

Chapter 2

THE DUAL ROLE OF EUROPEAN UNION CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS BETWEEN EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS AND DOMESTIC CIVIL SOCIETIES

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Introduction

The European Union (EU) has in the past couple of decades developed a variety of means for interacting with organized civil society across Europe. It has incentivized the formation of Brussels-based umbrella organizations and networks that work in different issue areas and are expected to represent wider civil society in consultations with European institutions. These organizations have often been brought into existence by the provision of financial support and institutional access to European institutions. In addition to providing expertise and knowledge about local conditions, the involvement of these “EU-level civil society organizations (CSOs)” in consultations is expected to mediate—or even overcome—the distance between the EU’s institutions and domestic civil societies by “bring[ing] Europe much closer to the people” (EC 2000, 4), thereby alleviating the criticism toward the EU for being an elitist project (Kohler-Koch and Rittberger 2007; Warleigh 2001). The expectation on part of the EU is that organized civil society can enhance the popular legitimacy of the EU by communicating Europe to national societies and citizens (Monaghan 2012). This has resulted in expanded—or at least altered—political opportunity structures for EU-level CSOs, acting in-between Brussels and national civil societies.

This chapter investigates the roles EU-level CSOs play in the processes of Europeanization in terms of building links and connections with EU institutions as well as domestic CSOs. Our approach differs from the vast mainstream literature on Europeanization, which mainly has addressed how EU institutions through formal political channels affect national political agendas and reform processes and patterns of policy change (for exceptions, see Ketola 2013; Sánchez-Salgado 2014). In line with the other contributions to this volume, we emphasize that civil society actors take an active and important part in Europeanization processes. We adopt the analytical framework developed in chapter 1 in this volume in order to structure the activities of EU-level CSOs when they act in the roles of objects to, subjects in, and mediators of Europeanization. Our aim is to provide a systematic account of the different roles that EU-level CSOs may and do take on, and thus provide an inventory of their roles in processes of Europeanization. Our ambition is essentially descriptive. We do not intend to explain why certain EU-level CSOs play one role but not another, nor to explain why they play the roles they do. Instead, we want to map the different tasks and activities that EU-level CSOs undertake and that shape their relation with EU institutions on the one hand and with national civil societies on the other. Our investigation is limited to three dimensions of Europeanization: organizational, financial, and regulatory. This means that we leave out their role in the other deeper dimensions of Europeanization—that is, those that aim at more thorough societal, ideational, and cognitive transformations. For each dimension we tease out the ways in which they act as subjects, objects, and mediators with the view of providing a comprehensive account of their positions vis-à-vis EU institutions as well as national civil societies. The analysis is not restricted to EU-level CSOs operations in relation to Sweden and Swedish civil society, but rather focuses on EU-level civil society per se.

Our main empirical focus is EU-level CSOs active in the fields of social policy and antidiscrimination. What is specific with this case is that it corresponds to a policy area where EU competence is relatively weak because much of the mandate on social inclusion policies lies with member states. This is, however, less so when it comes to antidiscrimination. We furthermore concentrate our analysis on EU-level CSOs being members of the umbrella organization the Social Platform (hereafter the Platform). The Platform constitutes a key case with regard to EU-level civil society organizing since it brings together the major EU-based CSOs within the fields of social inclusion and antidiscrimination (Johansson and Lee 2014, 2015; see also chapters 5 and 8).

The chapter makes use of the following data sources. We have used the Transparency Register for analysis of the organizational and financial dimensions of Europeanization and the LobbyFacts webpage for the

regulatory dimension. The Transparency Register is the official EU institutional database on registered interest groups, while LobbyFacts is an initiative from Corporate Europe Observatory and LobbyControl—two CSOs that monitor lobbyists (EC 2016; Corporate Europe Observatory and LobbyControl 2016). It compiles information on the EC's high-level lobbying meetings and therefore provides an invaluable source for analyzing regulatory Europeanization. In addition to the data available there, we have also used membership in the European Economic and Social Committee's (EESC) Liaison Group (set up to strengthen cooperation with CSOs) as an indicator of access to decision-makers. The chapter also relies on a survey sent to all Platform member organizations in 2011 that tracked different kind of activities, linkages to national civil societies and patterns of cooperation of the organizations within the Platform framework (see Johansson and Lee 2014, 2015).¹

The first section of the chapter provides an overview of the EU agenda on civil society involvement and how it has unfolded over time, followed by the core of the chapter, which specifies EU-level CSOs' roles in organizational, financial, and regulatory Europeanization. The final section sums up the main findings.

The EU Agenda on Civil Society Involvement

The EU discourse on civil society emerged in the late 1990s. Until then debates on civil society had been promoted by single Directorates-General (DGs) and by the EESC. The EESC took an active stance and held several conferences on the topic, supported by some DGs (Smismans 2003).² In one of its most important position papers, the EESC defined civil society as “a collective term for all types of social action, by individuals or groups that do not emanate from the state and are not run by it” (EESC 1999, 18).

These activities paved the way for a discursive turn that took place at the start of the millennium (Fazi and Smith 2006; Finke 2007; Ruzza 2004, 2006); the publication of *European Governance: A White Paper* was of central importance (EC 2001). Kohler-Koch and Finke (2007, 210) discuss this publication as a move toward more-participatory consultations models, in contrast to previous hierarchical and partnership-oriented models. The earlier social dialogue, made up of the labor market partners, was now complemented by the seeds of a civil dialogue engaging a broad set of CSOs (Smismans 2003, 2006). Up to this point the EU had occasionally facilitated the involvement and participation of networks of CSOs in relation to particular topics, but not as part of a coherent strategy of interaction. While EU policies and positions in the 1980s and 1990s primarily addressed social

partner organizations or particular voluntary organizations as a source of support for European policymaking, the civil dialogue discourse started to engage all DGs and other EU institutions. That dialogue also rested on a much more inclusive conceptualization of which actors to consult and interact with as a reinforced “culture of consultation and dialogue” (EC 2001, 15).

