Westphalia provides a case in point. In 1986, two years after the first German regional representation had been set up, this region's government took the decision to open a representation in the EU. Yet the creation of a Brussels representation was complicated by ongoing debate within Germany as to the constitutional legitimacy of such EU operations. As a result, rather than opening a straightforward "representative office", the regional leadership went about establishing a joint venture with the regional state bank, the *Westdeutsche Landesbank*, thereby obviating the issue of formal legal status. It was only after five years of operation and a clarification within domestic law as to these offices' constitutional position that the *Land* leadership felt confident enough to integrate the Brussels representation fully into the Prime Minister's office (Dorn, 1991: 334).

This move brought the EU representation of North Rhine-Westphalia closer to the heart of decision-making in the region, and was a strategic move that would allow the regional representation in Brussels to be integrated fully into the domestic administration, and thus to function

more effectively as an operational element of the executive. Whilst this may always have been the aim,²¹⁷ the main reason for this shift of control was that for the first five years of its existence, there had been a degree of legal uncertainty as to the constitutional viability of these “branch offices” in Brussels, given that European policy – as an element of foreign policy – was technically a matter for the German Federal Government, under the terms of the constitution’s distribution of authority. But it was a shift in thinking on the nature of European policy *per se* which facilitated such a fundamental shift in how the *Länder* Brussels offices were to be controlled. Experience had shown that, particularly following the Single European Act, many of the decisions taken by the EU were in fact part and parcel of domestic policy-making in Germany and, as such, cut right across *Länder* responsibilities. To classify “European policy” in legal terms simply as a sub-branch of “Foreign Policy” was by the early 1990s no longer appropriate. Rather, there was growing acceptance of the concept of “European domestic policy”. Moreover, by 1991, the Federal Government had come to regard the *Länder* offices in Brussels to a degree as useful undertakings which served certain practical benefits, relieving the Permanent Representation of a number of functions, primarily in the distribution of information to regional actors (Börzel, 2002: 77).

North Rhine-Westphalia was not unique in establishing a joint venture as a means to run its EU representation. Like the German *Länder*, the Spanish Autonomous Communities were also struggling to develop scope for independent representative activity in Brussels. Their solution was similar to the Germans’: to open a public-private organisation. Galicia, Murcia and Valencia all set up offices in Brussels with the legal status of limited trade companies (Mazey and Mitchell, 1993: 105). The Catalan Office, the *Patronat Catalan Pro l’Europa* was established as a registered company, and was founded by the Catalan government, three Catalan universities, the Barcelona Chamber of Commerce, banks and a local authority (John, 1994a: 745). These all served as a form of “camouflage” (Badiello, 1998: 341).

As the federal government’s view of German *Länder* representative offices in the EU softened, they were gradually all fully incorporated into the *Länder* administrative structures. Functionally and administratively – the Brussels offices tended to be housed within certain *Länder* Ministries; the justice ministry was particularly favoured (Neunreither, 2001: 135), given the extensive reach of EU legislation in the *Länder* – but the economics ministry was also used by several *Länder* to steer their Brussels operations (Bauer, 1996: 418). Yet even these solutions

proved to be mere transitory arrangements, and Ministerial responsibility shifted throughout the 1990s to bring the Brussels offices under the direct control of the Prime Minister's Office in all of the *Länder*. This pattern of a gradual increase in the political salience of the EU offices and convergence around a single model for the control of Brussels offices is in evidence across all of the German *Länder* representations. Locating control of European policy and the Brussels office within the Minister President's Office, the highest office of the *Land* administration, the Minister President's Office (*Staats- or Senatskanzleien*) (Pahl, 2002: 1), is now the favoured strategic relationship; in fact, until the late 1990s, Brandenburg was the only German *Land* still to run its Brussels representation through the justice ministry.

Shifting responsibility for the Brussels offices from justice ministries to the Minister Presidents' Offices equates to a progressive upgrading of the role of EU representations within the home administration. Strategic control of the *Länder* offices in Brussels now rests with the Minister Presidents' offices, at the pinnacle of the *Land* administration; as a result, their work is "better integrated into the political helmsmanship of the *Land*",²¹⁸ giving the office a greater status or "hitting power" in interactions with other ministries, and the staff better access to information and people across the home administration.²¹⁹ Furthermore, positioning the Brussels *Länder* offices not *within* any particular ministry, but rather in the overarching political centre of the Minister President's office, is felt to be appropriate, given that their work feeds into the entire spectrum of ministerial responsibility.²²⁰

The nature of domestic governance within the German federal system today means that European policy responsibility and co-ordination is a "triangular" process in every *Land* administration, involving the European capacity of the three centres of policy authority: the *Land* capital, the Berlin representation to the federation and in the Brussels office itself. This underscores the extent to which European policy, federal and *Land* policy have become interlinked, the practical embodiment of "European domestic policy" (Chapter 3). The operational links between the Brussels and Berlin offices in terms of developing an EU policy line provide a vital co-ordination mechanism, particularly for the preparation of the *Bundesrat* EU committee, a key vehicle for the German *Länder* directly to engage with the domestic EU policy formulation process. The German *Länder* today therefore rely on having EU policy teams operating in all three of their political centres, underscoring the key role of an effective Brussels representation. Indeed, as Bavaria's

Minister President Edmund Stoiber stated at the opening of the palatial new Bavarian EU representation in 2004, "In a number of areas, Brussels is more important for Bavaria today than Berlin" (Stoiber, 2004).

Yet in terms of policy co-ordination the "triangular" relationship is not evenly structured. The main differentiation stems from the fact that policy is ultimately determined in the *Land* capital, in collaboration with the *Land* Cabinet. Final decisions are therefore taken by the EU team in the *Land*, whereas much of the content for these policy proposals comes from the teams in both Berlin and Brussels.²²¹

The problem of names

Within the German, legalistic tradition, sensitivity over the "representative" function of *Länder* offices in Brussels has found its fullest expression in the issue of nomenclature. In line with their gradual upgrading as policy-oriented tools of the home executives, the German *Länder* offices in Brussels have also gradually been upgraded in status through their classification within the domestic administration.

The *Länder* offices in Brussels commonly started out in life as mere "liaison" (*Verbindungsbüros*) or "information" offices (*Informationsbüros*) (Bauer, 1996: 417–418). Today, however, they have nearly all been re-classified as representations (*Vertretungen*) – an echo of the term *Ständige Vertretung*, "Permanent Representation", used to refer to Germany's Permanent Representation to the EU, but also the term used to characterise the *Länder* representations to the Federal Capital Berlin. Thus, the name which is today used by the home administrations to characterise their Brussels offices is an explicit reference to the terminology of international law and a direct reference to their Berlin counterparts which have an undisputed, legitimate role to play in the proper functioning of the German federal system (Moore, 2007 – Ger Pols article).

For the *Länder*, using this stronger terminology reflects the appropriate status of the Brussels offices within the policy machinery of the home administrations.²²²

Publicly, the Federal Government has failed to comment on the gradual renaming of regional offices. However, staff working in the Permanent Representation in Brussels are warned strictly not to use the term *Vertretung* when referring to the *Länder* offices, and to instead refer to these as *Länder*, information or liaison offices. The German Foreign Ministry has asked those *Länder* which refer to their Brussels offices as representations to revert back to using their previous names, which do not use the term *Vertretung*.²²³

Accommodating new sub-state authorities: the UK's constitutional regions in Brussels

In depth analysis of the accountability frameworks implemented to govern the EU operations of the UK's newly-created constitutional regions from 1999 onwards reveals the challenges posed by accommodating new tiers of governmental authority within established patterns of member-state interest mediation in Brussels. But with the trend within member states of the EU moving towards additional levels of decentralised authority (Marks, Hooghe and Shackel, 2008), the UK case provides valuable insights into the implications of devolving patterns of authority. These suggest that consideration of an EU representation dimension should form a core component of thinking within devolution and decentralisation agendas in EU member states.

Whilst at an operational level, the picture of control of the DA Brussels offices remains mixed, ministerial responsibility for the DA offices of both Scotland and Wales has shifted closer to the First Minister over the past few years. The management of European issues has achieved a high degree of prominence within the DAs, in spite of the fact that responsibility for EU policy has technically remained a "reserved" issue for the UK's central government.

Despite all of the Brussels offices being in principle subordinate to the sending department – that is, the administrative division of the home authority with overall responsibility for Europe – in practical terms, the relationship between the two is horizontal.²²⁴ The DA offices in Brussels are free to implement their own work programmes as best they see fit, rather than under the direction of the home unit. In fact, the distinction between the two units is functional; the home team is the policy unit, the Brussels team is very much more "hands on"²²⁵ in terms of delivering the specialist intelligence that the policy teams can work with.

With its tradition of separate administrative responsibilities and history of independent engagement with the EU (Mitchell, 1995), the Scots led the march to establish a DA representative entity of their own in the EU once devolution in the UK became a political reality. Despite the central government view in the early stages of devolution that any independent form of DA interest mediation in Brussels was merely a *possibility*, the decision was taken relatively early in the devolution process in Scotland to establish a distinct Scottish Executive presence in Brussels (see also Chapter 3). However, its precise role had to be carefully delineated alongside that of the existing Scottish organisations based in Brussels (Scottish Office, 1997) – in particular the existing territorial

coalition, Scotland Europa. Since its inception in 1992, Scotland Europa had established a formidable reputation as *the* focal point for Scottish interests in Brussels, becoming something along the lines of a “brand name”. But there was never any suggestion that the newly established Scottish Executive would commandeer Scotland Europa for its own purposes; the essentially “quango” nature of Scotland Europa could not fulfil the Scottish Executive’s need for *governmental* representation (Bulmer et al., 2001: 132).

The Scots’ answer to representational issues in Brussels was thus to separate the Executive’s interests from the other public sector and private-sector interests organised in Brussels, with a functional division of tasks. This move radically altered the established picture of UK regional representation in Brussels. As the restructuring of the various organisational and operational relationships became such a crucial – and in the case of Wales, highly contentious – issue in the establishment of DA representations in Brussels, this can be regarded as a “defining moment” in their development.

In July 1999, a new Scottish Executive representation was opened in Brussels, which was, in organisational terms, entirely separate from Scotland Europa. The role of the new office, the Scottish Executive EU Office (SEEUO), was depicted by the then Secretary of State for Scotland, Donald Dewar, as being to:

assist the Executive in supporting the European responsibilities of the Scottish Parliament. It will provide information to facilitate scrutiny of European legislation; it will assist visits to Brussels by Parliamentary Committees...it will ensure that the Scottish dimension is fed in early as European proposals are being formulated. It will work to build links with other European regions and their Member States. (Scottish Office, 1999)

Dewar’s speech underscored the view that representations of the UK’s new Devolved Administrations in Brussels were a *necessary* element of the devolution process.

Yet the pragmatism driving the EU dimension of the devolution programme (Palmer, 2008) encouraged the Scottish Executive to engineer a solution which would allow them to build on the representative work and profile-raising activities carried out by Scotland Europa; whilst the two organisations would be operationally distinct, their individual status could be enhanced through a combined presence in Brussels. The Scottish Executive thus contrived to harness the power of Scotland

Europa's status as a focal point in Brussels, by locating within the same building, which was to be relaunched as a "brand" of its own – Scotland House.²²⁶ This solution brought with it the strategic benefit of maintaining a focus for Scotland in Europe through a single physical presence at the heart of the EU district of Brussels on Rond-Point Schuman,²²⁷ whilst still allowing for an internal separation of operational tasks. The definition of a clearly structured relationship between the SEEUO and Scotland Europa within the wider entity of "Scotland House" was necessary to allow the crucial relationship between the Scottish Executive in Brussels and UKREP to function.

A separation of the tasks of Scotland Europa and the Scottish Executive meant that in practice, a "locked door"²²⁸ between the two organisations restricted the flow of potentially sensitive government information to that which had been sanctioned by the administration. This arrangement provided reassurance to the UK's central state authorities that information *it* would provide to the Scottish Executive on European issues would remain confidential and that there would be no potential for harmful leakages of information which could be used against the UK and its negotiating position.²²⁹ The strict separation of Scotland Europa from the Scottish Executive was seen as a means to secure the new Scottish Executive Brussels office's relations with UKREP and facilitate their work in Brussels.²³⁰

The Welsh model of interest representation in Brussels in the wake of devolution in the UK proved more problematic, and indeed more contentious (Moore, 2006). In line with the new arrangements for corporate governance in Wales, the original approach was to build a broad, multi-stakeholder representative office that built directly on the established work of the existing territorial interest representation in the EU, the Wales European Centre (the WEC), with the new Assembly taking out membership of this body.

However, the nature of the workload on European matters within the devolved administration soon led to calls for a separate interest representation to be established in Brussels, more along the lines of the then Scottish Executive's EU office. Devolution had in practice seen powers come to be exercised in Wales by the majority coalition Assembly Government, and this posed problems for the EU-level representation. Whereas the Assembly as a corporate body had joined the WEC in February 2000, the decision to leave and to reinvest resources in an independent representation in Brussels had been taken by the new Assembly Government. Crucially, the pace of changes to governing arrangements within Wales had not been accompanied by corresponding changes in EU representation.

Despite the political row which erupted, the Welsh Assembly Government successfully set up an independent representative presence in Brussels along the lines of the Scottish model. Thus, the gradual evolution of Welsh interest mediation in Brussels post-devolution towards the approach adopted from the outset by the Scottish authorities suggests the emergence of a general pattern for territorial interest mediation following the introduction of regional government. The former, pre-devolution UK model of regional stakeholder organisations which had become commonplace in Brussels, particularly within English regional representation, but also existed in the form of Scotland Europa, the WEC and NICE, has been found to be an inadequate vehicle for the mediation of regional government interests. Government membership complicates further the already difficult task of establishing a common policy position.

