

Regional Lobbying in Brussels

A case study on the mobilization of the regional offices on
the 'EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region'

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Abstract

Regional offices grow of more and more importance for the interest representation in Brussels. This study involves what determines if a region takes lobbying actions, what mobilization variables are important for the performance and what lobbying strategy is supposed to be the most successful. The study is a case study on the regional mobilization within the development of the 'EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region' and is based on empirical data gained by interviews with regional offices and Commission officials. Since there is usually a lack of theoretical backgrounds within lobbying, a theoretical framework with different lobbying strategies and several mobilization variables that determine these strategies was evolved. It turned out that the variables of representation, agenda setting and resources are the main influences for the different strategies, which is highly related to the decision making power of the region, the amount of partners established in the office and the interest in European issues at the home level. The main instrument used by the offices, a coalition, was not as successful as expected. A model of mobilization types is presented which distinguish 'the committed', 'the follower' and 'the reluctant'.

Key words: Regional Lobbying, Mobilization, Regional Offices, Baltic Sea Strategy, EU

Words: 19.927

List of Abbreviations

BaltMet	Network of the Baltic Metropolises
B7	Network of the seven Islands in the Baltic Sea Region
BSR	Baltic Sea Region
BSS	EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region
CBSS	Council of the Baltic Sea States
CoR	Committee of the Region
CPMR	Conference of the peripheral maritime regions
DG	Directorate General of the European Commission
DG Env	Directorate General for Environmental Issues
DG Mare	Directorate General for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs
DG Regio	Directorate General for Regional Policy of the EC
DG Relex	Directorate General for External Relations
EBIG	Europe Baltic Inter Group (of the European Parliament)
EC	European Commission
EP	European Parliament
EU	European Union
IBSG	Informal Baltic Sea Group (by the Brussels offices)
Interreg	EU programme to stimulate interregional cooperation
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
NGO	Non- Governmental Organization
Open Days	European Week of Regions and Cities
PermRep	Permanent Representation of a Member State
RO	Regional office

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1 Design and Outline of the Study

1.1 Introduction

Since almost 25 years a phenomena has reached Brussels, the establishment of regional offices towards the EU. Today over 160 regions are present and most of them have, besides other tasks, a clear mandate: to lobby for their regions (Marks et.al. 2002). This paper wants to identify what factors of mobilization are important to fulfill this aim¹. Marks *et al.* examined a very good study on why the regional offices mobilize themselves at a European level (Marks et. al. 1996) and this study takes this up and asks how they mobilize once they are on a European level. Only the fact that the regional offices are present does not automatically mean that they have influence. “Ineffective political actors might gain access to an institution without being able to translate this advantage into concrete policy outcomes” (Bouwen 2002: 366). In particular, the study wants to identify what has been done to influence an upcoming initiative, the ‘EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region’². Based on this study the paper should tell both what is and what should be done within regional interest representation. The focus lies more on mobilization factors and less on influence in general. Rather, it points out what factors are responsible for the performance of the offices. In short, the following research questions should be answered:

- What mobilization variables determine which lobbying strategy is used?
- What form of lobbying tactics and mobilization is the most successful?

This paper aims at creating a framework that helps to explain what different lobbying attributes are present within the different lobbying offices based on the BSS and a near complete study on the influence of the regional offices on the BSS should be delivered.

¹ The ways of regional lobbying are manifold. In this study only the ‘Brussels route’ will be discussed. Summaries and explanations how the regional level developed on the European stage can be found at various sources, Jeffery and Hooghe Marks being two of them (Jeffery 2000: 4ff; Hooghe and Marks 1996).

² Although this the full name of the initiative the name under what it is commonly known, ‘Baltic Sea Strategy’, is used throughout the paper.

1.2 Outline

This paper wants to explain what actions were taken by the regional offices to influence the BSS and what determines them. A theoretical framework will be created to itemize these different factors. Unlike most other works done on regional influence, this paper aims to connect the practice with the theory. It wants to explain in theoretical terms what is happening at a practical level and should help determine what mobilization attempts are best. This study is more interested in determining what aspects must be fulfilled to be successful, however, it will not point out which of the offices was most successful. Firstly, this is not in the interest of the study and secondly, a more extensive study must be done to answer this.

As aforementioned, the outline of the study is based upon applying a theoretical framework towards practice. First, the method and existing literature will be introduced and within the following chapters the developments within the fields of lobbying, regional representations and the BSS are presented. This should pave the way for the development of the theoretical framework in chapter 5. This is done through highlighting the different lobbying strategies and the variables that are expected to have an impact on performance. Chapter 6 connects the theoretical framework with the findings from the case study and within chapter 7 a short analysis of the findings are performed with three different ways of mobilization being introduced as result of the analysis. An outlook of the meaning of these results for the practice will close this study.

1.3 Existing literature

In the field of European interest representation, many empirical studies have been published (Bennet 1997, Greenwood et al 1992, Mazey and Richardson 1993, van Schendelen 2002). These studies on the diverse and complex field showed that the link between theoretical approaches and practice is lacking.

Regional influence in Brussels gathered some academic interest with the following summary being significant but incomplete as well as literature regional influences in general. These works do not focus solely on regional offices but include them as one way of interest representation. Besides more general oriented studies in regional influence (Bomberg and Peterson 1998, Jerneck and Gidlund 2001), a few on regional offices exist (Hooghe and Marks 1996, Marks et.al 1996), mostly serving as an inventory rather than a real study. Some of these studies come to the conclusion that regional offices have a rather weak influence, depending on their home country (Marks et al 2002). Others argue that the regional office influence is underestimated and regions have the opportunity to become relevant players (Tatham 2008, Moore 2008). Some see them as a form of collective action in which history and the country are important factors for

opening an office (Nielsen and Salk 1998: 247). There are works on offices of single countries, preferably Germany and Great Britain that come to the conclusion that the German offices get involved and influence the European policy process (Bosselmann 2007: 75) or see a shift towards more regionalism (Burch and Gomez 2002). Lastly, there are comparative studies of offices. Even within German, British and Spanish offices there are differing influences (Jeffery 2000, Jeffery 1997) and organizational forms. These different political structures of Germany, France and Spain have a huge influence on the performance of offices in Brussels, with the German Länder having the biggest influence (Neunreither 2001). Other works focus on two German regions (Buchheim 2002) but it is questionable if the results can be generalized towards other regions, especially outside of Germany.

Despite various studies, they can only partly be used within the discourse itself. Firstly, they focus not solely on regional offices but on all channels of influence. Secondly, they analyze all the duties performed by the regional offices; not just lobbying functions. They focus outside of the BSR, mainly German, English and Spanish regions are of interest (Kohler-Koch 1995, Mazey 1995, Moore 2005, Tatham 2007, Burch and Gomez 2002, Bomberg and Peterson 1998). Except Germany, no other region of the BSR has gathered major individual interest³. Within this study the regional offices of the BSR as a macro- region will be focused upon. Since the study concentrates solely on lobbying, it is unique within the studies of regional offices.

1.4 Methods

Focusing on the BSS, the study is a single embedded case study which tries to explain the mobilization of the offices in Brussels. This was chosen because with its characteristics it serves as an excellent research object. Firstly, it is highly related to regional interest and includes a wide range of topics. Secondly, it is a major step into a new direction of a new regional policy and thirdly, within its developing process it is very open for reformation. The multiple units within the embedded study of analysis (Ying 2003: 40) is divided into the regional offices and the EC. The focus lies on the influence of the regional offices with the Commission serving as a verification or rating actor. Every case study includes questions (Yin 2003: 74) and they are asked in the form of hypotheses. The developing and explanation of these hypotheses will be done within the first part of the thesis, then applied directly to the case study within the second part.

The empirical data was carried out through expert interviews, chosen from the wide range of possible interview methods. Expert interview is done with a “person who is responsible for the development, implementation or control of

³ Besides the already mentioned study by Jerneck and Gidlund (2001) and an unpublished paper that focuses on Estonia and Finland.

solutions/strategies/policies and who has privileged access to information about groups of persons or decision processes” (Meuser and Nagel 2002:71ff).

When recruiting the experts of the study, a short interview request was sent to 31 regional offices in Brussels in addition to several decision making institutions, accompanied with a short description of the research project. With 12 offices and two Commission officials an interview could be scheduled. The participants are a cross section of the offices of the BSR in Brussels and can therefore represent the region. This is essential for the question of generalization of the study. The study was conducted with regard to ethical guidelines in social science research (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009: 68ff) and research participants were informed about the overall purpose of the study and the main features of its design. They were briefed about confidentiality and the study’s application. All interviews with one exemption were taped and were made anonymous due to the sensitiveness of the issue. Quotes were adjusted that no inference of the identity of the office can be revealed. Questions asked were oriented on the study’s theoretical outline and the same question roughly repeated to all participants. An interview guide was used and adjusted to specify mentioned aspects and deepen them. Afterwards a postscript was created followed by transcribing. With interviewing the “interpretation of the data is at the core of qualitative research” (Flick 2006: 295) and the analysis took place focusing on the meaning of words and not the manner in which they were said. All data was verified during and after the study.

The overall requirement is objectivity and reliability. Reliability pertains the consistency and trustworthiness of research findings. In interviews this is closely connected on how the questions will be asked. The same interview guide was used for every single interview and differences within the interviewees can be excluded. Furthermore, the questions within this guideline were open and non-biased or non-influential. Validity permeates the whole research process not just one single aspect of the process and includes the trustworthiness of the interview subjects, the transcribing style or the logic of interpretation used. Every effort was done to produce valid and objective data throughout.

1.5 Limitations

The study has certain limitations. Firstly, all the findings are based on a single case study. Yin states “the single case study can represent a significant contribution to knowledge and theory building” (Yin 2003: 40) but this could be a disadvantage as well. Nonetheless, this study can to a certain extend be generalized. Stake states that findings should not be solely generalized but rather seen contextually and thus be transferred to other situations (Stake 2005). The case study should therefore offer a ‘naturalistic generalization’ which does not include any claims about general meaning of their outcomes (Gomm et al. 2000:3ff) but that the study can produce a more detailed picture on regional lobbying.

Choosing interviews as the main method could install a problem since “it is hard to produce new knowledge through interviews that goes beyond common sense and which may be pragmatically helpful in understanding or even changing a social situation” (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009: 299). However, its strength to produce an insight view into regional lobbying in Brussels is clear. Interviews are highly related to the honesty of the interview partners, which is closely connected to reliability and therefore, complete credibility cannot be reached with the study.

Another limitation could be the choice of participants. As aforementioned, the interested offices show quite a good sample of all offices in Brussels of the BSR. For the most representative result, all regional offices and institutions need to be interviewed which was considered when analyzing the results.

2 Lobbying and Mobilization

2.1 Lobbying

The lobby was a venue where the congressman and delegates could debate and bargain with outsiders. From the early 19th century the expression ‘lobbyists’ was used for the people that tried to influence the congressman.

One recent definition was that of Milbrath defining a competition of two people trying to attract the favor of the decision makers (Milbrath 1963). Berry moves away from the two-person explanation and focuses upon the lobbyist as an person that wants to have influence on a political decision (Berry 1977: 46). In recent years scholars followed this active approach defining lobbying simply as ‘efforts to influence political decision making’ (Cates 1988: 238ff, Jordan 1991). This is used too loosely and sometimes even inappropriately, therefore another definition is used here.

Lobbying is “the stimulation and transmission of a communication, by someone other than a citizen acting on his own behalf, directed to a governmental decision maker with the hope of influencing his decision” (Milbrath in Sills 1991: 442).

EU institutions are quite open for input from interest groups and sometimes even rely on this input (Mazey and Richardson 1993). Some authors argue that the “EU institutional setting and the interest group system co-evolved” (Eising 2008: 9).

The word lobbying is not unvalued but sometimes arises suspicion with a negative connotation. This derives from the “belief that lobbyists use improper methods in their attempts to influence officials” (Milbrath in Sills 1991: 442). In Europe especially this distrust is bigger than the United States and was seen as a ‘threat’ towards democracy (Eschenburg 1950). Some scholars and actors prefer the word *interest representation* (Greenwood 2007). In terms of definition, it refers to the same action as lobbying. In this study, lobbying is the preferred term. The dismissive connotation also arose within the empirical study. “The expression lobbying is negative, rather networking”¹². The used notion ‘networks’ or ‘networking’ is another expression frequently used inappropriately. In political science, extensive studies exist that deal with the concept of policy networks⁴. In

⁴ Börzel (1997) has presented a very good introduction as well as analysis of policy networks.

line with these concepts this work refers to organizational networks when mentioning the notion⁵. When referring to building up relationships over time the expression ‘contacts’ is used not to interfere these two different acts.

2.2 Mobilization

The notion mobilization plays a major role within this study. Regional mobilization is defined as “the growing engagement of sub-national governmental actors with the institutions and processes of EU policy-making.” (Jeffery 2000: 2). Jeffery refers to mobilization on the whole regional level, this paper has to define a slightly more narrowed definition. Since it only concentrates on the regional offices in Brussels, which is a mobilization *per se*, the focus is on how they mobilize and perform the influence and what variables are responsible for the mobilization process. It is therefore closely related to the lobbying notion explained above but nonetheless goes beyond the sheer influence measurement.

The definition of mobilization of the regional offices in Brussels is the engagement of the offices within the institutions and processes of EU policy making.

⁵ This can be for example in the BSR the ‘BaltMet’ or ‘B7’ networks.

3 The Regional Offices

Referring to a regional office always implies referring to the region that is represented. In the past many different definitions have been made on the issue⁶. This paper follows the understanding of Gren which states that a regions is “defined as a territorial unit [...] and acting as a framework for economic and political action.” (Gren 1999: 12). That implies that the region does not necessarily need a common institutional government and is in line with the different areas the regional offices in the study represent, since they do not essentially have a regional elected body⁷. In this respect, a regional office is an office of a region lower than nation-state level that represents this area towards the outside. The study does not include the national representations of regions and municipalities. Firstly, they don’t see themselves as regional offices and they “have a slightly different role than the regional offices.”⁶ Secondly, they have a different outline and represent the regions of a nation state level, not the regions itself. Regardless, these organisations work closely together with the regional offices as they are defined in the study, this makes that some scholars count them as regional offices (Hooghe and Marks 1996: 83).