A key tenor in the EU discourse is civil society as a solution to the EU’s weak democratic legitimacy and as a way to engage citizens in EU affairs. Ideals of openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness, and coherence that color the White Paper adhered strongly to the role and function of civil society. Civil society was expected to play “an important role in giving voice to the concerns of citizens and delivering services that meet people’s needs [and to provide] a chance to get citizens more actively involved in achieving the Union’s objectives and to offer them a structured channel for feedback, criticism and protest” (EC 2001, 13). As such, civil society was seen to “play an important role as facilitators of a broad policy dialogue” (EC 2002, 5).

Although the range of organizations that were granted institutional access was now considerably widened, there were still important restrictions, and criteria for participation began to emerge. To partake in the civil dialogue, a civil society actor had to be “a non-profit representative body organized at European level, i.e., with members in two or more European Union or Candidate countries; be active and have expertise in one or more of the policy areas of the Commission; have some degree of formal or institutional existence; and be prepared to provide any reasonable information about itself required by the Commission” (EC 2002, 17). The EESC stressed that organizations should be independent and not bound “by instructions from outside bodies” and should be transparent with regard to their financial means and decision-making structures. It further emphasized representational credentials and held that CSOs needed to be recognized as representatives of particular groups or interests at the member state level, have members in most member states, and be authorized to act and represent at the European level (EESC 1999, 5–6). This later developed into the common consultation standards (see, e.g., EC 2015 for a recent report on the regulation of stakeholder involvement).

The ideas and ideals of the European governance White Paper (EC 2001) continued to color the EU agenda for a considerable period; it took more than a decade until another important institutional innovation took place. In 2012 the EU decided on an additional route for citizens’ involvement in EU affairs, the European Citizens’ Initiative (ECI). Unlike the participatory civil dialogue that relied on the aggregated interest formation of organized civil society, this avenue for participation sought to directly engage with the

citizens of Europe, and it allowed individual citizens to propose legislation. While the ECI is heavily circumscribed in practice through massive organizational requirements, its establishment nonetheless demonstrates that the EU now values the participation of individuals in addition to the involvement of organized civil society (Hedling and Meeuwisse 2015).

However, several changes in the landscape of EU civil society have taken place in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis. Using antidiscrimination CSOs as a case of investigation, Ruzza (2015) argues that the crisis has sparked a new cycle of protests across Europe. While most of these have taken place at the national level in form of local, regional, and national anti-austerity movements, a split is growing between grassroots activists and EU-based advocacy organizations. Grassroots organizations and movement leaders are less “willing to espouse the level of institutionalization and compliance with the EU discourse that is generally taken for granted by EU advocacy groups” (Ruzza 2015, 31; see also Ruzza 2011). Such growing skeptical attitudes toward the EU have put pressure on the established set of EU-level CSOs that are engaged in EU consultation processes and civil dialogues. This could potentially lead to a change in the political culture of EU-level CSOs over the long run. At the moment, what we can discern is a widening rift between a set of institutionalized actors that operate and are firmly embedded in Brussels politics—and a set of actors who are increasingly challenging this *modus operandi* and the institutional actors’ legitimacy to act on behalf of civil societies (e.g., della Porta 2015; della Porta and Parks 2015; Parks 2015).

This is not the first time that the EU model of consultation with CSOs has been challenged and criticized, and there has been a longstanding debate among scholars about the methods and intentions of EU institutions. As we shall see, these definitely seem to contradict traditional assumptions about civil society as autonomous and value driven, initiated from below, and engaged in contentious politics toward the targeted institutions or states. Critics have claimed that EU-level CSOs are dependent on, rather than autonomous from, EU institutions, and so are limited in what criticisms and alternatives they can put forward. They have therefore variously been called tamed, pacified, or even co-opted. Our analysis does not enable us to draw any conclusions with regards to this debate, but it can at least shed some light on the issue.

Evidence of Organizational Europeanization

A key mechanism of organizational Europeanization is the transfer of organizational models. EU-level CSOs might find themselves in three different

position types, sometimes at different points in time, but more often simultaneously. These CSOs are the objects to organizational molding by EU institutions, but they are also subjects that actively engage in passing on organizational models to national member organizations and themselves partaking in forming new networks and alliances. Last, as mediators they might act as brokers, linkages, and/or gatekeepers in relation to other organizations.

To begin, we can see that, in general terms, most EU-level CSOs follow a certain organizational form that indicates that modeling from above has worked at least to some extent. Most of the EU-level CSOs, and certainly most of the members of the Platform, can be characterized as “formal [and] professional” organizations (della Porta and Diani 2006, 145). The great majority host their headquarters in Brussels close to the power centers that they seek to influence. They are usually governed by a board of representatives and are often led by a president or a chairperson. All of them employ staff, although the size of that staff varies. They do not rely on mass mobilization of members, but they purport to represent a particular constituency—for instance, the poor, the old, or the unemployed—and seek to act in their interest in lobbying.

It is not a coincidence, therefore, that many EU-level CSOs follow a similar organizational logic. This reflects, as we discussed above, that EU institutions have been instrumental in forming Brussels-based branches of already existing national-level CSOs. EU-level CSOs were, and are, expected to follow established norms of representation and expertise as a requisite for gaining access to certain funding programs. Similar pressure is also put on candidate and neighbor countries as the EU supports the formation of organized civil society. The stated aim of this EU activity is “to support the development of a civil society which is participating actively in the public debate on democracy, human rights, social inclusion and the rule of law, and has the capacity to influence policy and decision making processes” (EC 2017).

Such activities demonstrate how EU institutions seek to steer the organizational forms of civil society. This contradicts “the general image of NGOs as a societal force rising to challenge or replace the state from below,” and instead shows how international organizations might create and shape civil society in a top-down manner (Reimann 2006, 46). But this is not the whole story. There are also examples in which grassroots organizations have played important roles in establishing EU-level CSOs. Denis Frank’s study of the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM) is interesting in this respect. He found that this organization initially sought to inform and influence other CSOs operating at the EU level (refugee organizations in particular) rather than seeking to influence EU institutions and member states. The early version of PICUM also aimed to

take a more contentious stance, defending irregular migrants vis-à-vis EU institutions because they believed that existing EU-level CSOs were too cooperative and acquiescent (Frank 2015).

