Gendered Interests in the European Union
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Fernanda Nissen
Norwegian feminist and politician (1862–1920)

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Father of Buffy the vampire slayer
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Sofia Strid

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The European Women’s Lobby and the Organisation and Representation of Women’s Interests
Abstract


On a general level this thesis concerns the changed and changing institutional conditions for gender equality in Europe and the organisation and institutionalisation of women’s social and political interests at the EU level. I ask in what ways political structures and authorities enable and/or obstruct women to generate, sustain and control their presence in politics as women. I explore how the EU institutions structure and provide opportunities and constraints for women to mobilise and organise to act as an authorised party vis-à-vis and within the EU political system. How does it come that women, as a collective, are not only recognised as a politically relevant group but also legitimised to act and be present as women in an organised relationship with the EU system’s main authorities?

The presence comes in the form of the European Women’s Lobby (EWL), an EU level and EU wide non-governmental umbrella organisation which represents some 4000 women’s organisations on multiple levels of the EU. The EWL is not the first example of women organising on the EU level, but it is the first of its kind. The EWL was initiated by women from within the European Commission and is funded mainly via a grant from the Commission. The EWL’s objectives include the endorsement of equality between women and men and to ensure that measures to promote gender equality and women’s rights are taken into account and mainstreamed in all EU policy.

Using material gathered through interviews, observations and official documentation I study the structure of the European Women’s Lobby; the participation of the EWL in EU politics; the relation between the EWL and the EU institutions; the relation between the EWL’s member organisations; and the forms the representation of women’s organised social and political interests at EU level can take.

I argue that in the specific political system of the EU, organised interests in civil society and the EWL perform the functions of input, and participate in output and feedback. Organised interests function as intermediaries between the national and European levels. Organised interests strive to gain influence; the Commission, as a political authority, strives to gain legitimacy of its policy-making through the input and output of representative organised interests. As a consequence of what I argue is a corporatist policy-making style of the Commission the EWL has become increasingly institutionalised. The trade off is that while the EWL has enjoyed the Commission’s support and funding to constitute an established EU level platform from which women can formulate, mobilise and pursue their interests, the EWL has had to organise and take control over the interests aggregated from its member organisations and over the form of the member organisations. The very structure of the EWL can be seen as part of the price the EWL has to pay to be granted somewhat of a representative monopoly in terms of opportunities to influence EU policy-making through the various channels of consultation. In this context, I argue that the representativeness of organised interests is key. There is no electoral basis legitimising the policy-making of the Commission, instead, this basis is constituted by organised interests. Paradoxically, this holds the potential for increasing the legitimacy of the Commission, something which increasing transparency has failed to do.

It is no exaggeration to claim that the EWL offers a remarkable EU level platform for women to act and pursue their interests as women. By studying the actual impact of EU level policy-making and politics in various ways, this thesis argues that the very existence of the EWL can be understood as being in the interest of women.

Key words: EU, European Women’s Lobby, organised interests, representation, civil society, political system, institutions, corporatism, interest theory, legitimacy, gender equality.
Abstract


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In the extended environment, beyond Örebro University, I would like to mention the intellectual stimuli I have received from Jo Armstrong and Sylvia Walby. In the greater scheme of things, I send a special thanks to Maria-Theresia Rosén for her empowering love and friendship; Adam Greig, the one on the left, for being queer-forwardly unreal; Kate Whittaker, the subversion of sexuality, for keeping it real; Joe Rigby, the man - the myth - the marvel, for being real; and to Jamie Ward, for real.

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Part I

The Framing of Problems
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and problem

Women are increasingly organised at the level of the European Union and in Europe at large (Ghodsee, 2007; Ishkanian and Lewis, 2007a; Philip and Gray, 1996; Roth, 2007; Sillman, 1999). The European Union (EU) offers both opportunities and constraints for women's organising and the pursuit of interests. The EU has the potential to function as a power arena by offering a platform for women's civil societal organising; for the promotion of women's interests; and to transform gender relations (Cichowski, 2003; Walby, 2004). The EU has, on the other hand, the opposite potential as well. That is, to frame and constrain the forms which women's interest promotion can take (Lombardo and Verloo, 2009; Stratigaki, 2004).