3.1 The Development of the Offices

The past two decades has seen an explosion in the number of offices established by sub-national governments in Brussels. Despite their continued growth and financial empowerment, many academics still question the influence and therefore the usefulness of these offices (Hooghe and Marks 1996, Bomberg and Peterson 1998, Jeffery 2000 and Marks et al. 2002). Nonetheless it is “a truism that no rational actor will ever waste resources by investing in an operation that does not deliver any form of a return” (Moore 2008: 522).

The legal situation of the offices is very different. They vary from legal entities under the law of the national state or under the name of an NGO and their

⁶ For a summary of different notions and definitions of ‘region’ see Gren (1999: 11ff) who has a short, but good summary of the ongoing discussion. The EU has its own definition of a region which is the so called NUTS system. This is part of the definition but not the used definition in this paper.

⁷ With this definition also the BSR is included and defined. The region is a macro-region of the 9 countries with access to the Baltic Sea, in some definitions also Norway and Iceland is included. In this study BSR refers to the first.

organization is as various as their legal status. Hence, they differ from the work of the PermReps of the countries as they try to gather information and influence the policies as early as possible whereas the latter is focusing on the work within the Council (Bosselmann 2007: 25). The first offices opened in Brussels were the German Länder⁸, which are mostly seen as the forerunner of regional influence. Today about 300 offices are set in Brussels from nearly every member state. “The action for sub-national offices is rooted in their respective domestic politics where we find sub-national 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). Initially installed as an early warning establishment, they have nowadays various tasks:

- Information Gathering
- Acquisition of Subsidies/ Contacts with other Regions
- Representing the Region at the European Level
- Representing the Office in the Region
- Supporting the CoR Members of the Region
- Lobbying

(after Bosselmann 2007: 23ff/ 52ff, Marks et al 2002, Moore 2009)

Over the years they became more and more lobbying facilities, especially when the offices got upgraded with staff and competencies. This is connected to the fact that lobbying follows information gathering, since the domestic level needs to be well informed to position themselves.

3.2 The Regional Offices as Lobbying Actors

It is evident that regional offices act as lobbying facilitators. “Translated into the terms of interest-group politics, regional offices ‘lobby’ those in power, although administrators of regional offices usually describe their activities in more bureaucratically acceptable language” (Marks et.al.1996: 183). Lobbying is usually divided into two different groups, the ‘sovereign’ and the ‘non-sovereign’ (Buchheimer 2002: 29). Other scholars divide into ‘public’ and ‘private’ lobbying. (Michalowitz 2007: 52, Fischer 1997: 35ff). The regional offices are clearly set at the ‘sovereign’ or ‘public’ level, which leads to the fact that they have “privileged access” (Eising 2008: 9). This is related to their special stance. “most EU legislation involves local and regional governments in its implementation, and has

⁸ Their existence is secured and their duties as well as restrictions are defined in detail under §8 EUZBLG http://bundesrecht.juris.de/euzblg/_8.html

thus engendered a set of active regional players seeking to shape that legislation” (Greenwood 2007: 231). Emergent practices of policy initiation and development in the EU sphere draw on the weight of regional expertise situated in and around the key institutions (Mazey and Richardson, 2001: 78). Studies showed that the main focus lies on the Commission “in their battles with member states and as agents of implementation” (Greenwood 2007: 176). The problem within regional lobbying can be that “regional representatives misunderstanding the nature of authority structures in EU regional policy making and investing lobbying efforts in the wrong targets (John and McAteer 1998). Furthermore, they should pursue their interest as if it is the common interest of the regional level (Bosselmann 2007:52). The sheer number of regional offices equate to balancing the reasons for contacting the Commission. “Contacting because of any issue might not help in promoting the issue” (Buchheim 2002: 187).

3.3 The Offices in the Study

The concentration on the BSR and the offices based in Brussels represent a wide variety; in total there are 32 offices with a direct connection to the Baltic Sea⁹. Some of these offices are bigger, others smaller, but the offices of the BSR can be seen as an representative cross section of all existing offices in Brussels. The offices embrace a certain diversity. Some of them are units of federal ministries with civil servants, others represent city or local authorities whilst others represent regional and sub- regional alliances. Of these offices, 10 took part in the study representing these different forms. Within the analysis the study will return to these differentiations.

⁹ Which only includes offices with a direct access or connection to the Baltic Sea, usually the broader number of about 55 in terms of the wider definition of the BSR including more parts of Germany, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Poland and Norway is named.

4 The Baltic Sea Strategy

4.1 The Development of the Baltic Sea Strategy

The uniqueness of the BSR gathers the attention of the European Union for almost 15 years. After the 2004 enlargement, the potential and challenges of the Baltic Sea Region has been paid further attention. With the BSS, for the first time in history the Union creates an internal EU strategy for a specific geographic macro-region. The European Union is interestingly preparing a transnational area for co-operation but without “using this term according to the treaties” (Schymik and Krumrey 2009: 2). The idea behind the Baltic Sea strategy is to create a surrounding that will make it easier for the region to prosper, and to handle its cross-border challenges more effectively.

The idea of a Baltic Sea Strategy was first raised in November 2005 by the inter-parliamentarian ‘Europe Baltic Intergroup’ when they published a paper called ‘Europe’s strategy for the Baltic Sea region’. After a while of silence the Council states within its conclusions of the December 14th 2007 summit:

“Without prejudice to the integrated maritime policy, the European Council invites the Commission to present an EU strategy for the Baltic Sea region at the latest by June 2009. This strategy should *inter alia* help to address the urgent environmental challenges related to the Baltic Sea. The Northern Dimension framework provides the basis for the external aspects of cooperation in the Baltic Sea region.”

(European Council 2007)

Today, the Commission is working on the strategy. According to the Commission officials the strategy is “very important for at least 5 DG’s”² and a “priority”² for DG Regio. Openness is one of the main priorities within drafting the strategy with two ways of consultation processes. The first was a series of meetings, a stakeholder conference last September in Stockholm opened the consultation process. On this account the Commission published a paper and identified the rough direction of the strategy with four different focus areas: environment, economy, infrastructure and safety. In the following months for each of these topics a ‘round table’ meeting was placed. The consultation process was completed with another stakeholder meeting in Rostock on February 2009 and in light of this meeting the Commission published its first proposal for the draft of the BSS. The second process was an public consultation for two months where citizens, organizations and public authorities could submit ideas which ended in

December. In this second process 110 papers reached the Commission (Schymik and Krumrey 2009: 5). With these papers the Commission “decided on a analytical basis what is interesting and what we could exploit further”². In June 2009 the final draft will be presented at the Council meeting and the strategy will become one of the priorities during the upcoming Swedish presidency in the second half of 2009. It is clear the Commission aims for a so called ‘rolling action plan’, which is without time limitations and therefore needs to be updated frequently. (Schymik and Krumrey: 9). The strategy itself will be adopted as a Communication and it will be short with an action plan as annex. The action plan will appear to be “broad, complex and little focused” (Schymik and Krumrey 2009: 2). The Commission explains: “we list some actions showing where we want to go and then we are listing more concrete with a number of reflection projects that should be implemented”.²

4.2 Bodies Dealing with the Baltic Sea Strategy

4.2.1 The European Commission

The Baltic Sea Strategy is written under supervision of DG Regio and here the unit of territorial co-operation. The team working on the BSS consists out of four people, including the head of the unit with each person assigned a chapter as the main writer. This group meets once a day, mainly informal and comments on the work which they describe as “very intense and collaborative effort”². In addition they are supported by several other staff members on certain issues. An impact assessment group exists and contacts with all units of the countries involved all from DG region are frequent. This includes regular meetings with the Director of the DG and the Commissioner. Core groups of DG Regio, DG Environment, DG Maritime and DG Relex exist since “any of the DG’s could be the one that was leading”². Besides these core groups, an inter-service working group composed of 20 DG’s supports DG Regio. These get asked “to provide information, they also look at the strategy drafts and comment on them and they also push for things to be included”² and “if we don’t agree it has to be sorted out at the higher level”.²

Besides these internal collaborations, the Commission has also invited input from outside; mainly through the public consultation process but also from other meetings and contacts. “DG Regio was quite open and really invited to have input from all the different regions and the different regional levels and the networks.”⁶ This openness is primarily done because of the lack of expertise. “The small size of the Commission relative to its function can makes it dependent upon expertise that outside interests bring for drafting workable and technically feasible policy proposals.” (Greenwood 2007: 7). This makes an easy access from lobbying efforts. “It is therefore not surprising that a significant resource dependency between officials and lobbyists based on regulatory needs, expertise, information

and reputation has emerged in the European public policy process” (Coen 2007: 334). However, DG Regio stressed the importance of their supervision “We are in the end the ones that are writing. We in the end need to make the analysis if it fits into the bigger picture of the strategy and decide if its worth to take it on board.”².

It is most likely that lobbying activities are mainly focused on DG Regio, which juxtaposes the general experience of lobbying since, as the agenda setter, the Commission is the primary focus of lobbying activities (Pollack 2003). This is confirmed by studies on regional offices (Bosselmann 2007: 29) and relates to the fact that offices try to influence as early as possible and the Commission is usually the starting point of all EU decisions.

4.2.2 The European Council

The European Council was the institution that decided about the existence of the BSS and gave the mandate to the Commission to prepare a draft of the strategy. The main driver within the member states is undoubtedly Sweden, since it pushed for the strategy on the ministerial session of the CBSS in June 2007 (Kalniņšā 2008: 1) and managed to include the sentence within the Council conclusion in December of the same year. The plan is that the formal adoption of the strategy and with it an action plan will be done by the Council meeting in December this year. The Council is therefore the main decision making body within the process of the strategy. Since this paper focuses on the influence of the regional offices it appears most likely that the Council does not play a major role. The main direct contact of the regional offices is primarily done through the PermRep’s of the member states. The study therefore focuses only on these relations, if there are any.

4.2.3 The European Parliament

As aforementioned, the Parliament played an important initial role. The informal EBIG of the Parliament was the one that initially launched the idea of an Baltic Sea Strategy¹⁰. Informal groups in the parliament are special in the respect that their work is not compulsive and they execute quasi lobbying activities (Judge and Earnshaw 2003: 198). This informal group included MEP’s of eight Baltic Sea EU Member States and several MEP’s with other nationalities. The chairmanship is held by British MEP Christopher Beazley and they try to promote the regions interest within the Parliament. Seven members of the Baltic Strategy Working

¹⁰ Although the initiative of the Northern Dimension as a policy framework for Northern Europe and its partner countries in the region exists. Initially launched in 1997 and after two action plans the strategy was re-launched in 2007 and is now an infinite framework that should enhance co-operation in all fields within the region.

Group, one of them being today's Finnish Foreign minister Alexander Stubb, wrote a paper called 'Europe's strategy for the Baltic Sea Region' which was presented to the EC president in November 2005, initially written to highlight the issue for the then upcoming presidencies of Germany and Finland. After Sweden discovered the topic and the Commission's involvement, the EBIG is constantly following the process and members of the intergroup are welcomed speakers on all occasions in relation with the BSR. However, at the moment the Parliament is not involved in any decision making process. It is most likely that once the Commission has delivered the Communication to the Council and the first reading is held, the Parliament is having a resolution on the topic. Despite its powers and openness, the Parliament is not the main addressee of lobbying activities by the offices (Buchheimer 2002: 32).

4.2.4 Committee of the Regions

The CoR has rather limited competences in the decision making process and serves mainly as an assembly of regional representatives. In principal the CoR possesses only a advisory status (art. 263 EC), but depending on the policy fields it has to be consulted. In classical terms the CoR is therefore a lobbying institution itself (Buchheimer 2002: 33). Since the BSS is unique in its character and is about to address a European macro- region for the first time, the CoR is most likely to have some input within the decision making process. So far the body has published two papers, first in April 2008 which serves as an appreciation and wish list at the same time. The second more concrete opinion called 'The role of local and regional authorities within the new Baltic Sea Strategy' was adopted in April 2009 under the supervision of the Informal Baltic Sea Group of the CoR with the rapporteur being an representative of a Swedish region. This group will follow the process of the Baltic Sea Strategy. The regional offices have to some extent institutionalised their lobbying efforts on the CoR since they usually help their members with the preparations of the Committees sessions (Bosselmann 2002: 33).

5 The Theoretical Framework

5.1 The Theoretical Design

5.1.1 Theoretical Approaches towards Lobbying

The classical theoretical approaches can only partly explain lobbying. There are the state-centric models, the supra-national models and the multi-governance approaches. Out of these the latter one is the one that tries to explain the coexistence of political processes (for a detailed summary of the general theories towards lobbying see Appendix C). The idea behind this is that political authority is divided between European and national authorities and therefore domestic groups need to pursue their interest via several routes, a national and a European one (Hooghe and Marks 2001). Member states are not the only link between the European level and the regional authorities. “MLG theorists posit a set of overarching, multilevel policy networks” (Marks et. al. 1996: 167). This model is a good theoretical background when it comes to explain the mobilization of regions on European level but not how their mobilization works, which is the main intention of this study. Therefore this model cannot be further used within the development of the theoretical framework.

EU interest group studies have been shaped by various different fields of political science namely comparative politics, international relations, policy analysis and democratic theory (Eising 2008: 1). Thus, it is not easy to define one single theoretical approach to explore the field. The models and theories within the field of political science are mostly interaction models that have to look on ‘both sides of the game’ of the lobbying interaction. What complicates this further is that most interest groups differ considerably and have no relations except promoting their interest.

5.1.2 Developing of the Theoretical Framework

As pointed out, with the usually theories used in the field, the mobilization of regional offices and their lobbying behavior cannot be explained, therefore theories from other fields need to be considered. More than one theoretical approach has been followed to build and develop this theoretical framework with

having have their background in various different political areas. Diplomacy theory was used as the main theoretical approach since the regional offices can be seen as diplomatic mission of the regions. Theories from diplomacy can be applied almost directly to the work of the regional offices when it comes to interest representation. Diplomacy is mainly defined as foreign policies of countries, or in a more general definition it is “a method of political interaction at the international level and the techniques used to carry out political relations across international boundaries” (Leguey-Feilleux 2009:1). This presents a basis to understand the work, interaction and function of a regional office in Brussels. The regional offices can be seen as little ‘embassies’ of their region within the European landscape. Negotiation theory is closely connected to diplomacy and plays another major role within the theoretical framework. “Negotiation is widely regarded as one of the major functions of diplomacy” (Leguey-Feilleux 2009:4) which makes it easy to juxtapose.