The inadequacies of the Welsh arrangements for DA representation by 2002 led to the restructuring of the established pattern of Welsh interest mediation in the EU. As the *effectiveness* of the first post-devolution model for Welsh interests in Brussels was found to be unsatisfactory, this led to the development of a more suitable framework. The appropriateness of accountability structures was therefore a crucial element driving change. Ongoing communication with and feedback from end users similarly constitutes a process for measuring the *effectiveness* of the subscriber-driven offices in Brussels and serves as a potential catalyst of change.

In the case of Northern Ireland, key players within the province's political establishment did, prior to devolution, overcome their differences to support the opening of a non-governmental lobbying base in Brussels. In 1991, the Northern Ireland Centre in Europe (NICE) was established. Part-sponsored by local politicians, the organisation sought to "foster links with the EU institutions and open doors for groups visiting Brussels" (McGowan and Murphy, 2003). However, NICE was forced to close its Brussels arm shortly after devolution due to a lack of funding and internal wrangling.²³¹

The dissolution of the Northern Ireland equivalent of Scotland Europa removed one of the organisational challenges facing DAs in other parts of the UK when it came to an EU presence. Following in the wake of the Scots' move, the new Northern Ireland Executive established a representative arm, the Office of the Northern Ireland Executive in Brussels (ONIEB) in 2001; in a move similar to the "Scotland House" model, the ONIEB shares its premises with the economic development agency, *Invest Northern Ireland*, though this arrangement concerns only office

space, and does not involve any actual operational linkages between the two organisations.²³² As in the Scottish case, however, this ring-fences information flows between UK governmental actors in Brussels. The ONIEB's broad and inclusive approach to the EU sets it slightly apart in its activity remit from the other devolved administrations' EU representations, though it is essentially the functional equivalent of the Scottish Government EU office or the WAG office.

*The "UKREP Family" concept and control
of DA representations in Brussels*

There is a further dimension of the organisation of the British DA offices in Brussels, which is unique amongst constitutional regions in Brussels, namely their privileged relationship with the Permanent Representation. This relationship has been an important driving force in delineating the operation of the DA offices in Brussels, and therefore demands consideration here.

Certainly, the presence of DA offices in Brussels was not regarded by the UK central government as a *necessary* adjunct to devolution when plans for this programme were developed in the 1990s. However, once it became clear that each of the DAs was intending to open such a representative office (see Chapter 3), central government authorities stepped in to ensure that this would not impact negatively on the presentation in Brussels of a single UK position, nor would they transgress the limited role foreseen for DAs on Europe matters under the terms of the administrative agreements regulating their co-operation, the "concordats".

The new DA representations were thus to operate as part of an "UKREP family" in Brussels; they would work under the umbrella of the British government representation in the EU and as a result, would have privileged access to that organisation, its meetings and information resources – such as memos from the UK FCO – as well as access to the working groups of the Council and the Commission.²³³ Heads of offices were given diplomatic status – a unique position amongst regional representations in the EU, even amongst other constitutional regions' representative bureaux. In return the DA offices would advance general UK European policy interests in Brussels, rather than representing a separate "voice" in the EU (Bulmer et al., 2001: 136).²³⁴ Thus far, this relationship has preserved the "Rolls Royce" machinery of British EU policy co-ordination (Bulmer and Burch, 1998); despite a sense amongst EU partners that internal disputes have caused tensions domestically, a unified position has been maintained externally (Tatham, 2006; 2008).

Administrative regions

Political control of the work of this type of regional representation in the EU is not as clear-cut. The majority of EU representations mediating the interests of administrative regional levels within the member-states tend to involve some form of broad regionally-based partnership. This tends to include local government authorities, regional development agencies, higher education institutions and other public bodies, including voluntary groups, charities and business associations. The extent to which any individual elected authority will steer the regional representation in Brussels is, however, variable across both regions and member states.

The partnership arrangement which is put in place to steer a regional representation in territories where there is no natural governmental focal point, such as a “meso-” level of political authority, varies according to the domestic situation in the member state. For instance, the Stockholm regional representation in Brussels involves a partnership of subscriber interests from Stockholm County Council, the Association of Local Authorities of Stockholm County, alongside with other public authorities located in the region, such as Mälardalen County Council. Other local authorities have a lower level of strategic engagement, a mere service agreement rather than associated member status, in the EU representation, including the counties of Sörmland, Västmanland, Uppsala and Gotland.²³⁵

This pattern is widely replicated across the representations of other administrative regions. In the Dutch context, for instance, the four provinces of the region of Randstad (Noord-Holland, Zuid-Holland, Utrecht and Flevoland) have had a joint representation in Brussels since 1993, and this has been located in the jointly-operated “House of the Dutch Provinces (HNP)” since 2000. The joint activities in Brussels are co-ordinated through a structure in the four provincial organisations. Political guidance comes via a management board, made up of the elected representatives from the four provinces who hold a European Affairs portfolio. The Randstad Brussels office consists of one or two representatives per province, one head of office and one policy officer. Each representative deals partly with issues relating to their own province and partly with issues that are of interest for all the four Randstad provinces together (Regio Randstad, 2010).²³⁶

Given the weak level of “meso-” level government in Scandinavian countries, it is not surprising that local authority associations maintain strong presences in Brussels, staffed with increasingly large numbers of personnel (Kull, 2007), both through individual representations of

national associations, and through active presence and participation in the regional representative collectives. This reflects their domestic political role on EU policy issues of sub-state relevance. The Danish municipal association, for instance, is involved in regular briefings that include all Danish parliamentarians dealing with EU affairs, both from the *Riksdagen* (national parliament) and the EP (Kull, 2007).

The Finnish offices selected for our study represented both those maintained by regional councils and those maintained jointly by a city, a regional council and a university. Regional councils are de facto controlled by the municipalities but have their own organisation and can thus establish an office in Brussels on their own, or together with the member municipalities. Financed by several organisations, there can be efforts to calculate the working hours of the office according to the shares of the different organisations. Usually the organisations trust that an office is worth the costs, without such calculations. In addition to routine activities, the offices also receive enquiries from other organisations and citizens. In principle, all enquiries are responded to, but the interests of the organisations that finance the office are primary ones. According to one official in a Finnish regional representation, there could be more guidance by these (Kettunen and Kull, 2009).

Attempts to run an EU representation-style office from Finland, rather than subsidising an actual office in Brussels, had failed quite dramatically (Kull, 2007). Underscoring in a practical sense the added value of an EU presence over other forms of "regional representation in the EU".

The nature of the devolution and decentralisation in France has resulted in the situation today where French regions are more policy levels than political spaces. This ultimately de-politicises the role of their Brussels offices, which do not implement the EU policy objectives of any politically-motivated or ambitious regional government. Instead, the French regional offices in Brussels are focused primarily on shoring up their own policy capacities in the domestic arena, through partner searches and engagement in relevant policy and networking circles in the EU. The overarching aim is, through contacts and network building, to deliver more effective policy solutions for the regional level in France.²³⁷

French regional representations in Brussels tend therefore to group together local authority interests in Europe as well as other voluntary and public sector actors. By way of an example, the Ile de France regional representation, representing the territory in and around Paris, was established in Brussels in 1999 as a means of promoting the European interests of local authorities in the region as well as harnessing European

funding schemes to the benefit of the region (Goergen, 2004: 183). The office's steering council is drawn from its associated membership, which includes both the regional government, the Regional Council of the Ile de France, as well the local authorities operating with the region in France: the General Councils from the Seine et Marne, the Essone, Seine Saint Denis, Val du Marne and Val d'Oise.

As French regions have no formal access to the domestic process of EU decision-making, there is no sense of urgency in its intelligence gathering.²³⁸ Information flows tend to be open, as there is no requirement for regional governments in France to secure EU intelligence that can be used for domestic bargaining purposes, such as is the case in states with strong constitutional regions such as Germany or Spain. This domestic situation has consequently shaped the activity profile of French regional offices towards programme support, inter-regional networking and the exchange of best practice.²³⁹

On the other hand, however, the lack of formal inclusion of French regional viewpoints in processes of domestic EU policy formulation within France, makes the various opportunities for policy-shaping at the EU level – through the work of the Brussels offices – much more valuable. If the French regional representations can shape Commission, Committee of the Regions, Parliament or even Council thinking through their engagement in policy networks at the Brussels level, then this offers new opportunities for them to operate as political actors on Europe, which they do not have in the domestic arena.

By definition, administrative regions lack a clearly defined regional tier of political authority, raising questions as to how a regional collective in Brussels should be managed. In most instances, a consortium will lead the management of the Brussels office, and membership of this steering group will rotate on a regular basis. By way of example, Finnish regional representations in the EU are generally mixed coalitions of regional actors, such as district authorities, city governments and higher education establishments. They operate on the basis of a strategic management collective drawn from subscribing members, and this rotates on a regular basis (Kettunen and Kull, 2008).

The English offices today represent a regionally-based partnership of local government authorities, higher education institutions and other public sector bodies – such as learning and skills councils – and since their creation in 1999, the economics-focused Regional Development Agencies. Despite minor differences in their precise subscriber base, notably in the direct involvement of private sector members, the English regional offices share a number of defining operational characteristics.

Typically, the work of English regional representations in Brussels is directed by the subscribing partners who supply the funds for their operation. The West Midlands in Europe (WMIE) construct raises revenue through its subscription scheme, which operates on four levels²⁴⁰:

- The largest subscribing partners to the WMIE are the two “**Principal Management Members**”, the RDA (*Advantage West Midlands*) and the West Midlands Local Government Association (WMLGA), which represents all 38 of the region’s local authorities. Together, these are responsible for the overall direction of the Brussels office
- The second largest players are classed as “**Senior Members**” of the WMIE, and they consist of major regional or sectoral groups, such as the higher education sector and the region’s Chambers of Commerce. Membership at this level costs €95 500 per annum (2007–2008)
- **Regional-Level Membership** is for larger representative bodies with a more active interest in EU affairs, with services including dedicated funding and policy advice. Membership at this level is charged at €10 600 per annum (2007–2008)
- **Individual Membership** is for smaller regional interests wishing to keep abreast of EU policy developments and funding opportunities, as well as engaging in targeted networking across the EU. Membership at this level costs €1 800 per annum (2007–2008) (West Midlands in Europe, 2010).

In other English regional offices, as in the West Midlands’ EU representation, the core partnership, which is the main driver of the organisation, is a long-established relationship with key regional players, and new members join only at a much lower level of activity. The one point of difference relates to whether membership of the partnership is open to all interested parties from the region, including individual businesses, or whether the representation is to be structured solely as a public-interest organisation, limiting membership to any regionally-based body with a public service interest. The affiliation of business interests is, at present, the exception rather than the rule.

New member states

There are wide variations amongst the representations of new member-state regions in the EU with regard to how they are controlled at a political level within the home region. Whilst territorial reforms within the domestic political system have seen new regional political authorities created, these are artificial constructions which cross-cut pre-existing

ethnic and linguistic boundaries (Baun, 2002: 269; Moore, 2008b) and remain inherently weak. There is limited capacity for sub-state engagement in national processes of European policy formulation (Haughton, 2009); thus, the regional representations do not have a remit to provide intelligence that can be used for intra-state bargaining. Rather, the focus remains primarily on supporting the European relations of regional stakeholders, maximising the inflow of EU project monies, alongside the exchange of policy expertise and ideas.

Ultimately, it is the political leadership within the regional administrations in the new member states who can make or break a regional representation. With strategic directional control resting firmly within the centre of political authority in the region, the views of that leader – be it Marshal, Vice-Marshal, Governor or such like – and what they do and do not sanction of their EU representations is the key to success or non-success of the office, due to the fact that they direct operational strategy by means of their budgetary control. “Without resources, there is a limit to what we can do”.²⁴¹

Poland

Amongst the Polish regional representations in Brussels, there is a relatively consistent pattern of domestic governance within the home regions. At a strategic level, they are all controlled by the most senior level of decentralised political accountability in the home region, the Marshal of the *voivodship* and an elected regional executive leadership. As a result, the reporting lines of the Brussels offices are based in these centres. Polish regional offices are ultimately responsible to the five-person executive board or committee of each regional Marshal’s office. These generally include the Marshal themselves, two Vice-Marshals and two other members of the regional assembly (*sejmik*).

Certain Polish regions have developed more progressive domestic regional collaborations to ensure the effective dissemination of the intelligence produced by the Brussels office, and this in turn has affected their strategic direction. The representation of Podlaskie for instance remains controlled at a political level by the Marshal’s office, yet within the region, the Marshal’s office manages a coalition of NGOs, local government associations and regional development agencies which together both utilise the intelligence produced by the Brussels office and discuss ideas on how best to further develop the role and activity of this office.²⁴²

But this form of innovative leadership remains relatively rare within Polish regions. At the other end of the spectrum, the smaller and more

poorly-resourced regional representations – often those with more openly Eurosceptic party-political leaderships – take a more narrow view of the EU office, and demand a clear and regular update on the value of the representation to the region. In fact, the Lubelskie office has periodically suffered regular calls from elected deputies of the regional assembly to close the Brussels office – as often as once every two months.²⁴³

In terms of developing a work plan for the office, Polish regional representations work in partnership with their domestic administrations to develop an annual plan. As is the case with other representations, the expertise of the Brussels offices themselves does have an input into this process. The variety of administrative control lines – whether regional offices are directly accountable to the region's department of tourism, regional development or economy – impacts on the scope of these annual plans. Different sets of deliverables are established in relation to the key emphasis of the controlling administrative department. However, some commonalities can be established around the emphasis on the broad objective of regional “promotion” and the successful creation of projects funded by EU Commission programmes.