Another key organizational pattern is that EU-level CSOs are organized in ever wider platforms or networks. Some of these networks have been initiated by EU institutions while others have been created by the CSOs themselves. The Platform is one example: at the time of this writing it had thirty-five full members and twelve associate members, among them the European Disability Forum (EDF), SOLIDAR, the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN), the European Network Against Racism (ENAR), and the European Women's Lobby (EWL) (see table 2.1; see also Cullen 2009, 2010). The Platform was set up in 1996 as a response to the EU's greater interest in broadening forms of consultation to include a wider set of civil society actors in addition to labor and business. In this context, there was a perceived need on the part of the EU to create a larger network in order to have a manageable number of CSOs to interact with (Armstrong 2002; Cullen 2010; Geyer 2001; Greenwood 2007). While the Platform was the first coalition of its kind, many others have emerged since, sometimes at even higher levels of cooperation. For instance, the Civil Society Contact Group includes the Platform and seven other value-based EU-level CSO coalitions in different fields, for instance international development, public health, and the environment. According to its webpage, the Civil Society Contact Group's members "bring together the voices of hundreds of thousands of associations across the Union [and] aim to represent the views and interests" of all these associations (Civil Society Contact Group 2018).³ Another example is the European Year of the Citizen Alliance (the Alliance), an open network of CSOs that in many different ways worked with enhancing active citizenship. The Alliance was initiated on the occasion of the European Year of the Citizen 2013 but lingered for a couple of years and included more than sixty EU-level organizations that together represented more than four thousand national CSOs (Johansson and Kalm 2015b, 6). While the EU was instrumental in promoting early coalition formations, this has been less obvious in recent years. Instead it has been largely replaced by a coalition of EU CSOs, called Civil Society Europe, comprising of almost thirty EU-level CSOs working across several policy areas (see Civil Society Europe 2018).

The ever-larger networks and coalitions are themselves arenas of interaction for EU-level CSOs. An interesting question concerns the quality and type of these interactions, especially whether they tend to promote cooperation or competition. Existing research shows elements of both. Pauline Cullen (2010) has found that the Platform allows its members to pool resources and to come to agreements on common positions, and it has even helped to develop a basic common identity for CSOs working on social issues

and antidiscrimination. Johansson and Lee (2015), in contrast, demonstrate through a network analysis that some organizations are centrally located and others much more peripheral, which suggests that there are power asymmetries and competition between them. Competition and conflicts tend to concern access to resources, particular policy positions, as well as what issues to prioritize in dealings with EU institutions. Other researchers have shown that such conflicts might appear between EU-level CSOs that also work on similar topics outside the Platform context (Sánchez-Salgado 2015; Scaramuzzino and Scaramuzzino 2015; Stubbergaard 2015).

EU-level CSOs are not only agents participating in larger coalitions—but are also simultaneously themselves coalitions made up of national organizations and other members. Table 2.1 provides a snapshot of membership patterns among the Platform CSOs. Some distinguish between full and associate members, where the former have voting rights and the latter face restrictions regarding participation in internal discussions, debates, and decision-making procedures. Most are meta-organizations rather than individual-based organizations, meaning that their membership is made up of other organizations and not of persons (Ahrne and Brunsson 2008). This might be interpreted as loose connections to national civil societies because the relations are built mainly between organizations. There are exceptions, however. Some include a handful of individual members, and others a great many—the most striking being the EDF that reports 80 million members.

We also find that their spread across countries is relatively large. Most organizations are present in more than twenty of the EU's member states, and a handful are present in all of them. Such models of geographical presence certainly mirror the EU idea of representation in all member states, a norm that most seem to comply with. As we will see in the next section, those with particularly widespread representation tend to be financially resource-rich as well. However, many Platform organizations are present in countries outside the EU, some in large numbers. These non-EU countries are most often in Europe, but sometimes in other regions of the world.

Although there are some shared characteristics, extensive differences also prevail, for example with regard to the membership governance of national member organizations. Some have no limit to the number of member organizations in each country, which indicates a strong bottom-up orientation of the organization. One example is ILGA (the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association), which has forty-two member organizations in Italy, seven in Finland, and one in Latvia. The result is that the number of members is quite uneven across countries. A different model is followed by the EWL, EAPN, and the European Network of Social Enterprises (ENSIE). They have only one full member per country, who acts as a national coordinator. This particular membership governance seems to

Table 2.1. Social Platform Participants' Membership: Type (Individual, National, and EU-level CSOs/International CSOs) and Country

Name	Number of individual members (persons)	Number of full national member organizations ¹	Number of associate member organizations	Number of members that are EU-level CSOs or other international CSOs	Number of EU countries where the organizations have members	Number of non-EU countries where the organizations have members
AGE Platform Europe	0	126			26	4
Autism-Europe	71	>80			25	6
Caritas Europa	0	49			28	16
Housing Europe	0	43			19	4
CECOP-GICOPA	0	18	8		14	
COFACE	0	60			23	
EAPN	0	31		18	27	4
EASPD	0	>130			27	6
ECDN Consumer Debt Network	10	31			18	2
EDF	80 million	29 ²	47+4 ³	25+13 ⁴	28	6
ENAR	0	124		8	28	
ENSIE ⁵	0	28			21	
EPA	0	48			27	3
EPHA	94	41		47	17	11
EPR	0	9+21			15	1
ESAN ⁶	5	>120	21		14	
EUROCHILD AISBL	26	151			28	4
EURODIACONIA ⁷	0	47			22	5
EURORDIS	0	724			28	36

EWL	0	31	12	20	28	3
FEANTSA	0	>130			27	7
ILGA-Europe	0	477		13	28	21
INCLUSION EUROPE	0	16		3	28	10
IUT	0	42	25		22	21
MHE	50	45	18	8	28	2
PICUM	175	145			23	8
SOLIDAR	0	35	25	2	25	2
TGEU	65	103			26	16
WAGGGS	1,300,000	39			26	12
YFJ	0	41		61	28	10

Source: The sources are the organizations' webpages and the Transparency Register, accessed 21 and 16 September 2016, 2016, respectively. In this and the following tables these Platform members are not included because they had no entries in the Transparency Register: European Federation of Older People (EURAG), European Federation of Unpaid Parents and Carers at Home (FEFAF), International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW), International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), and VOLONTEUROPE. We also do not include the twelve associate members of the Platform.