In the following theoretical framework, a model of different lobbying strategies will first be presented. Different variables that might determine the use of these strategies will then be explained “Existing literature on lobbying suggests that an interest group makes strategic lobbying choices based on its available, resources, its lobbying target, the characteristics of the issue, and the characteristics of other groups” (Victor 2007: 827). The variables are divided into two different sets: the topic itself and the office. This distinction is necessary to understand if some issues of mobilization are only connected to the BSS or if it can be seen as a general course. The topic variables are clearly connected to the BSS and can explain the mobilization in that certain case. The office variables can be generalized since within negotiation ‘organization theory’ (Kolb and Faure 1994) exists which is referring to how structures affect negotiations in general. “All organizations develop informal structures, a set of norms and taken-for-granted understandings about how decisions are made and work gets done, which complement (and sometimes modify) formal structures” (Kolb and Faure 1994: 114).

The variables from the both sets should explain if mobilization has an impact on the strategy of the offices, each assigned with a hypothesis. These variables will then be tested within the empirical part and the hypothesis will therefore be verified or falsified. The main assumption that combines all these different variables is the hypothesis that ‘mobilization matters’.

5.1.3 Limitations of the Theoretical Framework

Although these different approaches can explain the general complex situation, every single theoretical part has its limitations as well. Within diplomacy most approaches are substantialist rather than relationalist. Therefore there is no complete theoretical approach towards diplomacy. Negotiation theory has its limitations because it can explain certain decisions only partly since “negotiation require some special skills. These come through an acquired ‘feel of things’ and

are beyond capture and transmission of rules and theories” (Zartman and Berman 1982: 1).

The theoretical framework is based on different aspects of different approaches which might be seen as theoretical omnium-gatherum and therefore not accurate and precise. Nonetheless only a mix of these different approaches can explain the picture as a whole since this evokes that the theoretical focus is not just on a single theoretical corner neglecting another one but explains the general view. It must be mentioned that no meta-theory should be created. The development of the theoretical framework is solely used as an approach to explain and analyze the access and impact of the regional offices in this case and is mainly based on assumptions.

Lastly, the theoretical framework focuses on the input made by the offices. The output can only be mentioned briefly within the different goods of access. An extensive and complete analysis of this cannot be done as it is simply too elaborative and when writing this paper the strategy was not published. Therefore this output-analysis cannot be done.

5.2 The Lobbying Strategies

To explain the lobbying strategy, differentiations were used after Farnel (ibid. 1994: 107ff). The choice for the strategy model below was made because it is simple and applicable to the regional offices¹¹. Mainly three different strategies can be taken by the offices: The active position, the passive position and the anticipating position, whereas to the active position several different tactics can be applied.

5.2.1 The Active Position

The active position in contrast to the passive position implies that actions are taken. With these actions the actor tries to influence the lobbying object in a way that it suits the interest of the region. These actions or tactics can be done with different ways, mainly direct lobbying, indirect lobbying, financial lobbying and coalitions (Farnel 1994: 114ff).

¹¹ For more detailed reasons what strategy to choose (mostly related to the private sector) and why see Farnel (1994)

5.2.1.1. Direct Lobbying

Direct Lobbying, also sometimes called ‘insider lobbying’ is characterized as “close consultation with political and administrative leaders, relying mainly on financial resources, substantive expertise, and concentration within certain congressional constituencies as a basis for influence” (Gais and Walker 1991: 103). This is connected to the definition of a target group, which will be discussed within the mobilization variables. Direct lobbying happens mainly through communication and direct contacts with the addressees, which can be done through official and informal meetings, briefings, written communication or phone calls and is closely connected to financial lobbying (Berry 1997).

5.2.1.2. Indirect Lobbying

Besides direct lobbying, indirect or sometimes called grassroots lobbying exists as a tactic. This usually aims to bring more widespread attention to the lobbying cause (Gais and Walker 1991) and aims to influence the general perception of the lobbying object. Usually this means a more widespread lobbying with actions in the public relations sector, but in this special case the indirect lobbying behavior is less public oriented. Here it refers to the actions that are not taken directly from the regional offices but from another person, with the offices working closely together. This might be the home region itself, but also other networks from the BSR, which try to influence the BSS, since addressees cannot tell how much and if any input of these lobbying advances are made by the regional offices.

5.2.1.3. Financial Lobbying

The third tactic is financial lobbying and this can be done either legitimately or unethically (Farnel 1994: 116). The legitimate form is when the lobbying actor helps and supports the addressee with campaigns and/or with the provision of financial resources, including human resources. Conversely, unethical tactics also exist through bribes or other techniques. It is unlikely unethical tactics have been used, no office and/or the Commission would admit the use within the study.

5.2.1.4. Coalition

Coalition building is another lobbying tactic and this will be discussed more in detail since it is also used quite frequently in negotiation theory. According to this theory, a coalition is necessary if “in acting to reach their ends, they make rational decisions as to their options– their choices of requisite means. One such means may involve the forming of political coalitions with other groups” (Strauss 1978: 71/72). Coalition theory is based on three aspects: formation, stability and duration as well as impact and outcomes (Dupont 1994: 149). The first two aspects are of main interest of this study – why it might emerge and if it changed over time. The motivations to build a coalition can be manifold: Firstly, to improve the stand outside of the coalition to gain power because of little resources or plain bargaining behavior, or because of inside dimensions to gain power within the coalition or equity (Dupont 1994: 150). In combination with

negotiation theory, 'small group theory' (Rubin and Swap 1994) explains how groups form themselves within or prior to negotiation. It can be formed as a blocking coalition, deviation or to confirm pressure. The importance and success of the group relies on certain aspects: "the group's leadership, membership composition, history or cohesiveness" (Rubin and Swap 1994: 136). A common history or prior contacts may help when forming these groups. "Group whose members have a history of working together (and who may anticipate doing so in future) are likely to be more effective than those that do not have such a history" (Rubin and Swap 1994: 136). More homogenous groups tend to perform better than diverse groups and "groups whose members are united in some common purpose or who have a strong esprit de corps are more likely to work effectively than less cohesive groups" (Rubin and Swap 1994: 136). Leadership might be of importance within in these groups.¹²

Previous studies have pointed out that "successful lobbying of the Commission meant establishing an organizational capacity to coordinate potential ad-hoc political alliances" (Mahoney 2007). Nonetheless, it has to be kept in mind that on many issues sub-national governments are intensely competitive. When it comes to funding opportunities or access they are in competition (Hooghe and Marks 1996: 86) which makes it interesting to see if an coalition emerges.

5.2.2 The Passive Position

The passive position is characterized by observing rather than acting. No action is taken but that does not necessarily mean that no lobbying is happening. The lobbyist in that case takes the role of an observer and in case he will take action this will happen when the final decision is taken on the decision making level. Even if no action is taken this is a clear lobbying sign since it is taken from diplomacy, with also nonverbal communication having an impact, like "personal gestures" (Jönsson and Hall 2005: 84). Every gesture or action made by the office sends messages towards other offices as well as to the Commission and institutions. Non-behavior can also send messages and is therefore crucial for interest representation. This aspect is hard to study since not every movement can be observed. When an actor decides to take the passive position, this can also be connected to his lack of mobilization skills and hence its inclusion in the study.

5.2.3 The Anticipating Position

Additionally, the anticipating position can be distinguished. This is a mixture out of passive position and the passive action. It is characterized when the lobbying

¹² Leadership is connected to certain skills, efforts and common norms and beliefs that exist to accept a leader. For more on leadership (in the European Union) see Tallberg (2006).

actor tries to keep eventual bad effects in control but does not try to influence the action in a way that it would suit the actor best. It is a 'wait and see' action but 'interact if necessary' action.

5.3 The Perception of the Strategies

To measure the outcome, many factors need to be considered that are closely linked to a behavioral models and explains why, within the drafting, several inputs were taken up and why others were dropped¹³. In this study only the question of access can be discussed. Without access, influence and/or lobbying cannot be achieved. "Access therefore becomes the facilitating intermediate objective of political interest groups. The development and improvement of such access is a common denominator of the tactics of all of them" (Trueman 1951: 264). Bouwen points out three access goods for interest groups representation. These are 'expert knowledge', 'information about the European encompassing interest' and the 'domestic encompassing interest' (Bouwen 2002: 369ff). The first one has been mentioned frequently within theoretical frameworks (Truman 1951, Van Schendelen 1994, Bulholzer 1998), the two latter are first mentioned by Bouwen. 'Expert knowledge is usually needed within the first phase of policy making because drafting proposals requires an "substantial amount of expert knowledge" (Bouwen 2002: 379) which is highly related to the Commissions design. "Because of understaffing and severe budget constrains in the Commission, the institution is dependent on external resources to obtain the necessary expertise" (Spence 1997) As Bouwen states in the early stages, the two other goods do not play an important role, although the Member of the European parliament are highly concerned with the 'domestic encompassing interest'(ebd. 2002: 379). These goods are crucial to gain access to the institutions to lobby. As aforesaid, the process of drafting the BSS was quite open, but it matters if the offices have the goods to offer what the Commission is asking. If this is not the case the lobbying efforts do not have much success and the mobilization processes of the offices should produce these goods. Therefore, not only is the access important, but the efficiency that is made out of access is crucial for the impact of the offices.

¹³ an extensive study on effectiveness including several behavioural models can be found at Jaatinen (1999).

5.4 The Variables of Mobilization

5.4.1 First Set of Variables: The Case

5.4.1.1. The Importance of the Topic

Hypothesis 1: "It matters if the region is interested in the topic."

The importance of the topic for the region must be regarded when it comes to the question of why some offices might be more interested in lobbying and others are not. The BSS is expected to have an impact on all regions with the Baltic Sea Area, though some might not see the importance to their own regions or might solely not be interested in interest representation. If offices see the Baltic Sea Strategy as an crucial policy area of their interest they are most likely more interested in giving their input.

5.4.1.2. Channels of Influence

Hypothesis 2: "It matters what channels of influence the office has used."

As pointed out, there are different actors dealing with the BSS, therefore they might have different channels of influence. In general, the big majority of scholars view the following actors as lobbying addressees: the parliament, governments, the bureaucracy, judiciary, parliamentary fractions and political parties (Karr 2007: 68). Who the right channel is depends on the case. "Where possible, lobbyists try to influence such decision-makers that have direct access to decision-making during the different phases of the policy process (Karr 2007: 68). This is closely linked to the decision making process which cannot carried out in detail¹⁴. In this case it is most likely that the regional offices have tried to influence the Commission officials (see 4.2.1.). As van Schendelen points out, the question within the channels of lobbying is not where the competencies are but where the 'work floor' takes place, equating "the place where the work of decision making is really done" (ibid 2002). In the case of the BSS this is clearly at the unit of cross-border cooperation at DG Regio. Therefore it would be likely that most

¹⁴ A detailed look on how the decision process in the European Union can be found at Peterson and Bomberg (1999)

offices try to lobby here. The CoR might be another channel of influence the offices can use since it is ‘the’ main regional body of the EU¹⁵. The parliamentarians might play a role within lobbying as well. “MEPs can provide significant added-value to the case they present when they lobby either the Commission or their central executive” (Bomberg and Peterson 1998: 226). Therefore it is of interest what channels the offices have used.

5.4.1.3. Time

Hypothesis 3: “It matters when the mobilization happened and when the lobbying actions were taken.”

“Time implies recognizing that any particular moment is situated in some sort of temporal context” (Pierson 2004: 167). It is therefore crucial when certain actions are taken and when certain decisions have been made. The time dimension variable is closely linked to the theory developed by Pierson on what influence it has on political issues and “offers essential analytical tools for investigating temporal processes” (Pierson 2004:9). When decisions have been made, it has an impact on an outcome. “Sequencing – the temporal order of events or processes- can be a crucial determinant of social outcomes” (Pierson 2004: 16). Pierson is referring to this as path dependency. “In institutionally dense environments, initial actions push individual behavior onto paths that are hard to reverse” (Pierson 2004: 35). Path dependency relies on certain specific features i.e. that a range of outcomes is generally possible (multiple equilibria) that even small events, if they occur at the right moment can have a major output (contingency), or that it is crucial when an event occurs (timing and sequencing). Within the latter the phrase ‘the earlier the better’ is applied because later actions might have no output, even though its content might be of great importance to another time. He mentions additionally that timing cannot always be planned and that this has an impact on the outcomes. “When things happen effects how they happen” (Pierson 2004: 77). Although his study has the intention to explain several different impacts and key propositions on timing and sequence it is simply too extensive to regard every single aspect. The main focus lies on path dependence and issues of timing and sequence. The findings in respect to long- term, slow moving processes and institutional change will be neglected.

Although this variable is not easy to measure, it has a close link to the self-determination variable since a long decision making process might have a negative impact on the time axis.

¹⁵ It has to be mentioned that the CoR has a double function: it represents the interest of the region towards the decision making bodies and it is an addressee of lobbyists as well. (Karr 2007: 67)

5.4.2 Second Set of Variables: The Office

5.4.2.1. Focus of the Office

Hypothesis 4: “It matters what focus the office has and what tasks are included in the daily work.”

It might be the case that lobbying is not the main interest of the office. When it comes to regional offices, several studies have shown that information gathering is one of the main features (Marks et al. 1996:58, Jeffery 1996, Mitchell 1994, John 1994). Lobbying might therefore not be included in their given tasks. This is known from diplomacy: “gathering information on the local scene and reporting home has been recognized as one of the most important functions of the resident embassy” (Berridge 1995: 41). Acquiring information is important because “diplomacy is involved both in the formulation of a polity’s external policy and in its execution. Policy formulation requires the gathering and assessment of information about the external environment.” (Jönsson and Hall 2005: 73). Therefore, the most important aspect of an embassy is to “observe and report” (Leguey-Feilleux 2009: 194). Although with the evolving information society it might make this feature unnecessary, it is often argued that it is still important because “the information available via various media [...] will remain significant complements to, but no substitute for, information gathered through diplomatic channels” (Jönsson and Hall 2005: 75). The person on the spot is still important because in diplomacy “it may take a discerning person to see what needs to be done differently to take advantage of technological advancements” (Leguey-Feilleux 2009: 86). Other tasks attributed to the office was explained in 3.2. Henceforth the focus of the office determines its actions and the lobbying activity.