The focus of this thesis is women's civil societal organising and the organising of women's interest in the European Union. The general problem addressed concerns the organisation and institutionalisation of women's social, political and economic interests at the EU level. The aim is to explore how women organise on the level of the EU, and how and why the EU has provided opportunities and constraints for the pursuit of women's social and political interests and for the organising of those interests in civil society. The institutions and domains studied include the European Women's Lobby, the EU institutions, the development of gender equality within the EU and institutionalised EU mechanisms for interest representation. In other words, the subject of this study is the civil societal organised political representation of women's interests seen in the complex context of a specific political system, the European Union.

I focus on one EU level women's organisation in particular, the European Women's Lobby. The European Women's Lobby (EWL) is an EU wide alliance of non-governmental women's organisations that was formally established in 1990. It is an EU level umbrella organisation coordinating and representing some 4000 women's organisations and associations on multiple levels of the European Union and its member states. It is the largest umbrella organisation of women's associations in Europe. The initiative to establish an EU level women's lobby can be traced back to the EU institutions themselves; the EWL was established by the initiative of women from within the European Commission. Furthermore, the EWL was, and remains, financed mainly via a grant from the European Commission. The EWL has, in contrast to many, but not all, non-governmental women's
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organisations paid full-time staff and a permanent office. The EWL’s main objectives include the endorsement of equality between women and men, and to ensure that measures to promote gender equality and women’s rights are taken into account and mainstreamed in all EU policy (EWL, 2009a).

By analysing the structure and participation of the European Women’s Lobby in EU politics and policy-making, this thesis examines whether and how the activities of explicitly gendered interest groups – in this case “womanised” interests or women’s organised interests – fit into the dual or double-sided picture of interests interacting with EU institutions. In more general terms, the questions I ask deal with how the EU, as a multi-level structure and institution provides opportunities and constraints for women to organise and pursue their social and political interests within that multi-level system. This, in turn, is part of a broader research area dealing with the way in which political structures enable and/or obstruct women to generate, sustain and control their presence in politics as women (Halsaa, 1998; Hedlund, 1988; Ishkanian and Lewis, 2007b; Jónasdóttir, 1991, 1997; Phillips, 1995; Woodward, 2002; Wängnerud, 1998). What concerns me here is not the shaping of collective identities in these processes, but the ways in which institutions enable the presence and the struggle for, what Anna G. Jónasdóttir has called, controlling presence of (organised) women’s interests in politics (Jónasdóttir, 1991). My approach to the study of how institutions provide constraints and opportunities for the organising of women’s interests and women’s organising is thus different from the approach found for example in Hobson (2003) where the overarching attempt is to understand how institutional contexts shape collective identities (see also Rupp and Taylor, 1999).

Why do women and the women’s movement organise and engage with a seemingly elitist and hierarchal political system such as the EU? Why do they engage with a political system criticised for its minute efforts and actions to reduce gender inequality (Elman, 1996; Rossilli, 2000); for reproducing the dominant ideology of the family and of motherhood (Lombardo and Meier, 2006; McGlynn, 2005) and for failing to recognise the interests of women with diverse employment patterns (Lombardo and Meier, 2008; Williams, 2003) and caring responsibilities (Lombardo, 2003; Williams, 2003)? Why do feminists engage with EU politics when potentially feminist goals and concepts become co-opted and neu-

tralised to fit into the market oriented goals of the EU (Stratigaki, 2004)? Why do women organise to engage with a polity that, not only due to the principle of subsidiarity, lacks legal remit in some of the most fundamental women’s issue namely violence against women, reproductive rights and bodily integrity (Walby, 2004)? Why try to influence a polity that is, even by its own institutions and leaders, continually criticised for its lack of transparency and openness (European Commission, 2001a; 2002, 2008b, 2008d; Prodi, 2001; Sutherland, 1992)? Why bother with a polity allegedly known for its lack of underlying support and trust from, and anchoring in, the very people it is said to represent (European Commission, 2001b; Eurobarometer 71)?