Notes:

1. N.B. The number of organizations sometimes refers to the full number, but sometimes to national councils or networks that often are umbrella organizations for several CSOs. For instance, the EWL reports only one member in Sweden, but that member (Svenska KvinnoLobbyn) itself represents twenty national organizations. Had EWL reported all those, the stated number of member organizations would have been much higher.
2. These are all national councils' umbrella organizations.
3. The first number is associate national organizations, and the second is observer national councils from non-EU countries.
4. The first number is full members, and the second is ordinary members.
5. The national member organizations are, in this case, national and regional networks that represent social integration enterprises.
6. Membership is diverse and includes funding agencies, universities, public departments of welfare, etc.
7. Members include churches as well as CSOs.

allow for more control by the EU-level CSOs (and their secretariats) over national members because information and knowledge should be channeled through this national coordinating unit. For instance, the Swedish Women's Lobby has forty-five domestic member organizations, but none of them has direct access to the European branch of the organization. The EWL recognizes this as it states on its website that while "only this first level of membership has voting rights, their members can benefit from direct two-way information flows to and from the European level" (EWL 2017a). Such creation of a common organizational model across Europe is a clear case of organizational transfer into domestic civil societies that EU-level CSOs deploy.

Evidence of Financial Europeanization

The transfer of money is the central mechanism in financial Europeanization. In their role as subjects, EU-level CSOs actively apply for funding from various sources. When they receive funding, they are considered in our analysis to be the objects to financial Europeanization. They might occasionally also act as mediators, such as when they work as cofunders for other organizations and for different projects.

EU-level CSOs receive funding from various sources, including EU and national public funds, membership fees, grants from foundations, and donations of different kinds. An example is ENAR, which receives the lion's share of their funding as a grant from the EC. They also get large sums from foundations, such as the Open Society Initiative for Europe, the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, and FOSI Black Caucus Washington. Additional incomes flow from membership fees and donations (ENAR 2016). Sometimes EU-level CSOs also receive income from expert missions and similar assignments. On occasions they hold fundraising events, such as the European Equality Gala 2015 arranged by ILGA (ILGA-Europe 2014–15).

EU institutions provide financial support in various ways. Among the EU-level CSOs investigated here, the common pattern is to receive core funding through a grant from the EC. There are programs that directly aim to support CSOs as representatives of particular societal groups and interests. The PROGRESS funding program (2007–13) provided substantial financial support for several EU-level CSOs, and it is now part of the EaSI program (European Programme for Employment and Social Innovation). The EU provides funding in several other ways too, such as through sponsoring particular projects where CSOs deliver results on a certain objective or through direct funding from the DGs (especially DG Justice and DG Sanco).

We also find several programs that aim to build and support capacity among national-level CSOs by providing funding, information, and technical assistance through the various structural funds. It is less frequent that economic resources flow from EU-level CSOs, although that sometimes occurs too. For instance, ILGA reports that in 2014–15 it “re-granted 45 small grants for projects carried out by member organizations and partner organizations of ILGA-Europe” (ILGA-Europe 2014–15, 3).

Table 2.2 gives a brief overview of the financial structures that EU-level CSOs are embedded in. One observation is that Platform members tend to have relatively large budgets. More precisely, the median budget among all members slightly exceeds 810,000 euros. However, the size of their budgets varies a lot. The European Consumer Debt Network (ECDN) has a budget of only 12,000 euros, while the European Organisation for Rare Diseases (EURORDIS) has a budget of more than 5 million euros. The five most resource-strong organizations have budgets that exceed 2 million euros (EURORDIS, European Youth Forum [YFJ], ILGA, EAPN, and EDF). This allows them to employ more staff than others, but the staff-to-budget ratio is not wholly straightforward. EURORDIS, for instance, employs only eight full-time staff, while YFJ—with a budget of 3.2 million euros—employs twenty-eight full-time and one half-time staff. SOLIDAR has a budget of 1.1 million euros and a staff of twelve, while ILGA has a larger budget of 2.1 million euros and only 4.2 full-time staff. Apart from effects on the number of staff and other observables, it is feasible that budget size also has an effect on less tangible factors such as prestige and influence.

This illustrates some of the relations between EU institutions and EU-level CSOs, but yet another illustration of financial Europeanization can be traced through membership fees from national to EU-level CSOs; here we find that these range from 0 to 100 percent of total budgets, with a mean value of 26 percent. A closer breakdown of the figures shows that those organizations that to a very large degree rely on membership fees tend to be less reliant on EC funding, and vice versa. For instance, the budget for the European Parents’ Association (EPA) comes to 83 percent from membership fees and only 6 percent from EC grants, while the YFJ receives 84 percent of their budget from the EC and only 5 percent from membership fees.

Although some actors thus have a fairly high proportion of membership funding, they are few in comparison. Only five of the thirty investigated organizations relied on membership funding for more than 50 percent of the total budget.