Whilst there is a growing sense that the scope of Polish regional offices has expanded thanks largely to increasing levels of awareness within the home region of the longer-term benefits of a presence in Brussels,²⁴⁴ resources remain the primary restricting factor (see Chapter 5). However, the picture remains varied, and some regions still struggle to advance their remit beyond the basic “promotional” work plan agreed on an annual basis. By way of example, the regional representation of Lubelskie is a functional element of the regional department of “Promotion and Tourism”. As such, the office director in Brussels is directly accountable to an official based in this department in the home region. They in turn report to the Vice-Marshal for the region. This official's role in the department of Promotion and Tourism has tended to shape the leadership's expectations of the Brussels office; “As a result, our work plan has to be based directly on the promotion of the region; I have had to leave other important aspects out”.²⁴⁵ Anything approaching “upstream” lobbying is out of the question, as is the development of innovative projects in other areas of regional interest, such as employment or environmental protection.²⁴⁶ Despite consultations with the regional office's director over the drawing up of an annual work programme, the views of the Vice-Marshal and Marshal on a European “promotional” representation remain the key controlling factor: “I propose, they decide”.²⁴⁷

Links with local authorities in the region are not formalised through the work of the office; politically, however, the Brussels representations are obliged to take on any requests or tasks put to them by the local level.²⁴⁸ Nonetheless, there is a political obligation on Polish regional representations in Brussels to assist local authorities, should they be asked to do so.²⁴⁹ Other public bodies are encouraged in the first instance to contact the administration in the region, which then act as an intermediary in determining which requests to transmit directly to the EU office. Communications between non-governmental actors in the region and the EU office therefore tend still to be mediated first by the regional administration.

The Czech Republic

When contrasted with the Polish model, there is a much less consistent pattern of governance of the Czech regional representations in Brussels. Wide divergences exist in the manner in which domestic regional authorities control the remit and operation of their EU outposts. But as in the Polish case, one feature is constant across the board, and that is the fact that ultimate responsibility for the regional offices rests with the most senior level of decentralised political authority in the home region – the Governor (*Hejtman*) of the Czech *kraje*.

The controlling leadership of the members of the regional assembly and the regional administration will, together with the EU office director, determine the projects, strategic goals and budget for the Brussels office on an annual basis. Whilst in the strictest formal sense the Brussels offices are responsible to the entire regional council, which indeed has to rubber stamp the offices' yearly action plans, in practice, the work plan and strategic objectives for the office are established by the EU office direction in consultation with the departmental head to which the office reports, along with the Governor of the region.

There are minor differences in the legal status of Czech regional representations. For instance, the EU representation of the Zlin region is run by a private agency; the Central Bohemia office is registered as an official NGO in Brussels. However, ultimate strategic responsibility for all Czech regional representations in the EU lies within the regional government. Members of the regional assembly and the regional administration generally constitute the board of directors for the EU offices. The majority of Czech regional representations are functional elements of the region's political leadership. The representative office of South Bohemia, for instance, reports to the regional governor's office, as do both the representations of Central Bohemia and Pilsen.

For the Central Bohemia and Zlin regions, with their different operational bases, there is a concomitant lesser degree of direct political control from the region over the representations in Brussels. Agendas and annual work plans do not need to go through the time-consuming processes of securing formal political support from the Regional Assembly, thus allowing an additional degree of flexibility in their operation. Linkages with the regional administration are still retained, however. For instance, the Central Bohemia region, which is legally a stand-alone entity, is governed at a strategic level by a board of directors. This consists of a number of members of the Regional Assembly, including the regional Governor, and officials from the regional administration. It meets two to three times per year to discuss the office budget and ongoing work programme.²⁵⁰

There is a sense, however, that the regional political boards, which officially oversee the work of the representative offices in Brussels, do not yet make full use of the EU representations as a strategic resource. Even within the regional administrations, there is frustration at the lack of political leadership and "vision" as to how best to engage with Europe through a Brussels presence. "The office is not charged with concrete tasks at a political level, and the administration is not maximising the potential of our EU office".²⁵¹ The work programmes that are agreed for the EU representations are relatively modest, and concentrate on achievable aims in the projects and programmes arena, rather than more dynamic, policy-focused aims.

This mis-match in aims and ambitions between the controlling political authorities and the Brussels representations themselves arises largely from the socialisation process of working alongside the other 250 regional representations in the EU, and observing the results that other regions derive from different strategic approaches to managing their EU representations. As one official in a Czech regional administration who had personal experience of working in Brussels noted, "The office in Brussels and the politicians in the region are not on the same wavelength; this makes co-operation very hard".²⁵² This discrepancy has been addressed in other regions through a concerted human resources strategy, which has focused on maximising the EU skills and experience of former Brussels representation staff within the domestic regional administration. At present, experiments in this direction within the new member states remain limited, but those officials who do have more experience of EU engagement are optimistic that a secondments programme will in future address the issue.

What is perceived by many regional representation staff in Brussels as "ineffective" political steering of their function is a result primarily

of a lack of overarching EU strategy within the Czech regions. In many instances, weak political opposition within the kraje compounds this problem; regional leaderships are rarely challenged to define or defend their stance on Europe. Thus, whilst technical skills and expertise on the EU are being built up within the administration through ongoing partnership work with other EU regions – specifically in relation to the management of EU funds – that capacity is not being replicated in Czech regional politics. A policy-related view of what effective engagement with the EU can bring to the region is as yet poorly defined at the sub-state level in the new member states.

Functional and operational control of regional representations

The procedural mechanisms that are implemented, both to set the operational objectives of regional offices and to assess their delivery, provide an angle through which we may begin to approach the idea of the *effectiveness* of regional offices in Brussels. How do controlling partners ensure that the regional representation delivers on its objectives? The following section therefore assesses the manner in which the outputs of the various types of regional offices are controlled within the sending region.

Constitutional regions

There is a common pattern amongst the constitutional regions' representations regarding the manner in which the work programme for the offices is established and controlled. In both instances, there is an emphasis on pragmatism – a heavy reliance on the particular skills set of the director of the Brussels representation. Notable also is the minimal parliamentary engagement; few of the constitutional regions' assemblies have a say in the direction of the EU representation, as these offices are largely established and run as agencies of the regional *executives*.

The common format for the constitutional regions is to have established a collaborative process for developing their annual work programme, which relies heavily on the expertise of Brussels staff. The programme for the Brussels office is drawn up by conducting an analysis on a yearly basis of the European Commission's work programme, the agendas of the incoming presidencies of the Council of Ministers and an assessment of the most relevant policy areas for the administrations.²⁵³ The Brussels office itself usually conducts this initial strategic selection process. From this, the most important policy issues for

the home region are selected, usually through a process of consultation between the head of the European team within the administration – as noted above, usually closely linked to the centre of political responsibility in the region – the head of the Brussels office, and through co-operation with the relevant policy teams within departments of the home administration²⁵⁴ which are likely to be affected by these European developments.²⁵⁵ At this stage, the strategic priorities for the year are drawn up through an analysis of where the region's broad priorities on Europe lie, and what are the key areas where it would want to increase its influence in both legislation and securing EU funding. A list of priorities is drawn up.²⁵⁶ This selection then provides the basis for the coming year's EU policy.

However, despite the fact that the Brussels offices representing constitutional regions are charged with the task of carrying out the work programme established at the start of each year through collaboration with the home administrations, they do have a large degree of autonomy in the manner in which they structure their work programmes. Home administrations rely heavily on the expertise of the Brussels base to react to changing circumstances, and for advice on how best to engage in the Brussels arena. They are not, therefore, a straightforward division of the Minister Presidents' offices,²⁵⁷ but rather, have a degree of operational freedom thanks to their distance from the home policy leadership and the different working environment in Brussels;²⁵⁸ in practice this differentiates them somewhat from home-based departments.

This collaboration between Brussels representation and the relevant policy team in the administration at home is significant, as it is this process that will map out the strategic priorities on Europe both for the regional administration and for the office in Brussels too. This list of strategic priority areas thus provides the work programme both for the Brussels office and for the European team in the central administration, flagging up also the key areas of European interest for individual departments. These strategic priority areas generally do not require approval through any formal channels,²⁵⁹ although in most instances, the decision is generally reported to the regional assembly.²⁶⁰ Crucially, the region's parliamentary assembly is only *informed* of the outcome; it does not have any decision-making role in the process.

The operational control of Brussels offices representing an elected government is firmly rooted within the sending administration. Responsibility is to a Minister, with close links to the head of government, given the high profile of external representation. In this sense,

the structures for the control, strategic leadership and ultimate accountability of the constitutional regions' Brussels offices mirrors that of national embassies overseas; national parliamentary committees on foreign affairs scrutinise the expenditure, administration and policy of their national foreign ministries.

As noted previously, the increasing political salience of EU issues at the regional level in Germany has led to the incorporation of *Länder* EU representations into the remit of Prime Ministers' offices in the *Länder*. The strength of the relationship between the Minister President and the *Land* office in Brussels also has an important role in shaping their function. If the relationship is strong, then this can serve a number of practical benefits. For instance, in cases of conflict over a *Land* policy issue with a European dimension, say between an agriculture minister and an economics minister, the position taken by the political leadership – that is, the Minister President – will become crucial. If that Minister President has a clear stance on Europe – and increasingly, the *Länder* Minister Presidents have been keen to develop their own personal profiles within Europe by openly supporting a particular stance – then that person will make the Ministers in his cabinet toe the line on what she or he thinks.²⁶¹ This clear authority on European issues can give the Brussels office additional downstream hitting power within the home administration and facilitates their work.²⁶²

In terms of assessing the work undertaken by constitutional regions' representations in the EU, reporting mechanisms tend to be largely ad hoc and informal, consisting mainly of communication and information flows between desk officers in Brussels and the home ministries: regular monitoring, briefing and reporting.²⁶³ Practitioners regard their ongoing communications both with ministries of the home administration and other regional organisations with an interest in EU developments as a core element of their feedback to the region, as evidence of their added value, and hence a measure of their downstream value added, and indeed, effectiveness.²⁶⁴ There are no formal, target-driven or measurable empirical data that need to be achieved by the regional representations, in that sense supporting the view that many of the benefits delivered by Brussels offices fall into the category of "soft" or intangible outputs. Crucially, the constitutional regions' representations themselves feel that they derive their main source of legitimacy and support from their interaction with individual ministries and departments of the home administrations.²⁶⁵

Although certain Brussels representations do conduct some form of review of their yearly achievements, which is then delivered to the

centre of control within the home administration, few if any constitutional regions' representations in Brussels produce comprehensive annual reports of their activities and their budget lines are largely kept out of the public domain.

Administrative regions in Brussels

Given the diversity of domestic arrangements governing the scope of representational activity undertaken by this type of sub-state representation in the EU, there is an enormous breadth of relational control over the activities of administrative regions in the EU. Where there is no single elected centre of political authority in a region, opening and maintaining a base in Brussels means reporting back to a widely differentiated pattern of accountability. Differing structures of authority within the home region have positioned regional offices within different frameworks of domestic accountability, complicating cross-national comparison, but again emphasising the need to recognise this non-homogeneity in our understanding of regional representations in the EU.

The work of administrative regions' representations in Brussels which represent the interests of a set of subscribing partners, is determined by an annual work plan, determined in advance by a management board representing stakeholder interests. Yet whilst the broad, overarching remit of any of this type of regional representation is to work in Brussels to promote the best interests of the region itself and to maximise EU opportunities – most likely from EU funds – when it comes to the day to day business of the office, staff will prioritise the interests and needs of those regionally-based associations or interests which subscribe financially to the office partnership. All other enquiries from the region are accorded a lower priority, and may even drop off the radar entirely (Kull, 2007).²⁶⁶

The most common governing arrangement driving the representation of administrative regions tends to be the creation of a coalition of interested parties within the region, which may or may not operate an equivalent domestic grouping. Whilst all regional representations ultimately aim to support the wider interests of the region as a whole – and all regional stakeholders with an interest in EU developments – not all regions formalise this partnership into a control and reporting function. In some cases, such control may rest firmly with the region's local authorities alone – such as is common in a number of Scandinavian representations. In the Swedish case, it has been noted that difference in the make-up of the regional partnership subscribing to the Brussels

representation can have a marked impact on political influence (Berg and Lindahl, 2007). Control practices are therefore directly related to both the activities and the effectiveness of this type of regional representation in the EU.

Regional coalitions, however, do not have a “natural” focal point for the control of their activities. Therefore, in a reflection of practices adopted in the private-interest lobbying sphere, their activities are controlled by a strategic management board, which also monitors their operation. This board is drawn from the subscriber base on a rotational basis, to ensure the representation of a range of interests. Senior-level control positions, however, are occupied by key subscribers to the organisation – that is, their largest funding partners; there is no privileged position for local government from the region. Subscriber-driven regional coalition offices therefore report more along the lines of private entities – with feedback to members on how their money is being spent in terms of how their user-defined strategy is being implemented in Brussels. Coupled with the accountability framework of a panel of end users, the organisation of this type of regional office positions them firmly with the lobbying group or informal end of a spectrum of forms of interest representation.