5.4.2.2. Representation

Hypothesis 5: “It matters whom the office represents and on what organizational form.”

Representation questions what background the office has; whether it is a representation of an elected body or if it is autonomous from the regional political organization, which includes the difference between regional and local interests. Local equating cities, there is a difference in the power of offices representing a single region and ‘pluri-regional’ offices with the former usually being more powerful ones (Marks et al. 2002: 12). This is of interest since it would raise the question whether or not the elected bodies are more eligible and more vociferous within the various groups of lobbying. “The organizational form of interest

representation [...] is the crucial variable that determines the private interests' capacity to supply access goods and thereby to gain access (Bouwen and McGown 2007: 425). Different organizational backgrounds can cause different outcomes. The most common hypothesis is that "the larger number of equal parties involved on a side, the more difficult it is to arrive at a position." (Zartman and Berman 1982: 210) and therefore the efficiency of the work is likely to suffer. In case there are several actors at home and if the decisions that the Brussels office should cover are made at the home level, unity is necessary. Within negotiation this means that "decisions arrived in this way are obviously complicated and often time-consuming" (Zartman and Berman 1982: 207). Within negotiations it is "expected to speak with one voice" (Zartman and Berman 1982: 206) and in interest representation the same can be applied. Within the principal-agent theory, which refers to the relation between the representative and the represented (see 5.4.2.4), the difference between a single principal or multiple is obtained and points an advantage for the office in the case of several different decision makers at home. An increase in freedom of acting may occur since the different principal cannot agree on an instruction. It is therefore likely that the agent gets more leeway from the frequently vague commands of a collective body, where an agreement beforehand is necessary compared to a single actor that takes all the decisions by himself (Jönsson and Hall 2005: 109). It is questionable how this can effect the lobbying work positively. In addition, multiple principals can create difficulties for the negotiation or business partners of the agent because they cannot tell if their negotiation partner really acts as a representative for all of the principals.

The "two-level-game theory" is a concept from negotiation that can be partly applied to this aspect. This concept developed by Putnam says that within negotiation there are always two levels the negotiator has to refer: the negotiation partner itself and the level at home, where extensive discussion might take place, consideration within the ongoing bargaining is needed (Putnam 1988). This involves another dimension of interest representation since "different authorities and audiences back home have to be satisfied, with a second level problem of fences, relations and interests" (Zartman and Berman 1982: 210).

Another aspect of principal-agent theory refers to the question of who their 'real' principal is, whether or not it is the government, individual ministers, their responsible office at home or maybe even the electorate (Jönsson and Hall 2005: 109). This question can only be answered by the agents itself, but with whom they have employment contracts might be an indicator.

In summary the art of representation might have a big impact on how the access and the influence can be done and that some organizational forms might have an advantage towards others.

5.4.2.3. Resources

Hypothesis 6: “It matters how much resources the office has to its disposal.”

This variable contains a “resource push” (Marks et al. 1996) hypothesis. It stresses the importance of resources within lobbying and is based on the assumption that “the aggregation of resources (money and labor) is crucial to an understanding of social movement activity” (McCarthy and Zald 1977: 1216)¹⁶. Resources in that context include the material resources as well as the size of the office. “Resources such as policy information, financial means, constituency size, and economic clout are import and prerequisites for both access and influence” (Eising 2008: 15). There is a difference between direct and indirect resources. Direct resources can be used within the bargaining process like access goods. Indirect resources are mainly related to personnel and organization which have effect the bargaining or lobbying process in an indirect ways. (Buholzer 1998). The more money, the bigger the office is a general assumption. Within previous studies, size turned out to be a major factor on how and what strategy the interest group chooses. “Material resources determine to a large degree the extent and kind of strategies that interests use” (Bouwen and McGown 2007: 425). Smaller offices are most likely to build on common actions to invest as less time and money as possible. Taken from the diplomacy experiences it is proven that a well operating office needs to be proper staffed. “Many international delegates are understaffed, lack the facilities to carry out their diplomatic relations, or cannot afford to pay for the normal cost of diplomatic representation” (Leguey-Feilleux 2009: 140). If an office has more staff the delegates are supposed to be specialized within their topics. Taken from diplomatic experiences it shows that “diplomatic work thus requires greater specialized skill than before” (Leguey-Feilleux 2009: 144). The size therefore matters because “the diversity of issues for which specialized preparation is deemed necessary” (Leguey-Feilleux 2009: 69) and without the staff focusing on special issues the office tends not to be present within certain topics since no expertise is available. It must be noted that within diplomacy experts tend to act as specialists and within diplomacy experts from the ministry in the specific countries are sent to the embassies to serve as both an expert and an administrative delegate (Leguey-Feilleux 2009: 186). Since the structures of the regional offices are to some extent different than the nation state level it is nonetheless questionable if this can be applied to the regional offices. A small office can be an advantage since unity is one of the most important factors within negotiations and a small office can less likely contradict itself with only a small amount of people, if only one, has contact with other actors, which is related to a

¹⁶ The study itself is more related towards the social movements and resources as a ‘common good’. But nonetheless this can pave the way for the second variable.

trust relationship (Zartman and Berman 1982 :206). Lobbying activities nonetheless demand a high personnel expenditure and therefore it is expected that offices with more resources at their disposal can mobilize their efforts better than less equipped offices. This is also closely connected to their ability to develop expertise and be experts within their subjects. (Bosselmann 2007: 54).

5.4.2.4. Agenda Setting

Hypothesis 7: “It matters where the agenda is set and to what extent the domestic level is interested in European issues.”

Of main concern here is how the selection of the interesting topics take place. It is crucial who makes the decision of which topics are on the agenda on the regional office and which ones are not. To explain this aspect the principal-agent theory (P-A theory) will be used. Principal-agent theory was developed to explain the relationship between represented (principal) and representatives (agent) and it arises always when one agent delegates certain tasks to another agent. Although originally designed for institutional economics it can be applied to representation in general. People in the regional offices are actors that work on behalf of a principal, the region or more specific for an institution, organization or government at home. Rees develops this theory out of calculations of contracts between the principal and the agent. It might be the case that the actor is not pursuing the interest of the principal, what is called ‘shirking’ (Rees 1985: 78). If the concept is developed further for the purpose of diplomacy and interest representation the difference between acting for others (behavior) and standing for others (status) occurs (Jönsson and Hall 2005: 100).

The first possibility of behavior would be carried out that the principal acts through the agent and gives instructions to him. Within this binding feature there are differences in how much the agents are bound to the decisions made by the principal and to what extent they are free to act within the interest of the principal. The first one can be called a “imperative mandate” whereas the second one would be a “free mandate” (Jönsson and Hall 2005: 101). The imperative mandate is closely linked to accountability which means that the representatives should act on explicit instructions and any action of shirking is unacceptable and the representation relationship is a sheer executive one. The free mandate in contrast refers to the agents work freely and authorization is the key term within this specification. They are seen as “free agents, trustees, or experts who are best left alone to do their work” (Pitkin 1972: 144). Certain problems can occur, the main being if the agent does not get clear advices or instructions from the principal. Another problem can be contradictory advices, which can be the case if many principals exist at home, which would most probably lead to inactivity and missed opportunities to react and represent their interest. The second main branch of representation, the status, refers to the way that the agent is replacing the principal. That means that the representative is completely free within his

decisions and that he is perceived as a “symbol” of the represented (Jönsson and Hall 2005: 115). It is most likely that the regional offices do not have this complete freedom and therefore it will not be further elaborated.

Besides this actor and represented factor, it is proven from diplomacy issues that the home government is hard to convince and enthuse about certain topics that are seen as important within the embassy. “When the messages are sent but not read by their intended recipients, this situation tends to generate frustration and ironically even a sense of isolation.” (Legeux-Feilleux 2009: 189). This cannot only lead to important issues being missed but also that the influence of the office in certain issues is zero because the decision maker at home neglected the topic, of which the office was aware. The communication between both levels are expected to be crucial. The offices are usually not developing their own ideas but acting as the agent of the principal. (Bosselmann 2007: 55).

6 The Findings of the Case Study

6.1 The Strategies of the Offices

6.1.1 The Passive Position

Since the passive position is defined as observation of the processes, three offices could be distinguished that chose this strategy. “I keep an eye on things. I have my eyes on the inside documents.”⁹ but there is no direct action. The reasons for these decisions are that they see the BSS as no value of interacting and were not interested to give any input. It has to be mentioned that all offices stressed the importance of the topic: that this can be no reason for not interacting. It is more the expectations from the offices that differ and therefore can cause or not cause interaction. It turned out that some offices have different priorities within their tasks and lobbying is not included in these. One office stated that they are not a lobbying office and instead focused on establishing project and funding in the region. “What we would like to get out of it, we follow the meetings and it is important to have the IBSG to have the networks. But we are more focused on the projects possibility”⁵.

6.1.2 The Active Position

6.1.2.1 Direct Lobbying Strategy

Most of the offices participating chose the direct lobbying strategy, which is characterized as personal communication. This action was mainly received as the main strategy of lobbying. “Meet as many people as possible, I think that is the way to do.”¹¹ The meetings took place either directly with the Brussels staff or members of their home organization. “We’ve done a little bit of wide lobbying on the side of what we are interested in and our politicians wanted a platform. Which is ok because we are further deepening and otherwise the lobbying is happening from the main organizations.”¹¹ It was mentioned that it is quite important to bring politicians to Brussels. “Especially here in Brussels they like politicians.”¹¹ It was also mentioned that the politicians from the home region cannot easily be

mobilized to support the office in person. “They are not that keen but I force them every once in a while”¹¹. In some offices the BSS was a great exception. “Usually it is quite difficult to get them here but it has been really a major interest. People have been asking for it. For me it was really interesting and I had not drag them here.”⁴ The meetings of politicians of the region are usually prepared by the Brussels offices and these are aware how important these meetings are “There are extremely lobbyist here. So I want to make it short when I am meeting them.”¹¹ Some offices in addition were organizing meetings within the Consultation process whereas some took this opportunity to establish very close contact with the Commission while others did not got any advantage out of it

6.1.2.2. Indirect Lobbying Strategy

Besides these direct approaches the indirect lobbying strategy was used as well. The indirect influence was mainly done through the domestic level and the papers prepared for the consultation process play a major role. No regional office handed in a paper under the name of the regional office itself but most offices that lobbied actively for their interests participated in drafting the papers for their domestic regions. Out of the published papers, seven have a direct connection to the region within the participating offices¹⁷. It is unknown how much they might have contributed to papers. The offices have close links with their home offices and most of these papers were written in collaboration, some under the aegis of the Brussels office but mostly with the coordination lying within the region itself. Some offices even mentioned that they have not contributed anything to the papers of their region. “The paper was written by the staff back home and there was almost no input from the Brussels office.”¹² For some receivers this might be quite surprisingly because the Commission estimated that most of the papers were written within the regional offices. “With a paper from the region is very, very likely that their Brussels office has written at least half of it.”² Sometimes the shift from direct influence towards indirect shifted in the process. Some regions handed in very project related papers with mainly ‘good governance’ examples⁸ to which the regional office contributed some expertise. Other regional offices mentioned that they have concentrated on a specific area. “We wanted to pick one subject and make it ours in order to have a voice in the bigger picture because it is so broad.”¹ Other offices focused on more general issues “we have been looking at the whole BSS as a more general and what we should doing. What we want to achieve with the paper.”¹¹

6.1.2.3. Financial Lobbying

Besides these two forms of lobbying which was mainly done by all active lobbying offices, one office and region has chosen a special way of interaction

¹⁷ So far 78 contributions are published at the BSS webpage. In total the Commission received 110 papers and it is therefore unknown how many papers were in reality submitted by the regions. To comply with the interviews this reflects the total number but no definite figures can be made.

with financial lobbying. This office relocated a staff member to the Commission as an 'national expert' and is still paying parts of his salary and he "works temporarily with the strategy."² As a matter of course he is in close contact with the regional office he is usually working with. Another way of financial lobbying is the organisation of conferences within the consultation process. These conferences were expensive and required not only money but human resources. It should be mentioned that both ways of financial lobbying are paid by the region and therefore the region's resources are the most important ones.

6.1.2.4. Coalition Lobbying

Another strategy is the one of building a coalition. The BSR offices, especially the smaller ones used this strategy extensively. This happens for time saving reasons "we co-operate and don't waste time on boring meetings."⁹ but mainly for networking purposes "for lobbying we combine our forces with the others."⁷ which is closely connected to the resource variable.