Instead, most of the Platform members rely on public sources from the EU. For two-thirds of the Platform members public funding surpasses half of their budget, and in some cases exceeds 80 percent. Some organizations

Table 2.2. Budget, Staff, and Funding Sources

Name	Total budget €	Full-time positions	Public funding sources		Non-public funding sources		Public funding, percent of total budget	EC public funding, percent of total budget	Membership fees, percent of total budget
			EC funding€	Other€	Membership fees€	Other€			
AGE Platform Europe	1,228,819	11	1,034,805	0	137,251	56,763	84	84	11
Autism–Europe	293,421	10	214,631	0	64,863	13,927	73	73	22
Caritas Europa	1,807,794	8.8	725,694	0	79,500	1,002,600	40	40	44
Housing Europe	711,509	2.5	149,369	50,323	481,877	29,940	28	20	68
GEOP–CICOPA	546,500	1.8	131,622	0	310,429	104,449	24	24	57
COFACE	576,687	3	461,342	0	95,782	19,563	79	79	17
EAPN	2,032,308	2	1,725,351	301,757	5,200	0	99	84	>1
EASPD	1,546,714	13	1,241,518	16,242	199,098	89,856	81	80	13
ECDN	12,000	0.2	0	0	12,000	0	0	0	100
EDF	2,026,000	10	896,000	1,130,000	0	0	100	44	0
ENAR	1,268,873	5.2	1,000,573	0	268,300	0	78	78	21
ENSIE	240,600	2.2	206,400	5000	21,200	8,000	87	85	9
EPA	66,692	3.5	4,110	0	55,508	7,074	6	6	83
EPHA	816,322	6.5	544,247	0	87,745	184,330	66	66	11
EPR	1,227,947	0.2	100,000	0	326,750	801,197	8	8	27
ESAN	52,606	5.5	0	24,000	14,920	13,686	46	0	28
EUROCHILD AISBL	1,558,688	9.8	1,118,452	0	62,554	377,682	72	72	4
EURODIACONIA	619,869	7.5	443,431	0	147,167	29,271	72	72	24
EURORDIS	5,099,386	8	1,504,585	10,979	855,856	2,727,966	30	≈30	17
EWL	1,080,220	4	846,446	0	33,259	200,515	78	78	3

FEANTSA	1,174,397	3	939,518	127,000	107,810	0	91	80	9
ILGA-Europe	2,100,000	4.2	1,100,000	475,000	0	525,000	75	52	0
INCLUSIONEUROPE	579,767	4.5	331,167	0	145,002	103,598	57	57	25
IUT	142,292	2	20,922	0	121,370	0	15	15	85
MHE	380,000	1	300,000	0	70,000	10,000	79	79	18
PICUM	816,824	6	641,646	0	15,000	160,178	79	79	2
SOLIDAR	1,109,745	12	630,697	0	308,000	171,048	57	57	28
TGEU	630,821	1.8	200,780	192,865	10,095	227,081	62	32	2
WAGGGS	791,211	1.2	65,605	0	381,464	344,142	8	8	48
YFJ	3,243,750	28.5	2,725,522	113,000	149,461	255,676	88	84	5

Source: Figures are from the Transparency Register, accessed 15 September 2016.

receive sizeable public funding from non-EU sources, such as regional and national sources. This is the case for EAPN, EDF, ILGA, and Transgender Europe (TGEU). But for most, the dependency on public funding translates into a dependency on EC grants. The mean value of the share of EC grants in relation to the total budget for Platform members slightly exceeds 50 percent, and almost half of all Platform members rely on EC grants for more than 70 percent of their budgets. AGE Platform Europe (AGE), EAPN, ENSIE, and YFJ all exceed 80 percent EC funding. It is therefore clear that EU-level CSOs are highly reliant on the institutions that they are set up to monitor, consult, and influence. This finding challenges the common image of CSOs as arising from below to engage in contentious politics in opposition to particular institutions, organizations, or governments (Tilly and Tarrow 2007). It furthermore raises concern about the degree of autonomy and taming that these CSOs face. A resource dependency argument would hold that this situation pressures the organizations to conform to the views of the institution that they are set up to criticize—which assumes that whether there are explicit demands, you don't bite the hand that feeds you.⁴

This is why some CSOs choose not to receive any EU funding at all. Especially those CSOs that are committed to transparency and to monitoring lobbying of EU institutions stay clear of such funding. ALTER-EU (Alliance for Lobbying Transparency and Ethics Regulation), Corporate Europe Observatory, and LobbyControl are examples. They all make a point of abstaining from EU and corporate funding because they absolutely want to avoid being compromised by the actors that they are monitoring. They instead receive their funding from foundations (for instance Adessium, Isvara, Open Society, and Joseph Rowntree) along with membership fees and donations (based on analyses of data from the Transparency Register and the organizations' webpages).

While it seems obvious that these particular organizations choose this financial model given the kind of legitimacy that the field that they work in demands, it is difficult to know for sure to what extent EU funding compromises the position of CSOs working in other fields such as social issues, anti-discrimination, and development. We also cannot be sure that other financial sources would necessarily exert less pressure. In our survey distributed to Platform members, respondents were asked to describe their economic and political relation to the EU. Expectedly, the great majority (85 percent) considered EU institutions "partly" or "very" important as a source of funding. But there were mixed results as to whether they considered this to be a problem. On the one hand, the organizations reported that they had never limited their critique against the EU because of financial dependency—which, given that we accept their self-reporting as true—contradicts the "you don't bite the hand that feeds you" thesis.⁵ They also denied that they sometimes had to

carry out projects outside their main focus in order to secure EU funding.⁶ On the other hand, EU funding results in a different form of adaptation from the CSOs, namely when it comes to prioritizations. A large majority (83 percent) agreed that they took into account the possibilities for EU funding when deciding what activities to prioritize.⁷ It therefore appears that EU funding has effects on CSO operations at least in this respect. Another observation is that the organizations clearly found their situation problematic because all of them reported that they have to look for alternative sources in order to reduce their financial dependency on the EU.⁸

Evidence of Regulatory Europeanization

The dimension of regulatory Europeanization by definition involves the transfer of legal norms. Here we understand the term “legal norms” broadly, including juridical aspects but also different kinds of policies, governance forms, and softer regulations. EU-level CSOs are themselves objects to regulations of EU institutions and member states, but they might simultaneously be subjects in regulatory Europeanization in the role of lobbyists attempting to exert political influence. They might also take on a mediating position as coregulators, especially in their relation to national members.

Advocacy work is a main objective for EU-level CSOs in general and no less for those that are a member of the Platform. The EWL, for instance, states that it “brings together the women’s movement in Europe to influence the general public and European Institutions in support of women’s human rights and equality between women and men” (EWL 2017b); we can find similar statements from many other Platform members.