Just as the actual work of the regional coalition offices is driven by the respective set of stakeholders in that office, so work programmes at the Brussels level vary across offices. Broad partnerships may well offer something approaching greater legitimacy for EU offices to represent “regional” interests²⁶⁷; on the other hand, where membership is constituted of wide sectors within the home region, offices may have a broad brief and run the risk of being unfocused.²⁶⁸ It is for this reason that co-ordination amongst subscribers in setting clear priorities is of paramount importance – failure to do so can sometimes cause tensions between subscribers, who have different expectations of the Brussels organisation.²⁶⁹

In cases where a coalition of interests supports the Brussels office, these will generally contribute both to the setting of annual objectives, and the monitoring of delivery. The most common format of strategic control for this type of regional representation is that oversight is given to a management board, made up of representatives of the membership base. Lead responsibility for the management process is determined on the basis of the subscriptions system. Where there is a main partner in the coalition, usually the region’s lead local authority, a grouping of local authorities or an economic development agency, then these partners tend to take prime responsibility for the drafting of a strategic oversight agenda.

Meetings of management boards are formalised and regularised throughout the yearly cycle, but increase their intensity in the run up to the approval of a new strategic plan at the start of each calendar year, in accordance with the publication of the Commission's yearly work programme.

The operational plan of the Brussels office is one of the key oversight functions of any administrative region's management boards. Managed well, this will dovetail with the other key regional strategies – principally economic – which are drafted by the major players in the region – notably regional economic development authorities and other government agencies – with the result that the most important regional issues are reflected in the work of the Brussels office.²⁷⁰ In most instances, one further important strategic control function of the management board over the representation in Brussels is that it will be obliged to approve an indicative budget and subscription levels for the following financial year, and this oversight function will generally be formally regulated by the terms of a Constitution or Code of Conduct.

The subscriptions framework sustaining this type of regional representation in the EU also has an impact on the shape of the accountability framework to which the office reports. As noted above, a “core” partner tends to maintain a more permanent relationship of control over the office. Other coalition-driven representations will reflect the differing status of their subscribing partners through a variable level of control in the management board system. Not to put too fine a point on it, there is a direct relationship between “say and pay” – the more any individual partner subscribes to the office, the greater their ability to steer the region's EU representation through enhanced responsibility on the directing panel.

The constant communication with members, an overall culture of dialogue and exchange of views with members, coupled with the rotational nature of a management board or its equivalent is all felt to deliver the maximum opportunity for a range of views to be expressed, and hence for opinions on the effectiveness of the office's work to be voiced.²⁷¹ Furthermore, the nature of the subscribing payments system means that any organisations that remain dissatisfied with the output of the regional office can at any time withdraw their support – both financial and policy-oriented – from the Brussels office partnership.

Regions from the new member states

Whilst the actual frameworks for accountability and control do vary within the new member states, there is a general pattern of alignment

with EU15 counterparts, in that accountability is located at the heart of political authority within the region itself. Where some form of elected political authority has been established at the regional level, there is an emphasis on high-level political control of the Brussels office, though in different ways, as the case studies of Poland and the Czech Republic demonstrate.

Poland

This domestic weakness on Europe is reflected in the manner in which these regions' EU representations are operationalised by regional authorities in the new member states. To date, management and control of the new regional representations by regional authorities themselves has largely been a loosely co-ordinated and ad hoc process. Whilst political checks are in place to consider the value of expenditure in Brussels,²⁷² a relatively rapid turnover of party-political control within the regional administrations has meant frequent leadership and strategy changes on Europe. This in turn has seen capacity and expertise on European issues – including the management of the Brussels office – frequently being lost as skilled staff are reassigned to other teams or move to the private sector. There has certainly been only limited consolidation of experience on Europe at the executive level in the new regional administrations.²⁷³ The fluidity of this accountability framework has put further constraints on the Brussels offices themselves, who struggle to strike an appropriate balance between their representational activities, the demands of the home administrations and a growing awareness through social learning and interaction with other representations in Brussels of the broader capacity of regional engagement through a direct presence at the heart of the EU.

However, there are signs in the new member states themselves of an increasing recognition of the value of developing a strong strategic plan for the management of their regional representations in Brussels and an ambition to utilise the region's Brussels office as a multiplier of European awareness and engagement. Broad, region-wide stakeholder agreements have begun to be consolidated as the regional offices seek to connect not only with the domestic political players, but also NGOs, local government associations, universities, research centres and the voluntary sector. Like their counterparts from regions of older member states, strategic responsibility for the management of a growing number of Polish regional representations in the EU is located close to the centre of political authority within the regional administration, and this status is reinforced by the fact that the head

of office is a political appointment. Each of the Polish regional representations in Brussels is an operational component of a different element of the regional administration. Whilst some outliers – such as the Lubelskie Brussels office – are located within the department of “promotion and tourism”, the majority of Polish offices tend to be elements of the departments for EU structural funds, regional development or European affairs.

Despite this functional anchoring in a core team of the regional administration, levels of awareness of regional representations in the EU can vary widely within the sending regional administrations and across the region, and can be very limited. The “sensitisation” to the assistance an EU representation can provide has not filtered through to the administration on account largely of the lack of a targeted human resources strategy to exploit the EU expertise gained by staff in the Brussels office. On occasion, departments within the home administration have been surprised to find that a Brussels office even exists; technically the Brussels office is supposed to support the work of the administration as a whole, but communications problems have in some regions led to the work of the Brussels office being channelled primarily into the sending department, rather than being mainstreamed throughout the administration. There is a sense that the opportunities presented by having a regional representation in Brussels could be further maximised if this situation was controlled better within the home administration. “This ownership mentality needs to change if the region is to derive any great benefit from their Brussels office”.²⁷⁴ Current standard practice, however, reinforces this model of “ownership” of the Brussels office, whereby the functional department to which the office reports is seen as the one area of the administration that has the right to communicate directly with the EU representation. “We act primarily as intermediary between the Brussels office and the regional administration, and all its departments”.²⁷⁵

This problem of limited communication as to the existence and role of the region’s representation in Brussels is widespread within the regions of the new member states. There are generally low levels of awareness as to how an EU representation can assist desk officers in their work. “People within the regional administration are used to doing their job without the EU office being there, so they are not sure what exactly it can do for them or how to exploit it as a resource”.²⁷⁶ There is a general sense at present, for instance, that the EU representations of the Czech regions are underutilised, and could deliver much more value-added to the region.²⁷⁷

Despite these organisational linkages with the regional administrations, the Czechs are firmly of the view that a Brussels regional representation is not simply an office for the executive, but also for the region as a whole, including the municipalities, universities and other public sector organisations.²⁷⁸ Disputes as to the amount of work a Brussels office can undertake on behalf of regional actors other than the regional administration itself have not occurred, unlike in the Polish case. However, regional organisations do generally need to agree their requests of the Brussels office through the regional administration beforehand.²⁷⁹

Awareness of the region's Brussels representation and the services it provides varies widely within the new member states, and depends largely on the extent to which the element of the home administration to which the Brussels representation reports has undertaken efforts to construct a region-wide European partnership and deliver a clear mandate to the Brussels office. There is a correlation between the level of European expertise in new regions and the degree to which a more constructive model of engagement has been put in place for operationalising the work of the region's representation in Brussels. Those EU offices that are directed by means of a clear and overarching strategy on EU issues will generally bring on board a wide range of regional stakeholders with an interest in either EU policy or funding schemes. Where the partnership building on Europe in the region has been more successful, the office has a much greater impact and reach within the community and can fulfil a stronger mandate to connect regional interests with the EU. Within those regions that have constructed a broad association of interested parties – such as the Polish region of Wielkopolska – EU intelligence can be disseminated rapidly and effectively within the region, and a wide sense of participation in the activities of the Brussels office has been facilitated on the ground.²⁸⁰ There is recognition that this partnership approach can have long-term benefits. Officials in the regions with some of the more engaged and pro-active Brussels regional offices acknowledge openly that the EU representation is delivering “soft” benefits to actors in other parts of the region – such as town mayors or universities – and the EU offices have been encouraged by regional administrations to engage broadly with the regional community.²⁸¹

On the occasions when questions are raised domestically as to the value of a representation for the region in Brussels, the administration tends to emphasise these “soft” deliverables – such as capacity building on Europe and a general sensitisation for the EU – as benefits that cannot be measured by raw numbers alone.

In terms of evaluating the work of the regional office, heads of office generally report back to their sending teams within the domestic regional administrations on a weekly basis. Prague House, the representation of the capital city and *kraj* of Prague, uses a videoconferencing link to connect its Brussels chief-of-staff to the domestic management committee, made up of members of the City Council executive. However, each *kraj* administration itself has good personal links to the Brussels representation and can request specialist information from the office at any time. The quality and speed of these responses feed into the administration's general assessment of the work of the EU office.²⁸² The criteria for measuring the success or "effectiveness" of the Brussels representation are informal: "we give feedback," said one Brussels office director, "It is more about text than numbers".²⁸³

The parliamentary dimension of accountability and strategic control

In those EU regions with a democratically elected regional parliament, parliamentary scrutiny represents a further key element of the domestic accountability framework within which a regional office may operate.

The extent to which parliaments and elected assemblies have been marginalised in the European political process has formed part of a broad and ongoing debate across the levels of political authority within the EU (Börzel, 2000; Schüttemeyer, 2009). The increasing salience of parliamentary activity in the EU since the launch of the debate on the future of Europe in 2000 encouraged a re-focusing of interest at the sub-state level as to how parliaments could be more closely engaged with the European dimension. More specifically, as national parliaments began to establish their own permanent representations in Brussels throughout the 2000s, a sense of under-representation of regional parliaments at the Brussels level became increasingly palpable. The issue of control in those regions that do have some form of elected political authority has begun in recent years to shape the debate on how best to manage an EU presence. Yet constitutional regions have reacted differently to common pressures for increased parliamentary scrutiny, producing divergent responses.

Whilst parliamentary scrutiny in the regions themselves is a core feature explaining the shape, scope and remit of individual constitutional regions' EU representations in Brussels, one of the most notable and innovative developments in the picture of territorial interest representation in the EU in recent years has been the emergence of separate

regional *parliamentary* representations in Brussels – alongside those of regional executives, regional administrative actors and stakeholder-driven regional coalitions.

Germany

Within Germany, discussion of regional legislatures' involvement in *Länder* offices in Brussels has made only a very limited impact. The regional legislatures (*Landtage*) have only ever played a marginal role in the scrutiny and accountability of the *Länder* offices in Brussels. As noted above, the work plan for the offices is drafted by the executives; the EU divisions of the administrations may well report to the *Landtage* on the outcome of this process,²⁸⁴ but the formal procedure merely involves the government *informing* the *Landtag*. The *Landtag* itself does not have any decision-making role in the process.

Accountability to the *Landtage* also remains limited to this process of reporting. The *Landtage* are recipients of communications from the Brussels office on a regular basis. Their role is therefore passive, and they play no discernible role in the steering of the Brussels office. The dominance of regional *executives* within German processes of domestic EU policy formulation is thus reflected at the Brussels level.

As a result there is a very limited direct "presence" of German *Landtage* in Brussels. Their involvement in the *Länder* EU offices is limited to information-sharing arrangements, in the same way that other regional interests engage with the offices.²⁸⁵ None of the *Landtage* presently maintains an individual representation in Brussels, separate to that of their *Land* executive (Kiefer, 2003).

Exploring the possibility of a separate role for the *Landtage* in Brussels has not made an impact within domestic debate on the future of sub-state involvement with EU policy. In fact, overall the German *Landtage* have had a relatively weak influence on *Länder* European policy, a result which is particularly surprising in view of the actual scope of their competences to check the executive, and also given that around 80 per cent of the *Landtag's* work is based on EU legislation (Heckel, 2003).

Tensions between regional executives and legislatures in Germany over Europe have been kept very much at the individual *Land* level. In key tests, the solution has generally been to fall back on legal codification. In 2002, for instance, the Bavarian *Landtag* concluded an inquiry into "Reforming Federalism – Strengthening the State Parliament" (*Reform des Föderalismus – Stärkung der Landesparlamente*). On the issue of European policy, this inquiry recommended that a new law be

drawn up obliging the *Land* government to inform the *Landtag* early about EU legislative proposals, Directives and Treaties where *Land* interests are directly affected. The draft text of the new law places the informational imperatives on the lead Ministry or Department within the *Land* administration (the *federführendes Staatsministerium*), which themselves have direct information channels flowing from the *Land*'s representation in Brussels. In sharp contrast to similar debates within the UK, at no point during this inquiry was the suggestion ever raised that the *Landtag*'s informational needs could be best served through the establishment of an individual bureau in Brussels (Bayerischer Landtag, 2002).

The UK

By contrast, defining an operational space for the representation of regional legislative interests post-devolution has, in the UK, provoked widespread interest and a unique response. As the Scottish Parliament, Welsh and Northern Ireland Assemblies of the UK have no *formal* role on EU matters, they have had to interpret and adapt to the new set of circumstances as they see fit. Yet the extent to which the devolved Parliament and Assemblies' needs are met through an executive presence in Brussels has become a very salient issue within the devolved territories.

The DA offices in Brussels stress that their responsibility is to Ministers, hence their accountability is to the elected officials of the *executives*. By extension, the new devolved Parliament and Assemblies within the UK thus have a role to play in scrutinising the work of the Brussels offices. In a bid to emphasise the importance of this relationship of accountability, the Scottish Government's Minister with responsibility for Europe has appeared before the Scottish Parliament's EU and External Relations committee on a 6-monthly basis. In Northern Ireland, the Assembly committee with responsibility for Europe will wish to establish regular questioning of the Head of the Brussels office.²⁸⁶ Furthermore, the devolved Parliament and Assemblies in the UK have actively sought to demand accountability from the Brussels offices; questions concerning the cost-effectiveness of Brussels representations have been raised within the devolved Parliament and Assemblies.

This pro-active approach towards engagement with European policy issues goes hand in hand with the high civic expectations of these new legislative bodies, given the great symbolic importance of their coming into being. The assumption was that the new regional legislatures would focus on developing an inclusive model of governance, and – to a large extent – they are seen as having fulfilled those expectations (Institute

of Governance, University of Edinburgh, 2002; Jeffery and Wincott, 2006).