The so called IBSG is a loose network of 50 to 55 offices from the greater BSR. The exact number is unclear and has existed many years. "It is a very old network that is running for years and years and it was more informal and an exchange of opinion."³ Mainly this worked through an informal agreement. "We had a mailing list with the informal agreement that if anybody arranges a seminar or briefing event with somebody important can you tell all of us that we don't have to bother that person but that anybody can profit."¹ No membership fee applies which was appreciated frequently.³ The IBSG has a steering group, consisting of 10 to 19 offices, which mainly encourages certain initiatives but every component can take the lead within certain objectives. "We are the ones suggesting what we should do and how we should do it."⁴ These are the ones paying for certain seminars and expenses. That is why they "are in a better place for the outcome. I think you can influence if you are not in the steering group if you invest time but the steering group meets a lot an exchanges information."⁴ Besides the steering group, members don't get engaged within all topics, only if they are interested.⁵ It is seen as a give and take exchange. "We take terms and take over responsibility for a big thing and once you have done that you lay in the shadows for a while and float on the others work."¹

Initially founded as a simple mailing list to organize seminars and events it forms now several ad-hoc groups for certain specific issues, also for the BSS. "And then the Baltic Sea Strategy happened and suddenly there was this whole doctrine that in the Baltic Sea Group that we haven't discovered before that hadn't any importance."¹ and the offices used this existing network for their work on the strategy. "The BSS raised the importance that we all felt to do something and the activities grew quite a lot."³ Under the umbrella of the BSS "the work of the IBSG became so much more important and interesting once you have something concrete to work on."⁴ Besides the conferences, they organized other lobbying channels. "When it came to lobbying on behalf of the IBSG that was taken care by the three leading offices."¹

The IBSG made a contribution for the consultation process and drafted a paper which was mainly organized as an opinion survey. "A questionnaire was sent to

the 55 offices that were members. And I collected the responses for one of the four topics and then we had a meeting”³ For each of the four main topics an coordinator was assigned by the IBSG. “We talked about it, what to take away or where to be more precisely and the we put it together and that was we sent in from the network and that was what we presented at the open days.”³ It was described as “a really great process.”⁴ and very collaborative. “It was very easy to give your input.” and especially the leading offices on the four topics could have had a lot of saying within the paper. “It was easy to find an coming agreement because we saw it in such different way that it was not really contradictory.”⁴ This also raised some criticism because the outcome “was really just a list. You can always add something new to it and everyone wanted to have something on it.”⁵ The paper had to be general. “It is 55 regions. And everyone wants to make their input. Even if they could get concrete ideas they couldn’t get other regions that like it. You have to make it extremely general.”¹¹ It was mentioned that the paper was good for the time is was written but in the end it was too general. “You have to keep in mind that is was prepared last summer and of course things develop even on a short period of time. It had to be modified to take into consideration for sure.”⁸

The perception of the IBSG for their lobbying tactics is differing within the offices. Whereas a few focused completely on the IBSG and on the paper prepared by this group and did not handed in a separate paper by the region⁷, others only saw this as one aspect of their tactics. “The participation in the IBSG was not a priority. We participated but the priority was our own paper.”⁸ The reason for a sceptical participation was that “you define your main points of interests in the beginning and it makes no sense to adjust them afterwards to a larger group and subordinate your own interests.”¹² Also the tasks of the IBSG is seen differently. “I think for me the IBSG is about input and way of dissemination of information. I don’t see it as an active tool to make a concrete proposal.”¹¹ All offices agree on the fact that the IBSG is beneficial and a good tool to promote their interest. “The people see that it makes sense with the IBSG.”¹² Some even call it “a Baltic Sea family.”⁴ But there is also the effect of the group “If I would be there alone I would have less power than with this load of power”¹². “I think this has been an door opener.”⁴ In addition most of the smaller offices would not be able to promote their interest alone. “We are so small and when you are new it is an way to get an update because you cannot read everything and you get the contacts.”⁴ The group can also serve as a first way of interaction and clarification. “The common structure is needed because that is the first platform you can discuss. [...]I remember that they had a group discussion about accessibility and in that projects discovered that well developed countries mean broadband, ICT and for countries like Poland it was mainly the transport infrastructure.”⁷

The offices of the BSR have a strong relationship”¹ which is unique within the field of the regional offices in Brussels. To the knowledge of the interviewees, no other macro-region has a network comparable to the IBSG. This cooperation is commonly known in Brussels and “I have the impression that the Commission is thankful for this exchange of the regions and offices”¹²

6.1.3 The Anticipating Position

The strategies of the offices participating in the study are mostly passive and active. A real anticipating strategy could not be identified at first glance. However, the analysis shows that some offices did prefer the anticipating position since the coalition is more of anticipating behaviour than of active.

6.2 The Perception of the Strategies

As the main actor within the BSS only the perception of the EC is reviewed and this brief analysis should help to classify the mobilization efforts of the office. It is seen as an contribution of the self-perception and the perception by others towards their strategies.

The Commission officials mentioned that some regions were really active, but they haven't received the same engagement by all the offices. "With a very few exceptions they haven't called our office to arrange a meeting with us."² And if they were contacted the preparation of the meetings leaved a lot to be desired. "I have been to quite a few meetings where I have been invited to meet a delegation from the region usually politicians as sort of the board of a municipality. When you have the time to meet politicians it's been a good interaction.[...] But they had not prepared for the meeting they had no ideas oh what they should push for. I just told the process and the politicians have re-acted spontaneously how they do it as politicians but they weren't prepared. They were no political stand for the region."² This is overlapping with the statement by a few of the offices that the home level is not really interested in coming to Brussels, even though politicians are very welcomed guests (see 6.1.2.1). In general the positions of most of the regional offices were not clear to the Commission. "My impression is that very few regional offices have had a real strategy of how to approach the Commission with these work."² One or two regions have been visible and could therefore transport their interests better then others, which was closely related to the fact that a few have been very active with organising the conferences for the consultation process used this chance better than others.

On the indirect lobbying level, most offices mentioned the papers for the consultation process and at least for the co-operation for the IBSG this was the main impact. The offices mentioned to spent a lot of time with writing these papers. "I don't know if they were successful with specification of topics."² The main problem of the papers was that they were to general, according to the Commission. The regions are aware of this fact but they could not transfer this to their work. "I think it is always important to have something concrete and make a proper proposals"¹¹ The Commission stated that some papers did not contributed anything towards the drafting of the BSS. "There is a BSS and that the environment is really important. I mean we know that. That's the mistake most of them have done. They have been way to general. Sometimes you even have the

impression that some of them were really happy that they got something at the evening.”². Prioritizing their work would have helped to get more influence. “I think a lot of the regional offices could have turned up better work in identifying a few priorities they are pushing for and doing it more consistently.”² instead “almost nobody has done it and if at least one or two would have done it they could have a big influence if it would have been something narrow and substantial and has a point.”² Having in mind that the offices stated that they always got the sign of the Commission to address them in networks like the IBSG, this seems like a misunderstanding. However, the Commission had the impression that not respect and reluctance has been the reason but indeed the regional offices had no clear vision of what to stand for. “I think more of the regional offices should have pushed for their home organizations to get clear stands. To develop two or three priorities.” If the offices would have approached the Commission with these priorities the potential impact that this mobilization would have been enormous. “This has been an open process. Nothing was written we have actually been looking for contributions and we have actually been looking for some new ideas.”.

In summary it seemed as most of the offices have missed their chance to influence the BSS and within the following variables it will be analysed why they have not performed better when it comes to lobbying the Commission.

6.3 The Variables of Mobilization

6.3.1 First Set of Variables: The Case

6.3.1.1. The Importance of the Baltic Sea Strategy

The general importance or recognition of the Baltic Sea Strategy was mentioned by all interviewed regional offices without any exception. For all the offices, the BSS is a logical development since the BSR have been on the agenda of the regional offices for years. “I have been working here for 10 years and all this time the Baltic Sea area has been the main area”¹¹ It is seen as “something concrete for the first time”¹¹ The uniqueness of addressing a strategy for a macro region by the EU was highly appreciated by the interviewees. “A particular Commission policy that covers a particular region happens very, very rarely. All the other initiatives cover everybody. So it is very special.”¹¹ These symbolic aspects of the BSS are the ones that produce the engagement of the regions and offices.¹²

For some offices the BSS was of vital importance and it was put as an “outstanding” topic of the last years.³ For these offices it has dominated the work ever since it appeared and this is one of the main topics they are working on the past year. For other offices in contrast, the BSS was quite important when it started. “So it was in the start-up phase I spent a lot of time”¹ but then it was either taken over by the domestic level or all input was already given.

In contrast to the agreement on the stage of importance the expectations for the strategy differ. Whereas one sees the strategy with the BSS as something that might make a difference, others don't see its added value at this point. "We think that the BSS is a lot of words. What is really new to this? What does it really mean? There is no new money in it".⁵ These offices argue that the strategy without funding cannot fulfil the needs of the region. Money is the main argument in this respect "The guys in the parliament can be the dreamers. The Commission shouldn't be the dreamers. And the Commission is not able to put this dream in practical because of the money"⁹ The strategy will therefore not be of any added value. "It is too much empty talk. It has too many weak points. [...] They don't see the difference between strategy and programs. They mess it all up"⁹. One interview partner stressed the point that the Union has to 'sell' the strategy to other regions outside of the BSR as well. "It is so much deluded to make everyone happy."⁹ Because of this lack of benefits these offices don't see the reason to lobby. "If the BSS would be a new framework program we would probably try to lobby but now it is just a piece of paper."⁵

The supportive offices see the problem of the missing budget as well. "The strategy must be filled with life but the question is where the financial funding is coming from."¹² and admit that their hope might be disappointed. "It might be a total failure but at least we tried something new"¹¹. Most of the offices are aware that the strategy itself is not the main aspect within the future but "of course it will effect different programs, like Interreg."¹¹ These offices expect more money for the region in the future. "I know that the paper will be with concrete ideas. Because with concrete you can always argue 'where is the money for this?'. Ok now we are mentioned at the BSS we could get money."¹¹ So were the hopes for the BSS expressed by one office as "more co-operation, more funding mainly."¹⁰. That is why they think it is worth to put effort and money into lobbying on the strategy at this point. The outcome might be unknown but "to have a good position the lobbying must be done now."⁸ Another aspect mentioned by a few participants was that the nature of the BSS was reconcilable with the structure of some of the offices. The BSS is neither left nor right wing policies and it was easy to agree on³ and it covers a lot of policy areas. "Everyone was very interested. For different ways and different reasons because the BSS covers a lot, some more in maritime and safety issues, while others focused on economic issues."⁴

6.3.1.2. Channel of influence

The offices used several different channels of influence to promote their interest, utilizing mainly already existing networks. "The network matters. And it matters what ideas and positions you had in the last few years"¹² The main object of lobbying of the offices was undoubtedly the European Commission. The usual way was the support of the home office within preparing a consultation paper, as well as the paper prepared by the IBSG (see 6.1.2.4). Mostly the offices tried to influence not only through papers but also through personal contacts. Placing the BSS within the responsibility of DG Regio was mentioned positively by the offices. "They know us already. They know what we can give them and they used us to get their message spread. And if the work would have been done by another

DG that would be different. Then they wouldn't listen to us as much as they do now¹¹ "The European Commission when they spread the word on the Strategy it was like a *carte blanche* and this was a very good situation. They were very open minded and they were interested in any input from the region."⁷ The interaction with the EC was therefore unexceptional mentioned positively. "It is very easy to contact them. Whenever you need someone for a presentation or information."³ Especially the nationalities of the people working on the strategy seemed helpful. "There are Swedish national experts sitting in the Commission and Finnish and Swedish people are working within the Commission."³ Here it was also mentioned that the more higher ranked people you know, the better chances of influence are expected. "The more magnates you know the more influence you have. If you know the Commissioner it is way better than if you only know the public servant."¹² It turned out that organizing one of the conferences was one of the main advantages for further lobbying and collaboration with the Commission. At least one office used this special status, whereas other offices missed this opportunity. The initiative of preparing one conference was made from the Brussels office and was described as more of a coincidental incident.⁸

The Committee of the regions was a major channel of influence for some offices. "It is the formal lobby organization. Speaking that there is a government issue to it that the Committee of the Region should be interested in and have a look in [...] On this issue they have been heard."¹ Some offices prepare the work of their CoR members for them⁷. Within the CoR the informal interregional BSG catches the main focus. It was mentioned that the regional offices had an input in the March paper published by the CoR.¹² Other offices mainly see the CoR as a contributor for more inside information and a better position in the lobby business "I am not a great believer of the Committee of the regions, but they open doors for me at the Commission. Sometimes you get the bigger people and they get additional information."¹¹. It turned out that using the CoR as a channel is closely connected with whether or not the region has appointed a member in the Committee. "We don't have any members there and do not spent any time with that."⁵

The EP was mentioned seldomly as the object of lobbying. Some offices have good and continuous relations with the parliamentarians from their region. "We try to give them additional input in a certain specific area where the region had placed their focus".¹ Other offices stated that the parliamentarians of the country or region are not active in the Baltic Sea Region policies and therefore not of interest for the topic.³ Others pointed out that the contacts with the parliamentarians are done by their home organization. "I go either through the PermRep or the Commission, not the parliament, because they know where we stand and the people at home do that. They have their parliamentarians from the regions back home and that is their job doing it from home."⁴ Another reason mentioned was that the parliament has currently no influence on the BSS and otherwise the opinions are already set. The EBIG of the parliament is seen as one initiators of the strategy. When writing the paper that was published in 2005, few regional offices had some influence on drafting the paper. A "very small circle of selected offices were the back offices. They have been consulting the first draft of

the Parliamentary paper with the member of parliaments”⁹. The influence done back then is seen as one of the main aspects concerning the BSS and also a reason why one office decided not to do further actions on the Commission.⁹

Contacts with the Permanent Representations are also important for some offices. It was mentioned that the regions cannot do something without the support of the member states and more support in this respect would be welcomed¹². It was mentioned that national parliaments are linked¹¹ as well as other Baltic Sea Networks. Organisations from the BSR and other bodies are seen as quite influential and most offices mentioned that their region is using contacts with these organisations, a few focus even completely on these networks. These connections and influence are done mostly at the domestic level and the offices in Brussels are not fully involved in these activities.⁴ The influence of the networks is done through a connection of a politician that is a member in one of these organizations, and channels are seen by some regions as influential enough that the Brussels office is not playing a major role when promoting the interest.⁵

In summary, the regions had several channels of influence but mainly the Commission, the CoR and the networks as objects to spread their positions. An absence of interest to contact the Commission was therefore not visible.

6.3.1.3. Time

The importance of timing can be explained on where the formation of agreement that one of the stakeholder conferences was held. The initial plan was to continue a format of a conference series by the IBSG done in the years 2004 and 2006 in Brussels and combine one of the stakeholder conferences with the already existing format. The Commission however announced that they wanted to have two stakeholder conferences and four round- tables at the regions and then “a meeting was scheduled at the right time with the General Director of DG Regio and then it was decided that this will happen in our region.”⁸ Other less fortunate offices mentioned that there were other plans of the IBSG, which was not realized “because the Commission already had offers from two cities.”¹ This ‘success’ was therefore only possible because of an early start. The Council made this decision in December and the Commission started working on it in January and then “everything went on quite quickly.”⁸ Other offices had not such a quick response from home. “We were working a lot on it last spring in Brussels and back home they were moderately interested in it. And then during the summer it is all the articles in the news exploded and everyone was like ‘Oh this topic is so important’.”³ “Re-action and action must happened early on”¹², otherwise there is no way of influencing the issues.