In the literature on organized civil society, it is common to distinguish between inside lobbying and outside protest strategies (Binderkrantz 2005; Binderkrantz and Krøyer 2012). Organizations that choose the former path try to exert political influence by working with the institution in question. Concrete tactics can be formal (participating in consultations, attending meetings, and presenting written and oral statements) or informal (interactions with power holders other than formal procedures, for instance, through ad hoc meetings or correspondence). Outside protest activities often do not involve direct contact but are at the same time more confrontational. The objective is often to gain media attention that will raise awareness of their cause and force others to take action. Common forms of protest include demonstrations, occupations, petitions, and consumer boycotts (cf. Tarrow 1998, 93).

The Platform member CSOs overwhelmingly pursue inside lobbying strategies, as one would expect from professional organizations. This also

Table 2.3. Lobbying—Costs and Indicators

Name	Lobbying costs		Points of access to EU institutions						
	Lobbying costs €	Lobbying costs as percent of total budget ²	EP passes	Meetings with EC	EESC Liaison Group member	High-level groups	Consultative committees (besides Liaison group)	EC Expert groups	EP Intergroups
AGE Platform Europe	100,000–199,999	12	8	6	YES	—	—	5	1
Autism—Europe	100,000–199,999	51	3	0	—	1	—	—	1
Caritas Europa	900,000–999,999	8	7	4	—	—	—	—	5
Housing Europe	100,000–199,999	21	1	2	—	—	—	—	1
CECOP—CICOPA	133,000	24	0	0	—	1	2	2	3
COFACE	100,000–199,999	26	7	5	YES	1	—	4	1
EAPN	100,000–199,999	7	3	9	—	—	—	—	—
EASPD	100,000–199,999	12	5	1	—	2	—	1	3
ECDN	>50,000	N/A ³	0	0	—	—	—	—	—
EDF	900,000–999,999	47	4	8	YES	1	10	3	2
ENAR	300,000–399,999	28	8	11	—	—	—	—	1
ENSIE	100,000–199,999	62	0	1	—	—	—	2	1
EPA	>9,999 ⁴	N/A	1	0	—	—	—	—	—
EPHA	200,000–299,999	31	7	5	YES	3	—	—	3

EPR	>9,999	>1	0	0	-	1	-	1
ESAN	>9,999	19	0	0	-	- ⁵	-	-
EUROCHILD AISBL	50,000–99,999	5	2	4	YES	1	1	1
EURODIACONIA	100,000–199,999	24	6	0	-	1	6	4
EUORDIS	700,000–799,999	15	3	6	-	-	-	1
EWL	1,000,000–1,249,999	N/A ⁶	6	12	YES	1	2	3
FEANTSA	400,000–499,999	38	3	10	-	-	-	3
ILGA–Europe	1,000,000–1,249,999	54	7	10	-	-	-	1
INCLUSION EUROPE	400,000–499,999	78	0	0	-	1	-	1
IUT	25,000–49,999	26	1	2	YES	-	-	1
MHE	200,000–299,999	66	5	0	-	1	-	-
PICUM	500,000–599,999	67	7	2	-	-	-	-
SOLIDAR	600,000–699,999	59	8	1	YES	1	-	1
TGEU	200,000–299,999	40	1	1	-	-	-	-
WAGGGS	>9,999	1	0	0	-	-	-	2
YFJ	2,750,000–2,999,999	89	13	17	YES	-	-	1

Source: Data on EESC Liaison Group membership come from its websites (accessed 19 September 2016). Lobbying costs as percent of total budget is our calculation. All other information comes from the Transparency Register and/or the LobbyFacts websites.

Notes:

1. Most lobbying costs are stated as a range; in those cases we have calculated with the middle of the range: i.e., if the span is 100,000–199,999, we have used 150,000. When it only states one number, for instance >50,000, we have counted with that number.
2. Most lobbying costs are stated as a range, in those cases we have calculated with the middle of the range: i.e., if the span is 100,000–199,999, we have used 150,000. When it only states one number, for instance >50,000, we have counted with that number.
3. Unable to calculate the number because the lobbying cost number is too imprecise and results in lobbying spending of several hundred percent.
4. LobbyFacts believes this figure is inaccurate because the organization has an accredited EP pass. Therefore we do not calculate the lobbying cost as the percentage of the total budget.
5. ESAN reports Platform membership here, which we assume is mistaken.
6. The stated lobbying costs slightly exceed the total budget, therefore unable to calculate.

confirms the patterns observed in previous research on EU-level CSOs (Chabanet and Balme 2008; Cullen 2010; Kalm and Uhlin 2015; Kriesi, Tresch, and Jochum 2007; Sánchez-Salgado 2007; Saurugger 2006). In the survey distributed to Platform members that we mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, respondents were presented with a number of strategies and had to state which ones they used often, occasionally, or never. It turned out that the main ones were typical inside strategies such as sending position papers to EU institutions, serving on expert committees, making direct contact with EU officials, and participating in online consultations. Other important activities were alliance-building with other EU-level CSOs and arranging campaigns at the EU level. Outside protest strategies were used, but much more modestly. Out of the organizations participating in the survey, 62 percent said they occasionally engaged in protests and demonstrations, whereas none said they often did so.⁹ That some of these CSOs sometimes pursue such strategies does not mean that they could correctly be described as grassroots or mass popular organizations. Instead, they should be thought of as professional organizations that attempt to reconcile professional legitimacy and grassroots legitimacy, as discussed above. Another finding of the survey was that the organizations found direct contact with EU officials to be the most efficient tactic for influencing EU policy, while protests ranked very low in this respect. Among the EU institutions, they particularly contacted the EC and the European Parliament (EP). Among the different DGs, DG Employment and Social Affairs is the part of the EC that these actors most regularly seek contact with, followed by DG Justice and DG Education and Culture.¹⁰

This orientation toward influencing EU policies can also be illustrated by the money they spend on lobbying and their access to different points of contact with EU institutions. The data in table 2.3 provide us with a rough sketch of the CSOs' lobbying ambition and their level of connection with power holders. The first thing we note is that the share of the budget that is dedicated to lobbying varies significantly. For instance, AGE and Autism-Europe spend approximately the same amounts on lobbying, but for the latter this amounts to more than half their budget and for the former only 12 percent. We also note that only seven out of the thirty CSOs included spend more than 50 percent of their budgets on lobbying costs.