The DAs' commitment to transparent and inclusive government has meant that the meetings of the parliamentary committees with responsibility for Europe have a wide remit, and they are pro-actively engaging interests in their work. In Wales, for instance, the Head of the WAG Brussels office attends meetings of the Welsh Assembly's European and External Relations Committee; regional MEPs, members of the CoR and ECOSOC, and even the head of the European Commission Office in Wales also have standing invitations to attend. The European committees of the new devolved Parliament and Assemblies in the UK are thus unlike the Westminster committees on Europe, in that they are open and aimed very much at consensus building.

Nonetheless, this spirit of inclusiveness has not prevented the idea of establishing a separate, distinct presence for each of the DA legislatures in Brussels from taking root and indeed, from becoming a reality. Whilst the idea was originally pursued primarily and most vociferously in Scotland, both the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly now run an individual representation in Brussels. The idea of opening such an office has also been considered by the Northern Ireland Assembly (NIA Committee of the Centre, 2002).

During 2005, both the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales opened representative bureaux in Brussels, alongside the existing parliamentary representations of the region of Sicily and two of the Belgian regions and communities. Whilst neither British office claims to have a diplomatic role or function, the sheer presence of a regional legislature and assembly in Brussels, housed in offices alongside those of their executives, marks a qualitative new step in regional engagement in the EU.²⁸⁷ Both offices stress that their primary role encompasses two strands of activity. The first is as an add-on function to the existing members' research services – based within the home centres – the aim being to provide a dedicated research service on EU matters for the full spectrum of committee work in Edinburgh and Cardiff. The second is a representative function, which seeks to situate these parliamentary bodies within the wider networks of information and influence that pulsate in and around the EU institutions in Brussels.

The decision to open an individual Scottish Parliament representation in the EU dates back to a 2002 review conducted into "Scotland's representation in the European Union", which considered "in what capacity the Scottish Parliament might need support in Brussels and how this may be delivered" (Scottish Parliament, 2002b).²⁸⁸

The inquiry uncovered large-scale evidence that the Scottish Parliament's role was being overlooked in Brussels:

We were surprised to find examples, such as the information collected on the work of European Parliamentary committees, where information and intelligence is shared openly within Scotland House and with other Executive departments and agencies, but is not shared with other Scottish-based bodies and individuals, not least the Scottish Parliament and its committees. (Scottish Parliament, 2002a: 26)

It was thus found that the role of the Scottish Parliament was being neglected by the key Scottish players, who were excluding the Parliament from the major information loops concerning Scottish EU affairs. By not having a presence within Scotland House, and thereby remaining excluded from these information flows, the Scottish Parliament believed it was being put at a disadvantage.

The solution proposed by the review was that, rather than working to adapt existing structures for the representation of Scottish interests²⁸⁹ – notably the Scottish Executive's office in Brussels – to accommodate the needs and requirements of the Scottish Parliament, a separate structure should be created (Scottish Parliament, 2002a). Its potential functions were viewed as being five-fold:

- tailored intelligence gathering;
- networking with other regional parliamentary offices;
- building links with MEPs and establishing closer links between the Scottish Parliament and all of its committees;
- Internal liaison within the UK, such as ensuring liaison with the UK's National Parliamentary Office in Brussels; and
- Support for the CoR (Scottish Parliament, 2002a).

The ability *independently* to engage in Europe was thus presented in the report as a major “added value” of a distinct representative office for the Scottish Parliament, as it would be “inappropriate” for anyone other than the Scottish Parliament itself to run this function (Scottish Parliament, 2002a). Furthermore, this would be impossible under the constraints of the UKREP family construct.²⁹⁰

The issues being faced by the Scottish Parliament in terms of its EU capacity were shared in many respects by the other devolved legislatures in the UK. In Wales, debate also turned to the idea that the Presiding

Officer of the National Assembly may seek independent representation within Tŷ Cymru, alongside the Welsh Assembly Government's office.²⁹¹ In early 2003, the National Assembly for Wales' European and External Committee recommended that an official from the Presiding Office be "co-located with Team Wales in Brussels to provide European support to Assembly Members".²⁹² Offers from WAG to provide a free information and visitor service to the Assembly were rejected.²⁹³ Instead, alternative options were explored, and in 2005, a Welsh Assembly representative office was opened.

However, separate Brussels representations for DA executive and legislative interests was not a concept which informed the original thinking on the EU dimension of the devolution programme; no mention is made of such an arrangement within the White Papers or Concordats/MoU.²⁹⁴ In fact, the then Scottish Secretary Donald Dewar had noted that the Executive's Brussels office itself would act as a *tool* for the Parliament, in that it would:

- assist the Executive in supporting the European responsibilities of the Scottish Parliament;
- provide information to facilitate scrutiny of European legislation; and
- assist visits to Brussels by Parliamentary committees (Scottish Office, 1999; see also Section 5.2).

The fact that the new devolved Parliament and Assemblies in the UK are now actively seeking to develop their own permanent channels of communication and information at the EU level has therefore arisen from the needs of devolved government in practice. It is also indicative of a pro-active stance on engagement with European issues that distinguishes these young institutions from many of their constitutional regional counterparts.

Regional legislatures in Brussels – a new norm?

It remains to be seen whether the representation of regional parliaments and assemblies across the EU becomes the model that other constitutional regions will seek to emulate. There are few signs at present to indicate that this will be the case; interpretations of the UK regional parliamentary representations instead suggest that their creation is most likely accountable to the pro-active stance of the young democratic institutions of the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales in exercising their EU competences.

Adding further to this view that regional legislative representations will remain the exception in Brussels rather than the norm is the fact that few horizontal networks between regional parliamentary representations have been established. A common set of legislative interests and policy preferences does not necessarily emerge between regional parliamentary representations in the EU, and there is no collaborative lobby on regional legislatures in the EU. Rather, regional parliamentary representations in Brussels are more likely to work with other interest groupings from their own region, simply because they represent the same constituencies and their interests and policy concerns are necessarily more closely aligned. In the one area where these bodies do share common concerns – legislative competencies in the EU at the regional level – a coalition has not yet been mobilised, and it is unlikely to do so in the absence of any specific initiative in this field around which such interests could coalesce.

Nonetheless, the growing emphasis on the role of *national* parliaments within debate on the future of European integration – which has in itself catalysed the recent astonishing establishment of national parliamentary offices in the EU, growing from a mere two to 22 within the period 2003–2006 – offers scope for a growing role for regional parliaments as well. A renewed focus on parliamentary scrutiny and accountability has concentrated attention onto the parliamentary dimension of EU integration and could well catalyse further mobilisation of regional parliaments in Brussels.

Administrative regions and elected control

As representative bodies, clearly, the regional offices representing administrative regions in Brussels can only ever reflect the reality back in their home regions. In territories where there is no single focal point of governance and EU policy interests are widely divergent – such as the English regions, Scandinavian regions and in France, for instance – it is difficult for offices in Brussels to act as true “representatives” in the diplomatic sense. For most of these offices, the partnership is formed among local authorities in the region – though, in certain instances, other forms of local public actors are part of that broader territorial grouping. This can pose problems for the issue of accountability and control of the regional office in Brussels to its subscribing partners in the region. In offices where a regional alliance of sponsoring partners co-ordinates the office’s activities, elected authorities do not have any greater share of “ownership” of strategy than other subscribers. Thus, the parliamentary dimension of these regional offices, or any claim to

greater democratic legitimacy within European circles, is challenged by the reality of the regional partnership arrangement.

The lack of a single focal point for governance in the administrative regions also hampers the development of a "regional" position on EU policy issues, because the potential for conflicts of interest between partners increases. Whilst the management board system of accountability and control generally works well in practice, normative concerns as to the appropriate role and function of a regional representation in the EU have been raised, primarily by certain sections of local government in the regions. These claim that control of the EU offices should be more explicitly "political",²⁹⁵ and that some form of privileged role within the subscribing coalition to the Brussels office should be reserved for the elected governmental bodies within the region.

Concluding comments

It is clear that the EU representations of regions with elected governments fulfil a different strategic remit to those based on subscriber coalitions, and are therefore accountable through different channels. Governing arrangements within the home region determine the manner in which the Brussels offices are controlled; lines of accountability thus vary along a regional government/regional subscriber coalition axis. The regional representations from new member states are governed largely on an ad hoc basis but have the potential to develop in either direction.

In organisational terms, there is a clear division between the offices of the constitutional regions on the one hand, and the offices representing weaker, administrative regions or even regional partnerships of subscribing interests. The constitutional regions' Brussels representations operate as a "branch office", and are a fully integrated component of their respective domestic administrations. To that end, they are very much part of the home teams, and co-ordinate with policy-makers and officials within that regional authority. Their lines of accountability and strategic control mechanisms are the same as for any government department within the sending authority.

Those offices which report directly to a regional administration with a weaker degree of autonomous legislative capacity in their respective national contexts demand clear measurable outputs and "added value" as a means by which to control the Brussels representation, manage its activities in a manner which ensures consistency with broader regional objectives on Europe, and deliver something approaching value for

money in that outputs match up with the original remit for the representative office.

Regional subscriber offices, however, are constructed specifically to operate at the Brussels level; there is therefore no corresponding centre of authority to which they should report within the home region. For this reason, their focus in terms of accountability is delivering value to end users – which is made transparent through regular communication and annual reports detailing activities, income and expenditures.

Representative form in Brussels necessarily reflects the reality of power relations and the dispersal of authority within the home polity. Territorial governance – in this instance, the result of the process of devolution in the UK – has engendered a new model of interest mediation at the Brussels level. The convergence of Welsh and Scottish arrangements since devolution establishes a model of Brussels activity following the establishment of regional government and sets an informative precedent for other EU regions should political devolution become a reality.

Overall, therefore, the logic of strategic control clearly reflects the nature of governance within the home territories, underscoring the fact that regional representations must be understood within the context of domestic governing arrangements; just as these differ widely across the EU27, so the role and function of types of regional representative office in the EU is differential. Regional offices are thus distinguished by the governing context within the national polity; the national context of regional offices ultimately determines their structure, role, purpose and activities.

Clearly, there is a tension between the functions of the representation of executive interests at the regional level and the legitimate need for EU information, networks, contacts and profiling of elected regional assemblies. Whilst in the UK this has crystallised around the idea of establishing a separate and independent representation in Brussels, the German response has been heavily to fall back on legal norms and the traditions of organisational culture, by strengthening legal procedures and obligations on the *Länder* executives appropriately to inform the legislatures. There is no sense that the UK model of the representation of separate legislative and executive sub-state interests in Brussels is setting a new benchmark that other regions will seek to emulate; rather, the separation of executive and parliamentary functions and controls has resulted from the unique context of devolved politics in the UK and is thus nationally determined.

7

Conclusion

This book has explored the complex and varied nature of regional representative activity in Brussels, as manifested through the deployment and institutionalisation of representative offices, sustained by sub-state actors from the 27 member states, in all their governmental forms. The main purpose of this enquiry has been to establish a greater understanding of the degree of differentiation that exists between a series of types of regional representation in the EU. These differences are determined within the national political context, but ultimately the precise aims of individual regional representations at the EU level are determined by their activities, the manner in which they are resourced and, finally, their organisational and operational forms. What this book has underscored is the need for a more nuanced appreciation of the regional lobby in Brussels – one that is founded not just on a superficial reading of their outward similarity, but seeks to understand more fully the objectives and ultimate purpose of these different types of representative office. To suggest that regional representations function cohesively as the “regional lobby” in Brussels is to deny the complexity of the reality of regional politics in the 27 member states – a complexity which has undermined the role of the EU’s own Committee of the Regions and has ultimately limited its capacity to engage fully in the policy development process of the EU. This variation is reflected in the wide disparity of representative practices adopted by the 250+ regional representations with the common aim of representing the territorially-aggregated interests at a geographical level smaller than a nation-state yet larger than a local authority.

Why is any of this significant for our broader understanding of EU governance, and its multi-level dynamics? The answer to this lies in the empirical findings that this study has put forward. First, the more

nuanced appreciation of regional representative offices in the EU that this book presents explains that not all of the different types of regional representation in the EU engage in a governance process which is “multi-level”, that is, one which involves multiple levels of political authority; but this book has also explained how this is not ultimately the aim of significant sub-sets of regional representative offices. Under certain circumstances and certain pre-conditions – as has been shown – regional offices do indeed have an impact on EU decision-making, and in that sense can demonstrate a clear role as elements of a multi-level governance system. However, this capacity is by no means constant; there is certainly no systematic ability amongst all of these regional representations to engage fully and effectively in the EU decision-making process, whatever their expressed ambitions may be. Nor is a *successful* contribution to multi-level governance constant across types of regional representation – those representing constitutional regions, administrative regions or regions from the new member states of the EU. Constitutional regions may have greater ambitions to engage independently in multi-level governance networks, but the reality is that they rely largely on intra-state channels of influence in order to achieve those aims. The few cases there have been of direct influence are not causally determined and are contingent on certain constellations of factors – largely related to national governmental support for independent lobbying on an issue, or an ability to put forward clear evidence on the likely policy effect of proposed legislative decisions at that territorial level. That being the case, the impact of regional engagement through a permanent office in Brussels is most evident under this first set of circumstances. The political kudos which constitutional regions carry necessarily endows their Brussels envoys with greater access to policy debates, to circles of influence and ultimately to greater recognition by decision-makers.