6.3.2 Second Set of Variables: The Office

6.3.2.1. Focus of the Office

Like expected in the theoretical framework, the self-perception of offices does vary. Some of them actually consider themselves as a 'lobbying office'¹¹ whereas others don't see this as their point of interest. "We are still an information office foremost, and we are still giving the information to the people back home."³ Others see themselves as "an early warning station for home"¹² which coincides with an 'information office' which is characterized as "to inform home and to operate contacts"¹². This includes lobbying activities and most of the offices do certain interest representation duties, even if they would not consider themselves as lobbying offices. "We are basically informing a lot. We are not a lobby office. Even though we do that as well. We hand in position papers on cohesion policy, or the Baltic Sea Strategy."³ Most offices have several different tasks and call themselves "multi-functional."⁷ The best would be to grade most of them on a scale between informing and representing. Nonetheless, there are offices that have a primary focus on projects within the region and that are mostly in Brussels to get project partner and acquisition of funding for these projects. "We spent most of the time on giving information on support programs and find partners in Europe more project orientated."⁵ These offices don't lobby for political issues and if they do it is more related to certain projects and they help a city with appointments at the Commission, but not on "white and green papers"⁵.

In conclusion most of the offices have a lobbying mandate from their home offices, even if they would not call themselves that. There are a few offices that are mostly concentrated on project planning and less on the general politics and therefore not within an initiative like the BSS.

6.3.2.2. Representation

As explained, the organization and henceforth representation varies a lot between the different regional offices and the BSR is no exception. Within the study three different types of representation can be pointed out. The city offices, the offices representing an organization of various regional units and the offices representing a single government.¹⁸

The first group of the city offices represents a single city or smaller regional unit. The staff of the office in the study was a civil servant paid by the city and was a one man office. The hierarchical structure is quite invisible and claims "we have been succeeding with the tiny team than some bigger ones. We have been pretty visible."⁹

The second group of a joint representation is divided into two different ways of organization forms. Within the first form the amalgamation of different

¹⁸ It has to be mentioned that some offices in the study just recently, in the last two years, underwent a change in their organizational structure. Two of them were formed into representing a more broader region, one of them was formed from a city office towards a regional office.

regional administration units (counties, cities and/or other regional bodies like universities or development agency's) act as a loose network without any greater body. The connection between the Brussels office and the different partners at home are either done through a person or unit at each of these partners. Some offices have rotating chairs, where the partner in charge is acting as the main connection hub and is also paying the salary of the Brussels staff and because of this connection it is quite natural that the office works closest with the respective leader. This form of loose organization implies that a lot of co-ordination work is done at the Brussels office. "It is a lot of running around but there is no home office as such" ¹¹. It also results in a stodgy process since "it is so slow and converse takes so much time."⁴ Another form of organization can be the same cooperation of different regional bodies but with an assembly as a connection body. These 'councils' or 'committees' are mostly composed of politicians of the represented municipalities and the counties and the Brussels work is mainly embedded into other tasks of them. "We have an international board with politicians that are meeting that meet once every 6 weeks and they make the decisions how we should work and on what we should focus and what efforts should be done."³ Some of the offices have so called 'sister offices' in the region which whom they work closely together.⁷ The number of partners represented by the offices in the study ranged between 3 and 25 partners and these partners represent all kind of regional authorities as municipalities, cities, counties, regions, regional development agencies and universities. "Some of them don't really have any powers and they are mainly in charge of regional development in their county. But others have strong delegation powers"⁴ This amount of partners can cause communication and coordination problems. The main problem is concrete issues cannot be developed since not all partners are equally interested in the same topics. One office mentioned it is "very, very difficult"⁴ to find an issue every member is pleased with. This can have an impact on their lobbying work. "The partners need to negotiate by themselves and need to have a clear stand on the issues before they come to Brussels. But some of them don't really talk and then they come to Brussels and they don't know about each other."³ Dealing with these different partner is clearly a problem for some offices. "Being an lobbyist you have to be very clear in your message and here you have completely opposite messages and I don't know how I should represent this. The simplest choice would be not to do anything."⁴ A clear stance on these issues is indispensable. "They could still developed a more pragmatic point of view on certain issues. Not being so politicised but still for example push for one project that they can all agree on."² Also positive aspects of representing a lot of members was mentioned. Many partners at home is beneficial because representing the whole region is important. "We are more partners. I could see that it is more stable. It is not politically sensitive."⁷ Besides the stable domestic representation, the sheer number of networks contributed by every partner was mentioned. "The advantage is that we have lots of active networks. In that respect the diversity is also a strength with their different issues."⁴

The third form of organization is the representation of one single government with greater powers within the political decision making process. These offices

are part of the responsible department, mainly the one of external affairs, and act as their own division within the department under direct supervision of the departmental head. The sheer power makes them different to the other offices because they “have a completely different role within the treatment of the Commission.”⁴ and “they have the population to act, the powers.”⁴ Also the Commission confirms this impression since if “the region has some competencies in some areas, then I would rather listen to these offices.”² The importance of power relations is confirmed by the impression of the office. “When I go around I get asked quite often ‘do you have a political approval from the region?’ And when I can say yes I have they have approved this meeting it is always better.”¹¹

Concerning the question of the represented some offices symbolize the whole region because of the number of partners. Other offices mentioned quite frequently that they not only represent the ones that are paying for their salary but furthermore the whole region, like developing agencies or universities.¹¹ This also applies for the offices that are part of a governmental structure. It was mentioned that the work “primarily for the regional government authority but also for municipalities, companies or universities.”⁸

The findings show the form of representation has an huge impact on how the office performs. Firstly it is a question of power and secondly it is a question of how many partners are grouped at the local level.

6.3.2.3. Resources

The main difference between the different ways of representation is also visible within the resources. The rule, simply spoken; more power equates more money. Most of the offices representing a city or hub of regions have limited funds. “Our budget is very, very small and we are supposed to work on issues and do miracles.”³ Since the staff is the best indicator for resources it confirms this expression. Most of these offices have a staff of one to three persons in Brussels¹⁹ which seems not enough. “Normally this office should have at least two people”⁴ and even with more than one person the wish for more staff is there “Only three persons here. We should have at least one more”⁷. They also do not see any perspective for a bigger budget in the future. “We are a small region and have that the partners are already paying as much as they can but it is not enough to do what we want to do”³. The small budget is also one reason why there is the need for cooperation since it “is too small to make an impact so that is the reason why we have to co-operate with the other regions.”³ Some offices representing an amalgamation of partners either have found their scope; “we are three senior people. We all know what we want out of this”¹ or already have a good size of staff at around six people, which is almost the same size as the offices representing powerful governments in the study. As expected within the theoretical framework, a higher staff also leads towards more specification of the

¹⁹ In addition to the regular staff there all the offices mentioned that they have interns on a regularly basis that supports them within their work. Since all offices mentioned that these numbers are neglected within the count.

staff. The delegates usually come from the different departments and are therefore experts in their fields and only concentrate on their respective topics.⁸ Applying to the BSS one office mentioned that one person's task areas were remodelled so that he could concentrate almost completely on the strategy. A special Baltic Sea team was composed ad-hoc at the domestic level which was classified⁸. A lot of additional funding was spent for the strategy, which is closely related to one of the stakeholder conferences taking place at the region. As aforementioned within the organization variable, the Brussels offices are usually embedded within a bigger home office which supports them with their work and provides them with expertise in certain topics. Firstly, the financial resources of this domestic region is the most important. Second of all the staff count is crucial. Here a difference is visible as well. Within the study these staff members and ranged from three people towards big departments supporting and co-operating the Brussels office. Sometimes the Brussels office is not even dealing with European issues and instead this is done at the domestic level. "The topic is not supervised by the Brussels office but at the section North-East Coast at the home department. The Brussels office supports the work but is not leading and therefore only reacts."¹² The regional offices are to some extent highly linked to their home offices and becomes unclear when dealing with how much work is actually done at the domestic level. Therefore the resources in the respect of people is hard to measure, but it gives an impression of the class distinction present within the offices of the BSR. The payment of a conference or the provision of a staff member for the Commission are two main aspects aforesaid. These are highly related to resources and show how important the resources from the domestic level are for the lobbying activities.

6.3.2.4. Agenda- Setting

All offices agreed on the fact that the main decisions and approvals are made at the domestic level because the regional offices primary lack of funding and all related competences. Most offices coordinate their work through an annual plan to ensure that the organizations at home know the issues they are focusing on and at the same time to get the approval for the topics they work on. "We work on the basis of planning. There is still room for spontaneous action but mainly is the annual action plan."⁷ This plan is closely connected to the plans done within the region itself and the one published by the EC. Most of the offices, especially the smaller ones, compare both of these agenda-setting documents and pick the topics where they see a certain correlation.¹¹ The offices have a huge impact on these annual plans since "80 to 90% is coming from my side, we should do this and this will effect us"¹¹ and the practice to choose the topics is sometimes completely in the hands of the offices. "I pick the topics and the other agree"⁷ The ideal way of agenda setting would be that the offices get advices from the domestic level on what they should work. In some cases this works better than in others and it has to be kept in mind that the regional office itself is not able to take the main decisions.⁸ There is "always a clearance with the highest decision making body on the topic, constantly."¹² Larger offices are especially distinguished by more strict hierarchical structures with the department each of the staff represents whilst at

the same time they are quite autonomous when it comes to the topics they work on⁸. The best condition for lobbying is if the highest decision making body at home can quickly adjust to the situation, including the financial planning. This hierarchical structure also results in the impression of an 'imperative mandate' how it was called in the theoretical part. "I know that in most of the offices they are strictly cordage by their home office what they are allowed to do. And quite often it came to the scene that in a meeting they say ok we need to call home and see if we can do it."¹¹ Other offices enjoy freedom within their work to a great extent. "I don't report to anyone at home about my work here. We do belong to the team of international issues but they are not our boss. We do a lot of things with them but not for them."¹ One region mentioned that they act as a secretary of the home organization.⁵

One reason for this freedom might be that the domestic dimension is not familiar with the topics. "The ideal situation is that I am just the little handy man and they give me the tasks what to work on but in reality that doesn't work like that. In the best cases you get exchange ideas initiated by the people at home but actually a lot of time is initiated here and people at home say yes or no."⁴ It is mentioned that the domestic staff don't see EU issues as their main point of interest. "It is still quite strange to do EU business at home."¹¹ They even see it as additional work when the Brussels office asks for more support on a certain issue. "It is not included in their normal work. It is something extra. And if you are not interested in that you don't do it."¹¹ This is depicted as an advantage for all aspects of their work. "When you need to be successful especially in terms of lobbying it requires a lot of time on the issue. And for them to spent time it has to be really important and really urgent."⁴ This is related to the issue of staff since the smaller the unit at home is the less are they interested in European affairs. The problems within the region are main objective of the regional administrations "But I try to tell them the EU doesn't stop to work and wait until you have solved your internal regional problems."¹¹ Some offices see a positive development concerning the issue. "It is hard to motivate people on European issues but it is getting better."¹ The BSS was mentioned to be a good initiative to show the politicians that they can influence EU decisions. One interview partner mentioned the experience of one politician out of the region at one of the stakeholder seminars where he mentioned a detail²⁰ which was taken up later on. This experience had a huge impact in the further course of action since "he kind of got a boost out of that like 'it is so easy to influence EU legislation and have my opinion in that document' and after that every one just talked about that the BSS was on top of the agenda."³ It can be summarized that the domestic level plays an important role within the performance of the office.

²⁰The topic was on e-governance, somehow it was mentioned that information and communication technologies were surprisingly not mentioned (Schymik and Krumrey 2009: 8) within the last EC paper therefore it is. at this stage not clear if the BSS contains this point.

7.1 Analysis of the Mobilization Variables

Since the findings show that the different variables have to be seen in relation to each other, they cannot explain the lobbying processes when they stand alone and they are dependent on each other and therefore no direct answer on the hypothesis will be given. This analysis focuses on these relations and there are a few significant outcomes concerning the two questions asked in the beginning.

What mobilization variables determines which lobbying strategy is used?

Firstly, all offices were interested in the topic and most of them placed it high on their agenda. Nonetheless the offices choose different strategies. If an office takes the passive lobbying position the main reasons are that some Brussels offices have not been the leaders within the regional authorities to work on the strategy and a lot of work was done at the home level, which was mentioned by a few offices. Here the *agenda-setting* variable can be mentioned. In addition some offices were simply not engrossed in promoting their interest because of the general nature of the BSS, which is related to the *importance of the topic* variable. Another reason for choosing a passive approach is that the *function of the office* is a non-lobbying office. Resources do not play a role for a decision on active and passive lobbying, in contrast to the choice of the tactic.

Most offices stated to take active lobbying actions. First through the active strategy when having direct contact, and second through the passive strategy when supporting the home office writing a paper for the consultation process and thirdly through coalition lobbying when forming an ‘informal Baltic Sea Group’ of the offices which also handed in paper for the consultation process. Financial lobbying was also done by one office extensively since it supported the Commission with human resources within the division that is writing the draft. What tactic they choose is highly related to the *resource* factor. Financial lobbying is only possible if the office has the resources, which is obvious. Active lobbying leads to a high human as well as time effort which some offices can simply not effort. Since resources are highly related to the art of representation this should be also mentioned. An office that has power is most likely to be interested in active lobbying than in a coalition. The factors of *representation*,

agenda-setting and *resources* are also highly related why some offices choose a coalition as their main point of impact.

What form of lobbying tactics and mobilization is the most successful?