We have several measures for access to EU institutions. The first two concern direct access granted by EU institutions. "EP passes" is the number of accredited pass holders to the EP that the organization has. "Meetings with EC" is extracted from the EC's websites. It includes only meetings with elite officials, for instance commissioners, cabinet members, and DGs. CSOs might have had many meetings with lower-level officials, but there are no data available for those. On these two measures, the YFJ is by far best

connected. AGE, ENAR, and SOLIDAR rank high on EP passes, and EWL and ENAR on EC meetings. Very few organizations have neither EP passes nor EC meetings on their records.

There are also a number of selective memberships and modes of participation that provide some CSOs with privileged access to EU institutions. Membership in the EESC's Liaison Group is one example. Others are participation in high-level groups, consultative committees, EC expert groups, and EP intergroups. If we take these forms of participation as a measure of privileged access, the best connected of our CSOs seem to be EDF, EUROCHILD, EWL, and SOLIDAR.

All in all, this suggests that most of the Platform members are connected and integrated into the EU lobbying sphere in terms of having at least some access point to EU institutions; however, our analysis demonstrates extensive differences among the members because some have formal positions in groups and committees and regular and frequent meetings with EC high officials. There is thus a segment of insiders also among the members of the Platform, and such insider positions are likely to provide these CSOs with a more stable and central position with regard to regulatory Europeanization.

Table 2.4 shows the main lobbyists among our sample of EU-level CSOs. The ranking refers to the listing of major lobbyists among all CSOs targeting the EU—in any issue area—that have offices in Brussels. In table 2.4 we have included those Platform members that enter on the top fifty of this list (of 807 CSOs in total). As we can see, the YFJ stands out well above the rest. It has the greatest number of accredited EP passes and it has had the most meetings with the EC's top officials. The money that YFJ spends on lobbying is actually on par with the largest corporate, for-profit lobbyists. It spends approximately as much as does Siemens—which ranks eleventh on the 2016 list of for-profits (LobbyFacts 2017).

Engaging domestic member organizations in their advocacy work is an important function of EU-level CSOs. The EU-level offices—usually the secretariats—support their domestic members in various ways, for instance by exchange of expertise, the development of campaigns on specific issues, supporting domestic members' campaigns on cross-cutting issues, helping them to get access to decision-makers, and developing advocacy strategies to influence EU policies and legislation. A finding of the survey is that Platform members found it particularly important to develop toolkits that national members could use in national advocacy and to engage in capacity-building aiming at improving the member organizations' expertise on EU policy (see table 2.5). They also made efforts to provide domestic members with extensive informational support by writing reports, press releases, and short information notes on recent policy developments at the EU level.

Table 2.4. Main Lobbyists among Social Platform member EU-level CSOs: Ranking and Indicators

Ranking of all CSOs	Name	Lobbying costs €	EP passes	Lobbyists/Full-time employees	Meetings with EC
9	YFJ	2,750,000–2,999,999	13	28.5	17
23	EWL	1,000,000–1,249,999	6	4	12
25	ILGA	1,000,000–1,249,999	7	4.25	10
30	Caritas	900,000–999,999	8	8.75	4
32	EDF	900,000–999,999	4	10	8
50	EURORDIS	700,000–799,999	3	8	6

Source: LobbyFact's website, accessed 19 September 2016.

Table 2.5. Relations to National Member Organizations

	Strongly agree	Partly agree	Disagree
<i>We put our efforts into . . .</i>			
. . . regularly informing our members about our organization’s ongoing work at the EU level and in the Social Platform (N = 21)	16	5	0
. . . trying to work on issues that are of significance for our national members (N = 21)	20	1	5
. . . developing toolkits that our members can use in national policy work (N = 21)	11	10	0
. . . capacity-building activities for our members in order to improve their expertise in EU policies (N = 21)	16	5	0
<i>Our members . . .</i>			
. . . regularly provide information regarding conditions and policies from national contexts (N = 20)	11	10	0

Source: Own survey to members of the Social Platform.

At the same time, such information is processed upward from the local, regional, and national level to the EU offices. The members support the development of information reports and position papers by completing surveys, evaluate and monitor EU-driven projects at national and local levels, and write reports on national developments. All the respondents in our survey stated that their members regularly provide them with information regarding conditions from national contexts.¹¹

Conclusion

Civil society actors have largely been neglected in the literature on Europeanization. In this chapter we have examined functions that one particular civil society actor—namely EU-level CSOs—might have in this context. Our aim has been to provide a comprehensive and structured analysis of such functions and activities. We have therefore investigated their roles in the organizational, financial, and regulatory dimensions of Europeanization. It has been suggested in previous research that CSOs of this kind act as transmission belts between the European and national levels (Kohler-Koch 2010; Steffek and Hahn 2010; Steffek, Kissling, and Nanz

2008; Tomšič and Reik 2008). There is no doubt that this is crucial because acting in this intermediary fashion is a requirement for the transmission tasks (of organizational models, financial resources, and regulations) that are at the core of Europeanization processes. But the transmission belt metaphor leaves aside the roles as both object and subject, or taker and creator, in Europeanization that we find vital for grasping the breadth of their agency. As subjects, they actively engage in shaping Europeanization. And as objects to Europeanizing regulations, organizational pressures, and funding requirements, they themselves are shaped.

EU-level CSOs' involvement in organizational Europeanization demonstrates their triple roles. They are the targets of EU officials' ambitions and they tend to follow a similar organizational model that suits the field and the activities they are expected to engage in as part of the EU policy process. Their organizational model is to a conspicuous degree constructed from the top down rather than from the bottom up (even if there are some examples of that, too). The model favored by the EU is also passed on to candidate countries' civil societies. But EU-level CSOs are also subjects and mediators in organizational Europeanization, and they take action in forming ever-larger networks and coalitions with other CSOs at the European level. They also pass on the organizational model favored by the EU in their interactions with national-level civil society. This is particularly noticeable in those cases when national alliances or contact points are created. This is considered attractive by the EU institutions because national organizations are then expected to finalize internal discussions and negotiations before engaging with their EU counterparts. It is easier to address, negotiate, and discuss with one domestic actor rather than with a wide set of actors with potentially disparate interests. In these cases, it is the EU-level CSOs themselves that mold the organizational features of national civil society, for similar reasons that the EC finds EU-level alliances preferable in EU politics. The pressure of compliance put on EU-level CSOs is translated and incorporated into their internal relations with members. This might put them on a tightrope as top-down organizational and membership steering might risk their ability to have their ears to the ground and hence the legitimacy to speak on behalf of national civil societies. While this is an overall pattern, we find elements of firm bottom-up organization and actors that seem to build much more on the involvement of domestic CSOs, and a wider variety and set of actors is involved in their internal membership governance.