Whilst other types of regional representations are not excluded from multi-level governance per se, as the review of their activities shows, their focus is less resolutely on policy-shaping, but rather it embraces more fully also the “softer” benefits of long-term engagement in European networks, notably with regard to project finance and developmental support. A policy-shaping role in the truest sense of effective *multi-level* governance is similarly not constant but sporadic and contingent on circumstances, notably policy mood, the strength of evidence that can be put forward, or the ability to construct multi-sector, transnational ad hoc alliances as advocacy coalitions. Nonetheless, there are still considerable opportunities for influence through this type of

regional representation, particularly in sectoral debates where regional actors can become powerful players in the policy debates through a well-organised and technically sharp campaign.

Revisiting the paradox of a “Europe of the Regions”

Regional offices have developed a unique foothold in European politics over the 25 years of their existence. It has become clear that the presence of regional offices in Brussels is not evidence of an emergent federal EU – as some enthusiasts suggested in the early phase of regional representations in the EU (Loughlin, 1996: 158) – nor do they provide any indication of a nascent “Europe of the Regions” (Elias, 2008; Keating, 2008). Rather, their institutionalised presence in the EU has evolved as part of a wider process of expanding the opportunities for participation in EU policy-making at both the national and the supra-national level (Jeffery, 2000; Moore, 2008a).

The pragmatism of regional actors’ objectives in Europe provides the key to understanding the paradox of regional activism in the EU. Empirical analysis shows how the scope of regions’ engagement in the EU has moved beyond the largely abstract idea of a Europe of the Regions to focus on more pragmatic goals. In contrast to the symbolic rhetoric of a “Europe of the Regions” – which provided only a very abstract and ill-defined goal for regional actors – the constant increase in direct action by regions in the EU seeks to deliver concrete benefits to end users. These deliverables vary between types of regions active in the EU sphere. The notion of a Europe *for* the regions is an idea recently championed by many of the offices representing non-constitutional regions in Brussels. This approach would emphasise the tangibles delivered to the regions as a result of direct, permanent representative activity in Brussels – such as the establishment of business links, joint projects, EU funding of visible schemes and developments in the local area, or EU legislation which takes into consideration the specific circumstances of a particular region. Regardless of the long-term prospects for a Europe of the Regions, there are clear incentives to be part of the long-term game *in* Brussels.

Clearly, Europe offers a new opportunity space for regional actors to engage autonomously with decision-making processes that ultimately affect them – be that as implementers of EU policies, or as a result of domestic intergovernmental negotiations on EU policy formulation, are gradually excluded from national processes and need to find some compensation mechanism from that marginalisation. Whilst much of the excitement over a possible “regional bypass” (Keating and Hooghe,

2006) has largely proven overblown, the permanent engagement of regions in the EU does nonetheless challenge traditional state-centric readings of the European integration and policy process (Moore, 2008; Tatham, 2008). At the very minimum, the long-term engagement of these regional representative bureaux in the EU serves to undermine the traditionally held “gatekeeper” role of national governments, at least in the transmission of information (Bache, 2008). Collectively, their large number ensures that the regional dimension of Europe is present and visible in Brussels, not just the “functionally specific” interests of private lobby groups (Blatter et al., 2008: 483).

A nuanced appreciation of regional representations in the EU

Regional representations are situated at the juncture between national politics and European-level policy- and decision-making, yet the *national* frame of reference has been shown to be paramount in any understanding of the work of regional representations in the EU. The direction of causality pertaining to their form and function sees regional structures replicated at the Brussels level, rather than any EU paradigm dictate the shape of regional representation. A “domestic lens” is thus the most important analytical tool for capturing their full complexity. This awareness fleshes out our understanding of multi-level politics in the EU and suggests that whilst these institutions may well contribute to the multi-level dynamics of European governance, their impact is fluid and differential, in line with the nature of regional politics in the respective domestic arena.

This book has illustrated how the structural characteristics of regional representations in Brussels are determined by the nature of governing arrangements in the home region. Thus, regions with a fully-fledged regional administrative infrastructure use their Brussels offices as an arm of the home executive, and as a policy tool in the development and delivery of regional European strategy. This integration into the sending authority is underpinned by the resource profile of regional offices in Brussels. Where there is a full regional administration, staff from home policy teams are *seconded* to Brussels for around 2–3 years in order to provide relevant, Brussels-level information specifically to that home policy team. They thus operate fully as an extension of the sending administrative arrangements.

Similarly, the strategic direction of regional offices in Brussels and the accountability frameworks within which they are located underscore

the importance of the national context in explaining variation in the structural arrangements of the office. Chapter 6 illustrated how the main divide in terms of the strategic control of regional offices runs along governmental/non-governmental representations in the EU. Subscriber-driven organisations in Brussels are accountable to a set of subscribing interests, and value for money is a core feature of communication between members and the Brussels base – as evidenced by the transparency of incomes and expenditures set out in an annual report. Governmental representations in Brussels demand a similarly high standard of their representations in the EU, though control and scrutiny of the work of these offices is generally not as transparent.

Finally, an assessment of the current activities of regional representations in Brussels – in Chapter 6 – provided evidence of their actions at the EU level. The level and focus of engagement are determined by the objectives of the home or sponsoring authorities; thus, the direction of causality runs from the national to the EU context. The evidence presented in this study shows the extent to which regional offices should be conceived of as extensions of the home or sending authority, and in doing so has offered a fresh interpretation of these institutions. Furthermore, to categorise them as “regional information offices” (Jeffery, 1997b; Lynch, 2004) rather than “regional representations” or simply “regional offices” fails to capture fully their role, and fails to do justice to their now seemingly permanent role within the EU’s institutional landscape.

Overall, the impact of regional representations in the EU has continued to increase as their main *raison d’être* has evolved from championing abstract calls for a stronger “Third Level”, to a more concentrated emphasis of specific deliverables with real regional outputs. As this study has shown, the shift towards a day-to-day work programme within regional representations that engages with policy issues and technical expertise – as well as the management of sector-specific EU funded projects – has allowed them to develop a real niche within the EU’s institutional ecology and to develop a strong role in the multi-level governing system on this basis.

Regional representations in the EU – between diplomacy and interest representation?

As one of a number of strategic options for facilitating EU-regional communication, regional offices have become a recognisable feature of the institutional landscape in Brussels today. As the analysis in this volume

has demonstrated, their role straddles the divide between intra- and extra-state channels of interest mediation. That role varies, however, in line with the domestic position of the regional authorities themselves.

In order, then, to draw some conclusions as to where regional offices sit within the institutional ecology of the European Union, we can revisit the original suggestion that the role of a regional representation in the EU lies “somewhere between an informal “embassy” for their particular region and a lobbying agency” (Hooghe, 1995: 186). We can regard these modes of representative activity as falling along a continuum, as set out in Chapter 2 of this work. At this point, we can reassess the position of regional representations within a comparative framework of related institutional forms.

As figure 7.1 above shows, the representations in Brussels of the constitutionally- empowered regions – that is, those which have independent legislative capacity – occupy a more formalised role within this spectrum of representational activity.

On the other hand, administrative regions’ representations retain a more informal role within this spectrum, with a focus on delivering objectives set by the subscriber base, much along the lines of lobbying organisations. In figure 7.1 they are therefore more closely aligned with lobbying organisations and overseas trade and investment bureaux.

The representations of regions from the new member states retain a position towards the right-hand end of this continuum, on account of their relatively low level of resourcing and independent capacity to initiate action in any of these areas.

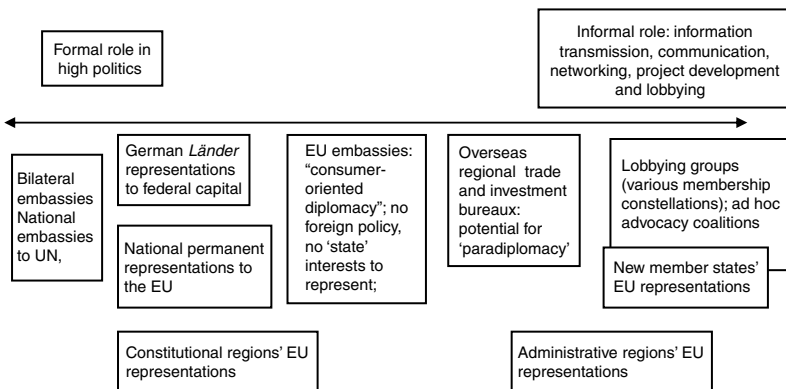


Figure 7.1 A typology of interest mediation

Connecting the debate on interest mediation and multi-level governance is a complex challenge, but a necessary undertaking. It is important for taking the debate on the role of regions in the EU beyond the broad-brush approaches which regard regional representations as a cohesive group with shared goals and commitments. The multi-level governance concept can benefit from a differentiated understanding of how regional representations operate. The picture presented here of regional representations is not a static one, but illustrates the core dynamic of their developmental trajectory. In future research, it will be important to map how these causal linkages – between the nature of the domestic governing arrangements and the ambitions and strategies of a European-level representative strategy – continue to manifest themselves.

Notes

1 Regional Representations in the EU: An Introduction

1. This framework for analysis was constructed with the publication of the benchmark work on this topic *The Regional Dimension of the European Union*, edited by Charlie Jeffery in 1997 (London: Frank Cass).
2. Not all of the offices which are branded “regional representations” cover territories of the same size. Whilst most “regional” offices relate to territory classed as NUTSII on the standard Eurostat measurement (*Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics*), others – for instance Czech regional representations – relate to territory at the NUTSIII level.
3. The term “sub-national authority” is a commonly used one in debates relating to regional engagement in the EU, and is thus used throughout this analysis. The author acknowledges however the preference of certain scholars to use the alternative language of “sub-state authorities”, in reference to the complexity of stateless nations in the European Union.
4. This is a direct reference to the term coined by Charlie Jeffery in his noted work of 1997 (Jeffery, C. (ed.) *The Regional Dimension of the European Union*, London: Frank Cass.)
5. Article 146 of the Maastricht Treaty on European Union (TEU), subsequently renumbered Article 203 by the Amsterdam Treaty, allowed a member state to send a regional minister to act as its delegate in the Council of Ministers in certain instances where regional authorities had major policy responsibilities in the domestic sphere. This provision has, since 2009, been embedded as Article 9c of the Lisbon Treaty.

2 Regional Representations in the EU: A Framework for Analysis

6. See Hooghe, L. (1995) “Subnational Mobilisation in The European Union”. *West European Politics*, Vol. 18, No. 3, pp. 175–198.
7. UK Conservative politicians have used the term to refer to European and overseas investment bureaux (Interview with European and External Affairs Division, WAG, 15 October 2003). Likewise, German commentators criticised the *Länder* for their delusions of grandeur regarding their Brussels “embassies” (*Wiener Zeitung*, 29 September 2004).
8. The activities and roles of regional representations from Germany and the UK will be contrasted within this framework in the concluding section of this study (Chapter 7).
9. This website can be found at <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/transparency/regrin/welcome.do?locale=en>
10. Communication from the Commission COM (2008) 323 final: “European Transparency Initiative. A framework for relations with

interest representatives (Register and Code of Conduct)". Available at http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/docs/323_en.pdf

11. Communication from the Commission COM (2008) 323 final: "European Transparency Initiative. A framework for relations with interest representatives (Register and Code of Conduct)". Available at http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/docs/323_en.pdf A number of regions have already elected to register here, though these are primarily regional representations encompassing broad public-private coalitions – such as North and West Sweden – or representatives of sub-regional entities, such as the Lisbon Regions Network or the City of Göteborg EU office.
12. Interview, Saxony-Anhalt representation to the EU, November 2008.
13. Interview, DG Environment, June 2008; Interview, DG Environment official, January 2009; Interview Bavarian EU representation, December 2009.
14. These are driven largely by regional economic development agencies.
15. As outlined above, the very concept of paradiplomacy implies deviation from central state positions. Indeed, without this differentiation, there could barely be any justification for regional activity in the international sphere. "Paradiplomacy does not assume that there will be no conflict. Indeed, a working assumption must be that some conflict will exist" (Mitchell and Leicester, 1999: 9). In practical terms, then, the line between "paradiplomacy" and "protodiplomacy" is very thinly drawn, making the international activities of regions hard to categorise definitively.

3 Regional Offices and the Domestic Politics of Europe

16. This constitutional provision has in part now been superseded by the new Article 23 of the Basic Law, discussed below.
17. Interview with Rhineland-Palatinate Representation in Brussels, April 2006.
18. Indeed, in view of the important role played by territorial units within the central government machinery prior to devolution, an argument could be made that they have less voice on Europe domestically today than they did prior to devolution (Keating and Waters, 1985: 64).
19. Birmingham City Council and Strathclyde Regional Council are regarded as the British "pioneers" of regional offices in Brussels. Both established a presence in the city in 1984.
20. Interview with Former European Affairs official Birmingham City Council, February 2002.
21. Interview with Former European Affairs official Birmingham City Council, February 2002.
22. There were over 30 of these by 1987 (Borchmann, 1988: 218).
23. The previous Article 23 of the Federal Republic's Basic Law had declared the objective of German unification. The 3rd of October 1990 saw the completion of reunification, effectively making the original Article 23 redundant.
24. Academic interpretations had, however, suggested that such representations would be regarded as constitutionally viable. Fastenrath (1990) concluded that their organisational shape did not represent a form of engagement under international law, nor were they exercising any rights of membership to the EU or agreeing any kinds of legal act.