Since the study was connected to a real lobbying issue the contrast between the impression of the actors and objects was more than visible and showed what mobilization factors have an impact on the performance of the offices. The most successful lobbying tactics would be the direct lobbying strategy and the financial lobbying. Offices that were in a continuous contact with the region are most likely to place their ideas within the strategy. This contact was highly related to organizing a conference or position a staff member in the Commission. Both actions are highly related to resources. Even if the resources are available this does not necessary mean that the lobbying activities will be successful. It turned out that the papers handed in as well as the coalition did not equate a major impact. A clear and defined position, shortly expertise, was the main goods the Commission was asking for and only offices that could fulfil this criteria were successful. The reason why most indirect lobbying activities and the coalition was not successful was this lack of expertise. The offices which chose these strategies were not visible in promoting their interest for the EC because of the major failure of not delivering concrete ideas. Regardless, the coalition of the IBSG must be seen as a good initiative because it does create side effects that are important for future lobbying and for the information and exchange process of the offices. It turned out that the offices with less resources and no clear stance on the issue grouped themselves in the IBSG coalition and relied heavily on that input, doing little else besides.

The mobilization variables delivers a pattern for what factors have to be fulfilled to deliver these concrete ideas. The variables of representation, agenda-setting and resources can explain to a major extent why some have not been as successful than others. If the home level is interested in the topics and invests time and resources for the issue, the office can enable the transfer of this expertise and interest to the lobbying level. If the regional level is less interested or cannot forward an opinion the office can only exert low influence if any. This was also the outcome of previous studies (for example Bosselmann 2007: 56). The domestic level must therefore be 'EU- skilled' to handle the information given by the regional offices proper and efficient. The main point of successful lobbying, regardless if the direct, indirect, financial or coalition strategy was chosen, is a clear and defined position. Several offices had difficulties to provide this because of the following reasons:

- ⇒ Who *sets the agenda* and how much this body is interested is the major factor. If this interest is not given the less likely it is an impact on the European level. One interviewee stated that "spending 6 months to find a common topic that every one in the end just go 'Yeah that is ok but not something we are burning for'"⁴ is not unusual for the work of the offices. Others have to fight for concrete ideas or invent them to have at least

something¹¹ If the agenda setter is interested and committed towards the lobbying work of the office and in addition has a clear stand on an issue interest representation can be successful to a high extent. The representation organisation must be hierarchical but on the other hand quick and easy to react. It must be clear who takes decisions and the principal-agent relationship must be clear. The best would be a 'free mandate' but most offices have an 'imperative mandate'. This is no disadvantage as long as the principal can reach a quick decision.

- ⇒ Related to the agenda setting variable is the *representation* factor. The study pointed out if the office has many partners it is less likely that a concrete interest can be pointed out. This concreteness is necessary for any input. Therefore the offices with only one principal are in a clear advantage. This does not necessarily mean that an office with many partners can have no influence. A clear and quick position determines the outcome and if the partners can deliver this then their Brussels office can have an impact. The power question is not as important as expected. If the region has certain powers within the decision making process it might help with the acceptance of the issues presented but is not the main factor for successful lobbying, which is in contrast to previous findings that see a clear advantage for these regions because the powers in the EU "favour their unique legal status" (Moore 2008: 524).
- ⇒ *Resources* do have an impact, since the office can perform certain tasks better with more staff members and as pointed out, financial lobbying played an important role within one office. Even with a one person office an impact would have been possible if the office would have had a clear issue to promote. "If someone calls me and says lets discuss the Baltic Sea Strategy than I would of course talk to them" ² The study also made clear that the offices with more resources are better 'in the game' than others. Specialised staff is the key factor. Even if the study should not underestimate the factor of networks they do not have such a major impact as other studies has pointed out (for example Bosselmann 2007:54 or others).
- ⇒ The *time* factor is more important than the art of representation. This factor is highly related to firstly, the agenda-setting variable and second to a certain kind of fortune of being at right time at the right place.
- ⇒ The variable of *channels of influence* pointed out that the Brussels office is embedded in a domestic level and is using these channels as well. Further analysis of these channels is not possible.

To combine these outcomes mentioned above even in more detail, the strategies of the offices can be illustrated in three different types of mobilization: the committed, the follower and the reluctant. With this different types a more complete picture and analysis can be drawn.

7.2 The Different Types of Mobilization

In the following the different types of mobilization are presented. They aim to combine the different outcomes and group the offices into three different modes.

The Active Position: The Committed

The committed is characterized as the one that has a clear issue and invests all time and money to pursue this issue. “There is the need for details and concrete ideas: To be honest the way you read the papers is ‘are they concrete?’ Have they got something exiting new? Or are they just going through emotion?”² If the office has to office these concrete ideas then it needs to pursue this. Some offices in the study have been quite successful with this and used all different kind of channels. “You must be willing to invest time and money and then it goes its way then you can make the difference. If you don’t you will not get much impact”⁸ This of course implies certain expenditures that not every office can afford and also the ones that have the financial resources cannot handle this on a regular basis. The process and how it worked was “exemplary”, as one office stated and that this cannot always be done⁸. Even if the office has not the resources it can have a good impact once it is committed to the topic and the issue it wants to lobby for. It was the “most intensive participation of a European topic since a long time”⁸ which explains why this office was quite successful within his work. Even though if the mobilization variables representation, agenda-setting and resources play have an enormous impact on the performance, there is always some unpredictable luck aside. “It is quite like that being in the right place at the right time talking to the right people.”⁸ If all these factors work together well then the possibility that ‘the committed’ has a big impact is quite high.

If the offices have no clear position they take the approach of the follower. Even though this position was seen as an active position, it turned out that the impression lasted as if these offices pursue a ‘wait and see’ tactic. The lack of clearness and a real strategy makes them not a clear active actor and instead they are more in the ‘anticipating actor’ behavior scheme.

The Anticipating Position: The Follower

In the study these followers were the offices that worked mainly through the IBSG. Although being initially a good way to combine forces it turned out to be in the anticipating position and be nearly invisible. "I think most of the regional offices are members of the IBSG and they have counted that this will be enough what they are doing in that group. Although from a Commission point of view it's been quite invisible what they have done."² The seminars organised by the group were received as a success but it was stated that the group lost its power afterwards, since the paper should have been revised and it was stated that it was far too general to make any influence possible. The paper of the IBSG was not received as a success as much as the conference. "If we look at the paper it didn't add much."² This lies in the nature of the coalition, since it is quite obvious that many partners have many different inputs and it is therefore hard to find a concrete issue. "When they all together in one group it dilutes the message the only thing they have in common is that they represent local and regional authorities. It becomes purely a governance question."² The message of the coalition is therefore useless: "The message are the core of an effective lobbying campaign. Without a compelling message an organization will not get far" (Mack 2005: 343). The offices that tried to lean back and work as a group were not successful with their work. The IBSG is one channel of influence but should not be used alone. It was stated that the offices had the chance and they "blew it."² because "they have been very loyal to the process of the IBSG but looking at our side and turn it from the sight they have been to loyal."² The offices should keep in mind that they are "not only partners but also competitors."⁹ The reason why the offices so heavily relied on the IBSG can be explained with firstly the lack of resources and man-power and second with the lack of clear visions and expertise from home. The two aforementioned issues determine whether or not the mobilization of an office can be successful. So in defence, these offices could not act differently because the preconditions were not fulfilled. Additionally, the IBSG seems to be a competent tool for the regions on various other issues, but on primarily lobbying it seems not as much instrumental.

It must be added that this characterization relies heavily in the impressions of the EC. However, it might be that other channels of influence have a big impact on the final outcome, which is not considered at this stage and the offices would have a active 'committed' position. Since the reason for the anticipating behavior is closely connected to their art of representation and agenda-setting is less likely that this happens.

The Passive Position: The Reluctant

The reluctant is not very interested in lobbying. This can have various issues. One reason is that the region as such is not interested in the issue, which was not the case within the BSS. Another reason could be that the Brussels office was not interested in the case. This might be because the region is pursuing the lobbying activities from the home level and/or the office has other tasks than lobbying included in its outline. “I think it is a good way how we prioritize. BSS is a lot of work, we neglect people that call us and say we have this really good program and can you help us there. It is a way to bring the EU closer to the citizens.”⁵ The third reason why lobbying might not be the best strategy is the issue of the BSS. Some offices stated that they take the passive approach since they are not completely convinced that the BSS will bring any added value. It was mentioned the be “a mission impossible”⁹. Mainly missing money was the reason for the reluctant strategy. This is a strategy where any mobilization has no significance since they are not interested in pursuing any influence.

8 Outlook and Conclusion

The study has shown that the various offices have different ways of how to pursue its interest and how to mobilize it. In general there must be an added division between conditions provided by the office itself and conditions from the domestic level. The offices are well positioned but the main impact on mobilization is at the domestic level, which leaves a lot to be desired in some offices. It has also shown that internal matters are mainly affecting the outcome. This is contrary to what previous studies have pointed out. “Efforts to understand the mobilization of organized interests have turned away from focusing on their internal traits to assessing the environmental forces that influence the supply of lobbying organizations and the demand for their services.” (Gray et al. 2005: 404), since at least in this case all offices had the same chance to influence and some used this chance better than others.

What can we learn from the study? It showed that expertise and concrete ideas and inputs are mainly the two determinants for successful lobbying. The Commission is heavily relying on the expertise of the offices and even expressed the wish for more input from the offices. With the establishment of the offices the regions created a direct lobbying tool, which is important and welcome. A point that could not be touched upon is that the offices need to make more clear that they have a special stance, which these days they miss. They differ widely from a ‘regular’ lobbying office in Brussels but somehow they cannot transport this difference in expertise and power towards their lobbying objects. One of the main changes the regional offices need to pursue is certain areas where they have clear powers and clear influence. If they work on these levels it is most likely that the regional office in Brussels can promote their interest successfully. The reason why some can’t fulfil these preconditions is the fact that they have neither the resources nor the support with expertise from home, partly because too many partners are involved within the decision making process. The only possibility for these offices to gain more influence or to work more efficient is to specialize themselves for the most important topics of the region in combination with more interest from the domestic level. It is therefore not advisable to cope a lot of different policy areas with a small amount, maybe even just one staff member. This leads to a waste of time and expertise that the region might have in certain specific areas and the office will not have a big impact.

In conclusion, the BSR offices generally hold a good stance whose main reasoning for occasional poor performance stemming from their home level. In future the offices need to use the possibilities of direct regional lobbying more so since within the BSS the Commission states: *the door may be open, but the responsibility of walking through belongs to the offices.*

Executive Summary

Since almost 25 years a phenomena reaches Brussels, the establishment of regional offices towards the EU. Today over 160 regions are present and most of them have, besides other tasks, a clear mandate: to lobby for their regions (Marks et.al. 2002). There have been various studies on the establishment of these offices on the European level and the influence of regions on general (Marks et. al. 1996), but this study goes one step beyond and focuses on the lobbying activities of the Brussels offices. The fact that the regional offices are present does not automatically mean that they have influence. “Ineffective political actors might gain access to an institution without being able to translate this advantage into concrete policy outcomes” (Bouwen 2002: 366). Concrete, it asks two key questions: Firstly, what mobilization variables determines which lobbying strategy is used? And secondly, what form of lobbying tactics and therefore mobilization is the most successful?

Lobbying defined as “the stimulation and transmission of communication, by someone other than a citizen acting on his behalf, directed to a governmental decision maker with the hope of influencing his decision” (Milbrath in Sills 1991: 442) and mobilization defined as “the engagement of regional offices within the institutions and processes of EU policy making” act as the main basic models. The study itself is a case study on a specific case: “The EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region”. On the means of this initiative the study analyses the behavior of the regional offices in Brussels in regard to lobbying. It is evident that regional offices act as lobbying facilitators. The main focus of this study lies not on the influence as such but on what factors shape interest in lobbying and what determinants have to be fulfilled that the actions taken by the office are successful. Based on this study the paper tells both, what is and what should be done within regional interest representation. This paper aims at creating a framework that helps to explain what different lobbying attributes are present within the different lobbying offices based on the Baltic Sea Strategy and a nearly complete study on the influence of the regional offices on the Baltic Sea Strategy should be delivered. The Baltic Sea Strategy is an initiative in the developing. The European Council gave within its Council conclusions from December 2007 the order to the Commission to draft this strategy until June 2009. Since then the European Commission is working on it under the supervision of DG Regio. Since the strategy was a *carte blanche* when they started they invited actors in the region to give input, either through a series of stakeholder conferences and meetings or through a consultation process where paper could be submitted. This open process makes it interesting for this study. Coming from this concrete case it should be analysed what the offices have done to represent their interest and what are the factors that determine these actions. Unlike most other works done on regional

influence, this paper aims to connect the practice with the theory. It wants to explain in theoretical terms what is happening at the practical level. In answering these questions a theoretical framework was developed. The first part of this theoretical framework focuses on different lobbying strategies (after Farnel 1994). There are three different strategies, the first being *passive* lobbying which is characterized as non-lobbying meaning that the offices take no action at all. The second one is the *anticipating* strategy which includes no action neither, but is on a slightly more active level since it includes possible actions at a later point. The third strategy is the one commonly known as lobbying, *active* lobbying which is characterized as actively influencing the policy and direct contacts with the lobbying addressee. This strategy can be carried out with four different tactics, direct lobbying, indirect lobbying, financial lobbying and coalition lobbying. Direct lobbying again being characterized of “close cooperation” (Gais and Walker 1991: 103) of the lobbyist and the addressee, whereas indirect lobbying refers to actions that are taken to influence the public or influencing circuitous. Financial lobbying is related to giving resources of all different kinds, including human resources, to the lobbying object and coalition, known from negotiation theory refers to the increase of power by the fusion of many. Here two main aspects are interesting: formation and stability (Dupont 1994: 149). The study moves on with questioning what different mobilization variables have an influence on the choice and performance of these different strategies. With the usual theories used in the field, the mobilization of regional offices cannot be explained and theories from other fields had to be considered. More than one theoretical approach has been followed to build and develop this theoretical framework. The variables are divided into two different sets: the topic itself and the office. This distinction is necessary to get to know if some issues of mobilization are only connected to the BSS or if it can be seen as a general course. The office variables are based on ‘organizational theory’ within negotiations (Kolb and Faure 1994) which is referring to structures affecting negotiations in general.