EU-level CSOs' engagement in financial Europeanization also involves roles as subjects, objects, and mediators. The EU provides central funding for several Platform members, and for a majority of the CSOs this is their main source of income. Despite the fact that we find diversification of funding sources, the flows of money largely come from EU institutions, and

EU-level CSOs to a large extent position themselves at the receiving end. This suggests a certain degree of limitation to their agency because they are dependent on EU funding for their operations and potentially must adjust their activities to adapt to an EU agenda. But they are also at the receiving end when it comes to financial resources from members, even though the significance of domestic sources of funding—especially membership fees—is more limited. While this certainly reflects the status of members of the Platform, financial Europeanization can also involve the direct relation between EU sources of funding and domestic CSOs. Structural funds and specialized programs have provided domestic CSOs with substantial financial support, and here we anticipate that EU-level CSOs might have provided domestic CSOs with knowledge and information on access and capability-promoting activities. The extensive forms of financial dependency on EU funding raises key questions on their autonomy and independence, yet previous studies confirm that also other factors play an important part to depict the complex function of public funding (e.g., Arvidson, Johansson, and Scaramuzzino 2017).

Our analysis of regulatory Europeanization positions these EU-level CSOs as having a distinctive role as lobbyists vis-à-vis the EU and various EU institutions. Several of them are resolutely embedded in EU politics, have wide accreditation in key EU institutional arenas, and have sufficient status to hold regular bilateral meetings with high-ranking EU officials. A small group of actors stand out in this respect as an insider elite group—in other words, a set of established actors among the already established, with similar status as some of the largest business-focused lobbying organizations. Although they deny the picture of being incorporated, tamed, and included in the EU machinery, because they often take the form of the object to the EU's regulatory and norm-setting practices, this risk again seems hard to avoid. Their ambition to influence EU policies is mirrored by a fairly lukewarm orientation toward their members in this respect. Although most of them engage with members in terms of building campaigns, collecting information, and providing expertise at the national level—acting as a mediator between levels—their main focus definitely lies in seeking to have an impact on EU policies. This reflects a gap between local/national CSOs and EU-level CSOs, which to a greater extent see their mission and social basis in Brussels rather than as firmly embedded and being part of European civil societies.

These discussions provide new insight into the dual role of EU-based CSOs. The analysis indicates generally a strong gravity and orientation toward the EU arena and institutions among EU-based CSOs. Connections and links to domestic CSOs above all regard to organizational Europeanization, yet less so within the other two dimensions of Europeanization. While

previous studies have observed that EU-level CSOs might run the risk of primarily being a target for EU governance and regulation, similar concerns can be raised with regard to their connections to domestic civil societies. This provides a somewhat pessimistic assessment for those who wish for a vibrant EU civil society to emerge. But one should remember that we are now exclusively concerned with professional EU-level CSOs; outside this group there may well be elements and actors that have the potential to provide other links and contacts and play different roles in Europeanization processes (see e.g. della Porta and Caiani 2009, Teune 2010). Whether they can bridge and link domestic civil societies with EU civil society is a matter for future investigations.

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Notes

1. The response rate was 57 percent of the full members of the Platform. This survey has been used in earlier publications (Johansson and Lee 2014, 2015), but the parts that are used in this chapter are previously unpublished.
2. See, for instance, conferences such as “Social Economy and the Single Market,” 12 October 1999; “First Convention of Civil Society Organised at European Level,” 15 and 16 October 1999; “Choosing Our Future: Shaping the Sixth EU Environment Action Programme—Views from Civil Society,” 7 March 2001; “Shaping the Strategy for a Sustainable European Union: Views from Civil Society and Public Authorities,” 26 and 27 April 2001; “Conference on the Role of Organised Civil Society in European Governance,” 8 and 9 November 2001.
3. In addition to the Platform, the other members are the European CSOs Confederation for Relief and Development (CONCORD), Culture Action Europe, the Forum for the Arts and Heritage, the European Public Health Alliance (EPHA), the European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning (EUCIS-LLL), the EWL, Green10, and the Human Rights and Democracy Network (HRDN).

4. One Platform member, EURORDIS, appears to be an exception to the rule. By far the financially strongest of Platform member organizations, only 30 percent of its budget comes from the EC and 17 percent comes from membership fees. A large share of the budget of this patient organizations' alliance instead comes from other sources, particularly from health sector corporates.
5. When presented with the statement "We have never limited our critique towards EU policies due to the financial support we receive from EU institutions," thirteen out of eighteen strongly agreed and two partly agreed.
6. A total of thirteen of eighteen disagreed and two partly agreed to the statement "For financial reasons, we sometimes have to carry out EU projects that are outside of our organisation's main focus."
7. Seven strongly agreed and eight partly agreed to the statement, "When we decide what activities to prioritise, we consider the possibilities for EU funding."
8. To the statement "We are looking for alternative funding sources, other than those from EU institutions, to reduce our dependency on EU funding," six of eighteen partly agreed and twelve strongly agreed.
9. The question read, "What kinds of activities does your organisation employ in order to influence the EU's policies?" and there were thirteen alternatives.
10. Here, the respondents were asked to state which of the thirteen alternatives (mentioned above) they found most effective and second-most effective for influencing EU policy.
11. The respondents were asked to consider if their national member organizations "regularly provide information regarding conditions and policies from national contexts." Ten partly agreed and eleven strongly agreed (of twenty-one in total).

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