25. "Ein zweiter Strang in der Außenvertretung", a term used in the debates of the Joint Constitutional Commission – Gemeinsame Verfassungskommission, 1992b.
26. "Das Gesetz über die Zusammenarbeit von Bund und Ländern in Angelegenheiten der Europäischen Union".
27. Interview with German Permanent Representation, September 2004.
28. *Legge 6 febbraio 1996, No. 52 Disposizioni per l'adempimento di obblighi derivanti dall'appartenenza dell'Italia alle Comunità europee – legge comunitaria 1994.*
29. As shall be discussed in Chapter 4 regarding the case of Germany, official terminology is indicative of broader intergovernmental tensions. The Italian regulation therefore refers only to "co-ordination offices" rather than to direct, regional *representations*.
30. NAW Record of Proceedings, 29 February 2000.

4 The Activity Profile of Regional Representations in the EU

31. This term was repeatedly used in interviews with the author and officials from constitutional regional representations in the EU. By contrast, the same term was used only sparingly in discussions with officials from administrative regions' EU representations.
32. Interview, Interview with EU Team Leader, Marshall's Office, Lower Silesian Voivodship, July 2006.
33. Interview East Midlands Europe Office, February 2007; Interview Bavarian EU representation, December 2009.
34. Interview Bavarian regional government Munich, July 2005; Interview Saxony-Anhalt regional government Magdeburg, June 2006; Interview Northern Ireland Executive, November 2004.
35. Interview Saxony-Anhalt regional government Magdeburg, June 2006; interview Catalan government representative, November 2008.
36. Interview, Emilia Romagna EU Liaison Office, November 2008.
37. Interview Scottish Government EU Office, December 2009.
38. Interview with SEEUO, April 2003; Interview with WAG official, October 2003; Interview with European and External Affairs Division, WAG, October 2003.
39. Interview with European and External Affairs Division, WAG, 15 October 2003.
40. His involvement alongside home-based officials of the Scottish and Northern Ireland Executives was due to the slightly different distribution of functions within Wales in the wake of devolution.
41. It must be noted, however, that this arrangement was further facilitated by a situation of party political "congruence" across the UK's political centres at the time. Such an arrangement in future would likely be challenged and constrained by competing party logics.
42. Interview Bavarian regional government Munich, July 2005.
43. Rhodri Morgan in NAW Record of Proceedings, 2 May 2002.
44. Interview with Minister President's Office, Saxony-Anhalt, February 2004.
45. Interview, Welsh Assembly Government EU Office, July 2008.
46. Interview with SEEUO, May 2002.

47. Interview Advantage West Midlands, October 2008; Interview Provence-Alpes-Cotes d'Azur (PACA) office, Brussels, November 2008.
48. Interview, Stockholm city government, September 2008.
49. See for instance John, 1990.
50. Interview with Silesian regional EU office, July 2008; Interview, Lower Silesia EU office, February 2006.
51. Interview, Pilsen EU office, April 2006; Interview, Prague regional representation to the EU, September 2006; Interview, Central Bohemia EU representation, April 2006.
52. Interview, former director, Lubelskie regional representation to the EU, May 2006.
53. Interview, Head of Croatian Regions office, May 2009.
54. Interview, Pilsen regional government EU team, June 2006.
55. Interview, Wielkopolska regional administration EU team, Poznan, June 2006.
56. Interview with Representation of Northrhine-Westphalia to the EU, May 2004; Interview with Bavarian Representation to the EU, December 2009.
57. Interview, DG Agriculture official, January 2009; Interview, DG Enterprise official, September 2004; see also Heichlinger, 2004.
58. Interview with Rhineland-Palatinate Representation in Brussels, April 2003.
59. Interview with Saxony-Anhalt Liaison representation to the EU, November 2008.
60. Interview, Saxony-Anhalt representation to the EU, November 2008.
61. Interview, DG Agriculture official, January 2009.
62. Interview, Director, DG Regio, January 2009.
63. Interview, Bavarian EU Representation, December 2009.
64. Interview with Catalan regional government EU office, November 2008; interview Rheinland Palatinate EU representation, April 2005.
65. Interview with German Permanent Representation, September 2004.
66. Interview with SEEUO, April 2003.
67. On taking office in government in 2007, the Scottish National Party renamed the Scottish Executive as the Scottish Government, resulting in a change also of the name of the Brussels representation. This has subsequently been rebranded as the "Scottish Government EU Office".
68. Interview, Welsh Assembly Government, October 2007.
69. Interview, East Midlands Europe Office, May 2006.
70. Interview, DG Environment official, January 2009; Interview, DG Agriculture official, January 2009.
71. Interview with Silesian regional office, July 2008.
72. Interview, Lower Silesia EU office, February 2006.
73. Interview, Wielkopolska regional administration EU team, Poznan, June 2006.
74. Interview, Lower Silesia regional administration EU team, Wrocław, July 2006.
75. Interview, Pilsen regional government EU team, June 2006.
76. Interview, Central Bohemia regional administration EU team, July 2006.
77. Interview, Polish Permanent Representation to the EU, April 2006.
78. Interview with Catalan regional government EU office, November 2008; Interview Saxony-Anhalt regional government Magdeburg, June 2006.

79. Interview with Catalan regional government EU office, November 2008; Interview, Scottish Government EU office, December 2009.
80. Interview with Representation of Northrhine-Westphalia to the EU, May 2002; Interview with Bavarian Representation to the EU, April 2003.
81. Interview with Bavarian Representation to the EU, April 2006.
82. Interview with the Saxony EU Liaison Office, April 2006.
83. Interview with Rhineland-Palatinate Representation in Brussels, April 2006.
84. Interview with Scottish Government EU Office, December 2009.
85. Interview with Bavarian Representation to the EU, December 2009.
86. Interview with SEEUO, May 2002.
87. Interview, DG Environment, June 2008; Interview CoR November 2008.
88. <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/committees/historic/europe/reports-02/eur02-05-02.htm>
89. Interview, Director, East Midlands Europe Office, June 2008.
90. www.euregha.net/home/
91. www.enrich-network.eu/network.htm
92. Interview with WMIE, May 2008.
93. www.ecrn.net
94. Interview with Saxony-Anhalt Liaison Office Brussels, 22 May 2002.
95. Interview, Wielkopolska regional administration EU team, Poznan, June 2006.
96. Interview with Silesian regional EU office, July 2008; Interview, Lower Silesia EU office, February 2006.
97. Interview, South Bohemian EU Team Leader, Ceske Budejovice, June 2006.
98. Interview, Lubeskie EU office, April 2006; Interview, Polish Permanent Representation to the EU, April 2006.
99. Interview, Central Bohemia regional administration EU team, July 2006.
100. Interview, Lubelskie EU office, April 2006; Interview, Lower Silesia EU office, February 2006.
101. Interview, Pilsen EU office, April 2006; Interview, Central Bohemia regional administration EU team, July 2006.
102. Interview, Central Bohemia regional administration EU team, July 2006.
103. However, this may equally have been a bid to avoid accusations that the Saarland was running a parallel foreign policy (Hahn, 1986: 109).
104. Interview, Director, EU Team, Rheinland Palatinate regional administration, June 2005.
105. Interview with European Commission official, DG Enterprise September 2004.
106. DA offices do, however, pass on knowledge and information on EU funding streams to key players within their territories (Interview with European and External Affairs Division, WAG, 15 October 2003). Nevertheless, their focus is not on the *direct* harnessing of EU funds for individual projects.
107. Interview with North of England Office Brussels, April 2009.
108. Interview with WMIE, April 2003; Interview with Scotland Europa, September 2004.
109. Interview with WMIE, May 2008.
110. Interview with West Sweden EU and Representation Office, September 2007; Interview with Catalan regional government EU office, November 2008.
111. Interview Provence-Alpes-Cotes d'Azur (PACA) office, Brussels, November 2008.

112. Historically, UK regional offices in Brussels have focused on improving the territories' regional economy, and involved the central government agencies responsible for economic promotion. Scottish Enterprise and the Highlands and Islands Enterprise were a majority 51 per cent holding in the company Scotland Europa Limited (SEL) when it was first established. Similarly, in Wales the WDA paid a third of the WEC's budget when it was first set up. In the case of the NICE, the Northern Ireland Department of Economic Development provided about a third of the funding when the organisation was first set up (John, 1994a: 743).
113. Interview with WMIE, April 2003.
114. Interview with UKREP, April 2003.
115. Interview with WMIE, May 2002.
116. There are, however, exceptions to this rule. The North of England office regards producing such a report as an additional burden on its already overstretched resources. The SEEUO, on the other hand, in 2004 produced its first ever annual report, in response to a request made by the Scottish Parliament (see Chapter 4).
117. Interview, Central Bohemia regional administration EU team, July 2006.
118. Interview, South Bohemia regional administration EU team, July 2006.
119. Interview, Director, German Land representation, April 2007.
120. Interview, EU representation of Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur region, November 2008.
121. Interview, Lower Silesia EU representation, March 2007; interview Poznan, June 2006.
122. Interview, Silesia EU representation July 2008; interview, South Bohemia Brussels office April 2006.
123. Interview, Wielkopolska EU representation, April 2006; interview, South Bohemia regional administration EU team, July 2006.
124. The activities and role of regional representations from Germany and the UK will be contrasted within this framework in the concluding section of this study (Chapter 7).

5 Resourcing and Organisational Principles

125. Interview with European and External Affairs Division, WAG, October 2003.
126. Interview with German Permanent Representation, September 2004.
127. The criteria for effective lobbying – devised by Mazey and Richardson (2001a) and discussed in Chapter 2 of this study – are labour-intensive procedures; thus, an enhanced team in Brussels goes some way towards providing a more comprehensive service to end users of any office.
128. Interview with Catalan regional government EU office, November 2008; Interview, Emilia Romagna EU Liaison Office, November 2008.
129. Interview with Minister President's Office, Bavaria, June 2004.
130. Interview with Minister President's Office, Bavaria, June 2004.
131. Interview with Rhineland-Palatinate Representation in Brussels, April 2003.
132. As of late 2002, the office formerly referred to as the National Assembly for Wales Office in Brussels (NAWO) became officially termed the Welsh

- Assembly Government (WAG) EU Office. A full explanation of the course of events during 2002 which led to this shift in terminology is provided in Chapter 5. The name "WAG EU Office" will therefore be used in this study to refer to the current representative office in Brussels, with NAWO being used to denote the office which existed prior to the changes of late 2002.
133. Hence, the policy officers from the home administration, seconded to the Brussels office, are collectively referred to as "*Spiegelreferenten*" (Bayerische Staatskanzlei, 2004), or mirror-image officials, as they reflect the work of the sending authority.
 134. Interview with Rhineland-Palatinate Representation in Brussels, April 2007; Interview with Representation of Catalonia, November 2008.
 135. Interview with Rhineland-Palatinate Representation in Brussels, April 2003.
 136. Interview with Minister President's Office, Saxony-Anhalt, February 2004.
 137. Interview with the Saxony EU Liaison Office, April 2003.
 138. Interview with Rhineland-Palatinate Representation in Brussels, April 2003.
 139. Interview with Thuringia Office Brussels, May 2002.
 140. Interview with European and External Affairs Division, WAG, October 2003.
 141. Interview with Rhineland-Palatinate Representation in Brussels, April 2003.
 142. Interview with Scottish Executive official, May 2004.
 143. Interview with European and External Affairs Division, WAG, October 2003.
 144. Interview with West Sweden EU and Representation Office, September 2007; interview with Provence-Alpes-Cotes d'Azur (PACA) office, Brussels, November 2008.
 145. Fuller discussion of the various types of English regional offices, which were developed in Brussels prior to devolution in the UK, can be found in John, 1994a; Jeffery, 1997b; Heichlinger, 1999.
 146. Interview with WMIE, 17 April 2003.
 147. <http://www.stockholmregion.org/website1/1.0.1.0/118/3/index.php>
 148. Interview, Lower Silesia EU office, February 2006; interview, Wielkopolska regional administration EU team, Poznan, June 2006.
 149. Interview, Lubelskie EU office, April 2006.
 150. Interview with Silesian regional office, July 2008; interview, Polish Permanent Representation to the EU, April 2006.
 151. Interview with Minister President's Office, Saxony-Anhalt, February 2004; interview Bavarian regional government Munich, July 2005; interview with Catalan government representative, November 2008.
 152. The complex public-private legal operating basis on which the first German *Länder* offices were established in a bid to avoid reproaches of parallel foreign policy (Chapter 2) thus extended to personnel matters as well.
 153. Interview with Minister President's Office, Saxony-Anhalt, February 2004; interview Rheinland Palatinate EU representation, April 2005.
 154. Whilst this is the ideal model and, indeed, is largely the common practice, it is not always the case, for instance, where policy officers whose position

- in Brussels is part-sponsored by two sending ministries within the home authority.
155. Interview with Bavarian Representation to the EU, April 2003; interview with Minister President's Office, Saxony-Anhalt, February 2004.
 156. Interview with Rhineland-Palatinate Representation in Brussels, April 2003.
 157. Interview West Sweden EU and Representation Office, September 2007.
 158. Interview with WMIE, May 2008.
 159. Interview West Sweden EU and Representation Office, September 2007.
 160. Interview, Lower Silesia EU office, February 2006; interview, Wielkopolska regional administration EU team, Poznan, June 2006.
 161. Interview with Scottish Government EU Office, December 2009; interview with Catalan regional government EU office, November 2008.
 162. Interview with Representation of Saxony-Anhalt to the Federation, November 2002.
 163. Interview, Welsh Assembly Government EU Office, July 2008; interview, Emilia Romagna EU Liaison Office, November 2008.
 164. The budgetary resources and financing of German and British regional offices are discussed more fully in Section 4.3.
 165. Interview with Minister President's Office, Bavaria, June 2004.
 166. Saxony's approach is not unique amongst German *Länder*; the *Land* Rhineland-Palatinate has also established a "Europool" of expertise on Europe which is ready to be deployed when an opportunity in Brussels arises (Fechtner, 1992: 158).
 167. Interview with Minister President's Office, Saxony, February 2004.
 168. Interview, Emilia Romagna EU Liaison Office, November 2008; interview, Welsh Assembly Government, October 2007.
 169. Interview Bavarian EU representation, December 2009; interview with Rhineland-Palatinate Representation in Brussels, April 2003.
 170. Interview with Minister President's Office, Bavaria, June 2004.
 171. For the new devolved authorities in the UK, a rolling secondment programme to Brussels was regarded as an important tool for building EU skills within the administration. The White Paper on Scottish Devolution *Scotland's Parliament* (1997), for instance, acknowledged the positive benefits that secondments from the Scottish Office to UKREP and the EU institutions had had prior to devolution, and stated the aim of continuing this practice once the new Scottish Executive was set up.
 172. Interview with Scottish Executive official, May 2004.
 173. Interview with Northern Ireland Executive official, November 2003.
 174. Item B4.28.
 175. As the First Secretary noted in a plenary debate within the National Assembly for Wales: "We have never been able to get sufficient numbers of seconded officials from Wales into the institutions of the EU" (National Assembly for Wales, Record of Proceedings, 29 February 2000).
 176. Interview with European and External Affairs Division, WAG, October 2003.
 177. Interview with European and External Affairs Division, WAG, 15 October 2003.
 178. Interview with Northern Ireland Executive official, 13 November 2003.