The variables from the both sets should explain if mobilization has an impact on the strategy of the offices, each assigned with a hypothesis. The main assumption that combines all these different variables is the hypothesis that ‘mobilization matters’. Within the first set of the topic, these are the variables of importance which should explain what relevance the BSS has to the office. The second variable deals with the different channels of influence. Since the main actor within the BSS is the Commission at the time, within the brief perception of the strategies, only this channel was analyzed. The next variable is time. Relying on Pierson (2004), time matters within the decision making process. It is therefore of interest when lobbying actions were taken. The second set of variables deals with the structures of the office itself. Here the first variable is connected to the focus of the office. Several scholars have pointed out that offices have several different tasks to fulfill and that it might be a simple information gathering office. The second variable in that field deals with the art of representation. Since regions have several different ways of setting up an office this variable is closely connected to the question how powerful the region is and how many partners are

supporting the office. It is the question of “single region versus pluri-region” (Marks et al. 1996: 12). Within this variable it is the assumption that the less partners the better the office can perform. The third variable in the office set is the one of resources. Resources are important for lobbying and the “resource push” variable (McCarthy and Zald 1977: 1216) might explain the choice of a strategy. Resources are also highly linked to the number of staff members and the expertise on certain fields. The last variable is the one of the agenda-setter. Here it matters who takes the final decision and how interested these decision makers are in the European topics. Based on the principal-agent theory different ways of behavior and competences are pointed out between the agent (regional office) and the principal (domestic level). Following Jönsson and Hall whom applied this model to diplomacy; different ways of acting, behavior and status, as well as different ways of freedom, free mandate and imperative mandate, are pointed out.

Following this theoretical framework a presentation of the findings are detailed along with the analysis. Since the study was connected to a real lobbying issue the contrast between the impression of the actors and objects was more than visible and showed what mobilization factors have an impact on the performance of offices. It turns out that the different variables have to be seen in relation to each other and not by itself, so a direct answer on the hypothesis could not be given. There are a few significant outcomes. All offices were interested in the topic and most of them placed it high on their agenda. Nonetheless the offices chose different strategies. If an actor takes the passive lobbying position the main reasons are that some Brussels offices have not been the leaders within the regional authorities to work on the strategy and a lot of work was done at the home level, which was mentioned by a few offices. In addition some offices were simply not interested in promoting their interest because of the general nature of the BSS or the function of the office as a non-lobbying office. Resources do not play a role for a decision on active and passive lobbying. Most offices stated to take active lobbying actions. First through the active strategy when having direct contact; second, through the passive strategy when supporting the home office writing a paper for the consultation process; and thirdly through coalition lobbying when forming an ‘informal Baltic Sea Group’ of the offices which also handed in paper for the consultation process. Financial lobbying was also done by one office extensively since it supported the Commission with human resources within the division that is writing the draft. The chosen strategy therefore mainly concerned itself with variables relating to importance of the topic, focus of the office and resources.

Concerning the second research question, determining the most successful lobbying strategy it emerged most offices were not visible in promoting their interest for the EC. The variables of time, representation, agenda-setting and resources can explain their ineffectiveness despite the plausibility of possible success. The main point of successful lobbying, regardless if the direct or indirect strategy was chosen, is a clear and defined position, shortly: expertise. This is the main goods the Commission was asking for and only offices that could fulfil this criteria were successful. If the home level is interested in the topics and invests time and resources for the issue, the office is enabled to transfer this expertise and

interest to the lobbying level. If the regional level is less interested or cannot forward an opinion the office can only exert low influence if any. The domestic level must therefore be 'EU-skilled' to handle the information given by the regional offices proper and efficient, which refers to the agenda-setting aspect. The power question was also mentioned, but was not as significant as expected. If the region has certain powers within the decision making process it may help with the acceptance of the issues presented but is not the main factor for successful lobbying. More integral to success is the enthusiasm of the office for a certain issue. The clearness of the promoted interest is difficult to get from the home level if the office represents several actors. This is related to resources. It turned out that the offices with less resources and no clear stance on the issue grouped themselves in the IBSG coalition and relied heavily on that input, not doing much else besides. This turned out unsuccessful. Even with a one person office an impact would have been possible if the office would have had a clear issue to promote. The offices with more resources and more expertise were more likely to succeed but here there were differences as well. Resources do have an impact, since the office can perform certain tasks better with more staff members and as pointed out financial lobbying played an important role within one office. Time factors are important, which is highly related to firstly, the agenda-setting variable and second to a certain kind of fortune of being at right time in the right place. To complete the analysis, three different types of mobilization are presented that combine research question one and two. These three different types are: the committed, the follower and the reluctant. With this different types a more complete picture and analysis can be drawn.

9 References

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Interviews

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- Interview 2 Joint Interview of Commission officials, Brussels, March 17th 2009
- Interview 3 Acting Director of a Regional Office, Brussels, March 30th 2009
- Interview 4 Developing Officer of a Regional Office, Brussels, March 30th 2009
- Interview 5 Staff member of Regional Office, Brussels, March 30th, 2009
- Interview 6 Head of Office of a Association of Municipalities and Cities, Brussels, March 31st, 2009
- Interview 7 Head of Office of a Regional Office, Brussels, March 31st, 2009
- Interview 8 Deputy Head of Office of a Regional Office, Brussels, March 31st 2009
- Interview 9 Head of Office of a City Office, Brussels, March 31st 2009
- Interview 10 Policy Officer of a Regional Office, Brussels, March 31st 2009
- Interview 11 Head of office of a Regional Office, Brussels, April 1st 2009
- Interview 12 Head of Office of a Regional Office, Brussels, April 1st 2009

Appendix

Appendix A: Interview Guide Regional Offices

Interview Guide

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW, I HAVE TO INFORM YOU ABOUT A FEW FORMAL REQUIREMENTS DUE TO ETHICAL ISSUES ACCORDING TO ACADEMIC STANDARDS. FIRST, YOUR PARTICIPATION IS COMPLETELY VOLUNTARY AND YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO WITHDRAW FROM THE STUDY ANYTIME AND/OR NOT TO ANSWER PARTICULAR QUESTIONS. OUR CONVERSATION WILL BE TAPED AND THE STUDY WILL BE COMPLETELY CONFIDENTIAL AND ALL NAMES WILL BE MADE ANONYMOUS WITHIN FURTHER USAGE OF THE INTERVIEW. I, AS A RESEARCHER, HAVE NONETHELESS THE RIGHT TO USE ALL STATEMENTS AND PUBLISH THE INTERVIEW OR PARTS OF IT.

Also before we start a brief introduction into the purpose of the Research design and overall reason of this study. The study is a case study on regional interest representation in brussels. in particular it should be analysed how much, if any, influence the regional offices have on the design of the 'Eu strategy for the Baltic Sea region'. So the main intention within our conversation should be what position your office has towards the strategy and what you do to promote your interests or the interests of the region you representing.

DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS BEFORE WE START THE INTERVIEW?

1. The Office

"First I would like to know a little bit more about your office in general"

- 1.1. Whom does it represent? (local government, municipalities, other administrative body?)
- 1.2. Who is directly responsible for it at home? Is there a connection unit at home?
- 1.3. What is the structural background has the office? How is it organized?
- 1.4. (Size) How big is the office? How many permanent staff members?
- 1.5. (Staff) How is the staff recruited? Where is the staff recruited? What background have they usually?
- 1.6. Is it usually a temporary position in Brussels or is it permanent?
- 1.7. (Self- determination) Is the staff able to work completely on their own or do you get instruction, if yes from where?
- 1.8. (information access) Where do the office usually gets its information from concerning its work on interest representation? Home administration? Commission? Networks?

2. The EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

“The second set of question is about the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea region in particular”

- 2.1. How important is this initiative for your office? For your work?
- 2.2. Who decided that this topic is interesting for your region/ your office?
- 2.3. What is special about it for your region? If anything is special about it.
- 2.4. Or is it just another topic you work on?
- 2.5. What are the main point of interest? - Environment, Economic issues, social welfare issues, security?

3. Processes

“The next set of questions deals with the processes of how you presented your interest within the Baltic Sea Strategy”

- 3.1. How do your office/ you represent your interest?
- 3.2. Do you know people or how does it work? Do you have personal contact with the unit at the Commission? Or other bodies?
- 3.3. When do you have started to give your input? At the very beginning? Or wait and listen?
- 3.4. (Coalitions) Do networks with other offices, bodies exist to promote a common interest? Who builds up these networks – You in Brussels or at home?
 - 3.4.1. Why does is arise? Just for this initiative or does is exist constantly?
 - 3.4.2. Is there a leader within this coalition/ network?
 - 3.4.3. Do all of the coalition partners have the same objectives and positions or are they split for example in the main interest?
 - 3.4.4. Do you think that coalition helps in promoting a common interest?
 - 3.4.5. Do you think offices outside of the BSR have a different interest?
- 3.5. Do NGO's play a role?

4. My last question

“If you compare your office to other offices. What do you think is your main advantage and what is the main disadvantage?”

DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING YOU WOULD LIKE TO TELL ME THAT I HAVE NOT MENTIONED OR ASKED THROUGHOUT THE CONVERSATION BEFORE I FINISH THE INTERVIEW?

Thank you very much for the interview. In case I have any further questions do you mind if I contact you via email to clarify these? And once I have finished the thesis I will send you a copy probably mid June (just when the Baltic Sea Strategy got published).

Once again thank you very much!

Appendix B: Interview Guide Commission

Interview Guide

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW, I HAVE TO INFORM YOU ABOUT A FEW FORMAL REQUIREMENTS DUE TO ETHICAL ISSUES ACCORDING TO ACADEMIC STANDARDS. FIRST, YOUR PARTICIPATION IS COMPLETELY VOLUNTARY AND YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO WITHDRAW FROM THE STUDY ANYTIME AND/OR NOT TO ANSWER PARTICULAR QUESTIONS. OUR CONVERSATION WILL BE TAPED AND THE STUDY WILL BE COMPLETELY CONFIDENTIAL AND ALL NAMES WILL BE MADE ANONYMOUS WITHIN FURTHER USAGE OF THE INTERVIEW. I, AS A RESEARCHER, HAVE NONETHELESS THE RIGHT TO USE ALL STATEMENTS AND PUBLISH THE INTERVIEW OR PARTS OF IT.

Also before we start a brief introduction into the purpose of the Research design and overall reason of this study. The study is a case study on regional interest representation in brussels. in particular it should be analysed how much, if any, influence the regional offices have on the design of the 'Eu strategy for the Baltic Sea region'. So the main intention within our conversation should be what position the Commission has towards the strategy and what impressions you have on how the regional offices represent their interests.

DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS BEFORE WE START THE INTERVIEW?

5. The Unit

“First I would like to know a little bit more about your unit in general”

- 5.1. How is the Unit organized? What is the structural background?
- 5.2. How works the collaboration with the other DG's/ Units?
- 5.3. How many people work on it in total?
- 5.4. How was the strategy developed?
- 5.5. Is the staff able to work completely on their own or do you get instruction, if yes from where?

6. The EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

“The second set of question is about the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea region in particular”

- 6.1. How important is this initiative for the DG region?
- 6.2. There was a consultation process. How did it worked?
- 6.3. How do you decide what's in the Strategy and what's out?
 - 6.3.1. It is said that so far the topics are to broad to have an impact. How do you decide whether or not to specify it?
- 6.4. What is special about it for the Commission? If anything is special about it. Or is it just another topic you work on?
- 6.5. What are the main points of interest from the region? - Environment, Economic issues, social welfare issues, security? Was there a 'hot' topic.

6.6. There are so far only 47 published but 110 were turned in – what was in the others? Why were they not published?

7. Processes – Commission/ Regional Offices

“The next set of questions deals with the processes and how the regional offices presented their interest within the Baltic Sea Strategy”

7.1. 31 papers within the consultation from the regions. How many of them have clearly an impact of the regional offices or home-based work?

7.2. Where you addresses directly? How does it usually work?

7.3. When do the offices have started to give your input? At the very beginning? Or wait and listen?

7.4. Do you see any networks between the offices?

7.5. Do you have any contacts with offices and regions outside the BSR? Or do they play no role at all?

7.6. Who role have the regional offices of all the different interest representations?

7.7. Do you differ between the offices (some more trustworthy and why – others not) – why country, size, influence?

8. My last question

“What is your general perception of the regional offices in Brussels and do you think they are influential?”

DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING YOU WOULD LIKE TO TELL ME THAT I HAVE NOT MENTIONED OR ASKED THROUGHOUT THE CONVERSATION BEFORE I FINISH THE INTERVIEW?

Thank you very much for the interview. In case I have any further questions do you mind if I contact you via email to clarify these? And once I have finished the thesis I will send you a copy probably mid June.

Once again thank you very much!

Appendix C: Lobbyism and Theories

The classical theoretical approaches can only partly explain lobbying. There are the state-centric models, the supra-national models and the multi-governance approaches. The first ones offer some ideas but cannot contribute theoretically to neither the existence of lobbying nor the set-up of regional offices.

Within the theory of neofunctionalism the scholars developed a supranational political organization and had hopes that interest groups could foster the European integration. It turned out that these hopes could not be fulfilled in reality (Haas 1958, Lindberg 1963, Kohler- Koch 1992). In the mid-1980s, new theoretical approaches emerged and with them a closer look on interest representation in the EU. Taking up the thought of the neofunctionalists the supranational institutionalists presented their ideas that within the times of further European integration business interest actors might foster this transformation. In contrast to the previous approach they could later prove this argument empirically (Sandholtz and Zysman 1989, Cowles 1997). Liberal intergovernmentalists in contrast argued that business interests have no impact in major policy decisions and can therefore be neglected (Moravcik 1998). All these main theories are common in that they focus on the general question whether or not interest group representations have an impact within the development of the EU. Other theories conversely focus on specific aspects of interest representation. A major theory on interest intermediation exists and they argued that informal, sectoral and pluralistic patterns are present (Averyt 1977, Streeck and Schmitter 1991). Moving on from this perspective the pluralistic approach developed (Coen 1998, Schmidt 1999, Broscheid and Coen 2003). Within elite pluralism, a credibility game is visible and the Commission tries to build up long-term relationships with interest groups based on their open consultation processes and the permanent information exchange. Others have quasi-corporatist views on the interest intermediation in the EU with its attention to resource exchange and compliance (Falkner 1998). Besides the view on interest intermediation, another part of the theorists view on the democratic deficit evolving out of interest group representation (Finke 2007).