179. Interview with Northern Ireland Executive official, 13 November 2003.
180. A key recommendation of the NIA Committee of the Centre report into the approach taken on European issues was that "Central" administration funding be put in place to cover the costs to individual departments of seconding staff to Brussels (NIA, 2002).
181. Interview with Northern Ireland Executive official, 13 November 2003.
182. Though on the other side of the equation, finding suitable staff to transfer to Brussels is not always straightforward, given personal aversions to relocation (NIA, 2002).
183. Interview Advantage West Midlands, October 2008.
184. Interview Provence-Alpes-Cotes d'Azur (PACA) office, Brussels, November 2008; interview, Stockholm city government, September 2008.
185. Interview, Lower Silesia EU office, February 2006.
186. Interview, Lubelskie EU office, April 2006.
187. Interview, Wielkopolska regional administration EU team, Poznan, June 2006; interview, Lower Silesia regional administration EU team, Wrocław, July 2006.
188. Interview, Wielkopolska regional administration EU team, Poznan, June 2006.
189. Interview with Catalan regional government EU office, November 2008.
190. Interview with Minister President's Office, Saxony, February 2004.
191. Interview with Rhineland-Palatinate Representation in Brussels, April 2003; interview with Representation of Northrhine-Westphalia to the EU, April 2003.
192. First Minister in Written Questions answered between 18 and 25 September 2003: Question WAQ27771.
193. Written Questions answered between 18 and 25 September 2003: Question WAQ27771.
194. These figures cover salaries, allowances and premises – including non-recurrent costs. Figures from National Assembly for Wales, Written Questions answered between 18 and 25 September 2003: Question WAQ27771.
195. Scottish Parliament Written Answers, S2W-8180: 22 June 2004.
196. Interview with Northern Ireland Executive official, 13 November 2003.
197. Scotland Europa, however, is organised differently, in that it remains part of Scottish Enterprise, and receives between 50 and 55 per cent of its funding from that organisation (see Chapter 5).
198. Interview, Lubelskie EU office, April 2006.
199. Interview, Lower Silesia EU office, February 2006.
200. Interview, former director, Lubelskie regional representation to the EU, May 2006; interview, Polish Permanent Representation to the EU, April 2006.
201. Interview, Central Bohemia regional administration EU team, July 2006; interview, South Bohemian EU Team Leader, Ceske Budejovice, June 2006.
202. Such co-localational arrangements do clearly add value in the sense of presenting a stronger presence outwardly to EU partners. In the early 1990s, when East Germany's *Länder* first began opening Brussels representations, all five new *Länder* offices shared premises in the former GDR embassy building in Brussels. The house served as a focal point for specific *Eastern* German interests and – as a group – the East German *Länder* felt they were

- able to “punch above their weight” on the European networking scene. Joint regional profile-raising events were well-attended. However, the demands of individual policy concerns and regional governmental controls meant that this co-locational arrangement was short-lived, with all East German *Länder* later choosing to adopt a similar model to their West German counterparts.
203. Interview, Pilsen EU office, April 2006; interview, Prague regional representation to the EU, September 2006; interview, Central Bohemia EU representation, April 2006.
 204. Interview, Lubelskie EU office, April 2006; interview, Lower Silesia EU office, February 2006.
 205. Interview Provence-Alpes-Cotes d’Azur (PACA) office, Brussels, November 2008.
 206. Interview, South Bohemia Brussels Office, February 2007.
 207. Interview, Emilia Romagna EU Liaison Office, November 2008 ; interview, Wielkopolska EU representation, May 2006.
 208. Interview with Scotland Europa, September 2004.
 209. Interview with WAG EU Office, May 2002.
 210. Interview with Scottish Parliament official, November 2007.
 211. Interview Bavarian EU representation, December 2009; interview, Emilia Romagna EU Liaison Office, November 2008.
 212. Interview with Thuringia Office Brussels, May 2002.

6 Strategic Direction and Accountability

213. Interview with Scottish Government EU Office, December 2009; interview with Minister President’s Office, Saxony, February 2004.
214. Interview with Catalan regional government EU office, November 2008.
215. Interview Bavarian EU representation, December 2009.
216. Interview, Emilia Romagna EU Liaison Office, November 2008.
217. Interview with Representation of Northrhine-Westphalia to the EU, May 2004.
218. Interview with Thuringia Office Brussels, May 2002.
219. Interview with Mecklenburg-Western Pommerania EU Information Office, May 2002.
220. Interview Saxony-Anhalt regional government Magdeburg, June 2006; interview Rheinland Palatinate EU representation, April 2005.
221. Interview with Minister President’s Office, Bavaria, June 2004.
222. Interview with Representation of Northrhine-Westphalia to the EU, April 2003.
223. Interview with German Permanent Representation, September 2004.
224. Interview with European and External Affairs Division, WAG, October 2003; interview with Northern Ireland Executive official, November 2003.
225. Interview with Northern Ireland Executive official, 13 November 2003.
226. The concept of “Scotland House” emerged from a review of different types of regional representation operating in Brussels, conducted by two Scottish Office officials seconded to UKREP in 1998 (Bulmer et al., 2001: 134–135).

227. However, the term “Scotland House” is today often erroneously used to refer to the Scottish Executive’s EU Office alone – even though it actually denotes the building in central Brussels which houses a number of Scottish interest representations in the EU, including COSLA, the Scottish Local Government Office, the Highlands and Islands European Partnership and Scottish law firms, amongst others (Scottish Parliament, 2002a).
228. Rhodri Morgan, in NAW Record of Proceedings 2 May 2002.
229. Interview with SEEUO, April 2003.
230. With this in mind, Scotland Europa then undertook its own review of its function in a bid to establish how its own activities would need to change in the wake of devolution and how best to represent Scotland’s interests once an Executive Brussels office had been established (Bulmer et al., 2001: 131–132).
231. Interview with Northern Ireland Executive official, November 2003.
232. When the ONIEB was first established, there was an agreement drawn up between the Executive and Invest Northern Ireland that the latter would contribute to the overall costs of the Brussels office, on condition that it would get office space there.
233. Interview with WAG EU Office, May 2002.
234. The arrangement provides the practical implementation of the “Team UK” idea established by the Memorandum of Understanding (see also Chapter 6). Paragraph B3.27 of the MoU states that DA offices in Brussels will “work closely with, and in a manner complementary to, UKRep which remains responsible for representing the view of the UK to the European institutions” (Bulmer et al., 2001: 135).
235. <http://www.stockholmregion.org/website1/1.0.1.0/118/3/index.php>
236. http://www.regiorandstad.com/index_eng.php accessed January 2010.
237. Interview Provence-Alpes-Cotes d’Azur (PACA) office, Brussels, November 2008.
238. Interview Ile de France office, Brussels, November 2009.
239. Interview Ile de France office, Brussels, July 2008.
240. It is worth noting that a number of WMIE members are also represented in Brussels through alternative, sectoral organisations. The WMLGA, for instance, is an active member of the Local Government International Bureau (LGIB) in both Brussels and London, at the same time as being a “principal management member” WMIE.
241. Interview, Lubelskie EU office, April 2006.
242. Interview, Polish Permanent Representation to the EU, April 2006.
243. Interview, Lubelskie EU office, April 2006.
244. Interview with Silesian regional office, July 2008.
245. Interview, Lubelskie EU office, April 2006.
246. Interview with Silesian regional office, July 2008; interview, Lower Silesia EU office, February 2006.
247. Interview, Lubelskie EU office, April 2006.
248. Interview, Pilsen EU office, April 2006; interview, Central Bohemia EU representation, April 2006.
249. Interview, Wielkopolska EU representation, May 2006.
250. Interview, Central Bohemia regional administration EU team, July 2006.
251. Interview, South Bohemian EU Team Leader, Ceske Budejovice, June 2006.

252. Interview, South Bohemian EU Team Leader, Ceske Budejovice, June 2006.
253. Interview with Scottish Executive official, May 2004; interview with Minister President's Office, Saxony-Anhalt, February 2004.
254. Generally, the *Länder* are also able to draw on the resources of a working group (*Arbeitskreis*) of EU policy officials drawn from all the relevant ministries of the home administration, including the EU team of the Berlin representation. This working group will meet on a regular basis, and is the primary source of EU policy expertise across the home administration (Interview with Minister President's Office, Saxony-Anhalt, February 2004; interview with Minister President's Office, Saxony, February 2004).
255. Interview with Minister President's Office, Northrhine-Westphalia, July 2004.
256. Interview with Minister President's Office, Saxony, February 2004.
257. Interview with Minister President's Office, Saxony-Anhalt, February 2004.
258. Interview with Saxony-Anhalt Liaison Office Brussels, 22 May 2002.
259. Interview with Saxony-Anhalt Liaison Office, November 2008; interview with Rhineland-Palatinate Representation in Brussels, April 2003.
260. Interview with Catalan regional government EU office, November 2008; interview with Scottish Government EU Office, December 2009.
261. Interview with Representation of Saxony to the Federation, November 2002.
262. Interview with Thuringia Office Brussels, May 2002.
263. Interview with Rhineland-Palatinate Representation in Brussels, April 2003; interview with Representation of Northrhine-Westphalia to the EU, April 2003; interview, Emilia Romagna EU Liaison Office, November 2008.
264. Interview with Saxony-Anhalt Liaison Office Brussels, May 2002; interview with Minister President's Office, Rhineland-Palatinate, October 2002.
265. Interview with Northern Ireland Executive official, November 2003.
266. Interview East Midlands Europe Office, February 2007.
267. Interview, Stockholm city government, September 2008.
268. Interview East Midlands Europe Office, February 2007.
269. Interview with WMIE, May 2002.
270. Interview Provence-Alpes-Cotes d'Azur (PACA) office, Brussels, November 2008.
271. Interview West Sweden EU and Representation Office, September 2007.
272. Interview, Wielkopolska EU representation, May 2006; interview, Lubelskie EU office, April 2006.
273. Interview, Central Bohemia regional administration EU team, July 2006.
274. Interview, Wielkopolska regional administration EU team, Poznan, June 2006.
275. Interview, Wielkopolska regional administration EU team, Poznan, June 2006.
276. Interview, Pilsen regional government EU team, June 2006.
277. Interview, Czech Permanent Representation to the EU, February 2007; interview, South Bohemia Brussels Office, February 2007.

278. Interview, Pilsen regional government EU team, June 2006.
279. Interview, Central Bohemia regional administration EU team, July 2006; interview, Prague regional representation to the EU, September 2006.
280. Interview, Wielkopolska regional administration EU team, Poznan, June 2006.
281. Interview, Prague regional representation to the EU, September 2006; interview, Lower Silesia regional administration EU team, Wrocław, July 2006.
282. Interview, Pilsen EU office, April 2006.
283. Interview, South Bohemia Brussels Office, February 2007.
284. Interview with Minister President's Office, Saxony-Anhalt, February 2004.
285. Interview with Representation of Northrhine-Westphalia to the EU, April 2003.
286. Interview with Northern Ireland Executive official, November 2003.
287. Interview National Assembly for Wales representation, April 2006; interview Scottish Parliament Representative Office in Brussels, April 2006.
288. The objective was not necessarily to justify scope for a distinct Scottish Parliament presence in Brussels. Indeed, the Conservative rapporteur on the issue, Ben Wallace MSP, had initially been against such an outcome (Interview with Scottish Parliament official, November 2003).
289. However, support for a distinct Scottish Parliament representation in Brussels did not equate to a withdrawal of support for the SEEUO. Indeed, the Scottish Parliament's inquiry into Scotland's representation in the EU stressed that "for the initial few years, it was prudent to staff [the SEEUO] at a fairly restricted level until such times as its operating practices became clearer. However, on at least two occasions, this Committee has called for greater resources for the SEEUO, including revised staffing levels" (Scottish Parliament, 2002a).
290. Interview with Scottish Parliament official, November 2003.
291. Interview with WAG official, October 2003; interview with European and External Affairs Division, WAG, October 2003.
292. Minutes of the National Assembly for Wales European and External Affairs Committee meeting, 30 January 2003.
293. Interview with European and External Affairs Division, WAG, October 2003.
294. This may well be related to the fact that the Concordats were never discussed by any Parliament; they are an agreement between executives rather than a framework for horizontal relationships between legislatures.
295. Interview with North East Assembly official, November 2003.

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