How did women’s organising and engagement with the EU come about, and how has the organisation of women and women’s interests on the EU level been sustained?

Historically there has been an internal division within the women’s movement, as well as within feminist theory, as to what the appropriate relationship to the state and state institutions is (Bergman, 2002; Lovenduski, 2005a; Stetson and Mazur, 1995). On the one hand, radical feminists advocated separatism and set up their alternative structures and institutions. Alignments with the state would not be fruitful, and should be avoided. That state was construed as, next to the collective group of men, the main enemy (for instance by early UK feminism, feminism in West Germany, feminism in Italy). Critics claim that once feminist organisations establish themselves within the institutional political system, they tend to become constrained, circumscribed and even co-opted by mainstream, or male stream, politics and political agendas (Bergqvist, 2004; Eduards, 2002). Previous research on organised gendered interests shows that when conventional politics is confronted with organised gendered, or feminist, interests the former either demonstrate little or no interest, or become directly antagonistic towards women’s political organising and feminist demands (Eduards, 2002; Rönnblom, 2002). Here, the overall argument is that for women to organise as women and to act collectively as women is the “most forbidden” act (Eduards, 2002).

On the other hand, the anti-state and anti-establishment strands have been contested. Some Scandinavian, and other, research consider the state or the governing

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2 According to the public opinion surveys conducted through the Eurobarometer, only 53% (male/female: 57/49) of the EU citizens support EU membership; 47% trust the EU as a whole; 44% (male/female: 48/41) trust the Commission; 48% (male/female: 52/45) trust the European Parliament (Eurobarometer 71).
3 Such thinking draws, in part, on a division and understanding of civil society as diametrically opposed to the political institutions. A theoretical framing and thinking in terms of a political community, seen as part of a society based political system, makes possible a less dichotomous and oppositional understanding of the organising of women’s interests and women’s organising on one hand, and political institutions on the other.
institutions to be potential allies in the realisation of women’s various interests (Dahlerup, 1988, 1993; Halsaa, 1977; Hernes, 1982, 1987; Lovenduski, 2003b; Siim, 1988; Valiente, 2007). Other research focuses explicitly on the potential of women’s policy agencies within the state (Connell, Franzway and Court, 1989; Mazur, 2001; McBride, 2001; Woodward, 2002).

Since the mid 1990s, several major research programmes have focused on the relation between the state and the women’s movement within and beyond the EU. *Women’s Movements and Reconfigured States* (1997-2003) focused on how and why reconfigured states effect the relations between the women’s movements and the state between the 1970s and 1990s. Eleven countries were included in the study: Canada, England, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Spain, Sweden, and the United States. The final findings, presented in 2001, showed that women’s movement-state interactions are both influenced by and have effects on state reconfiguration. In response to the reconfiguring state, women’s movements changed their strategies and in turn influenced the state and public policy in a new way. More than general characteristics of movements, such as life cycle, movement resources and personnel, it is the opportunities and challenges posed by state reconfiguration that shape women’s movement relations with the state. Among other factors, the study pinpointed the ability of the women’s movements to form alliances with other agents; the state’s capacity to develop gender policy discourse; and the presence of women’s movements willing to help implement policies as crucial for the women’s movements’ possibilities to influence policy (Banaszak, Beckwith and Rucht, 2003).

The research program *Research Network on Gender, Politics and the State* (RNGS) (1995-2009) researched state feminism in sixteen countries and the EU: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, and the United States. The main question of the project included if, how, and why women’s policy agencies make post-industrial democracies more democratic and the state more feminist by helping women’s movement actors and feminist ideas gain entry to the state as a way to represent women more generally? (RNGS, 2005). The research programme is thus an assessment of state feminism. The findings show that women’s policy agencies within the state are important partners for women’s movements to make a difference in public policy and hence have an important

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4 This is not only a recent phenomenon. In Sweden, for example, the institutionalisation of women’s studies and/or gender studies was both economically and politically supported from the beginning by the state. In the 1970s when the research area was being established as an academic discipline both female politicians and (a few) male central actors sustained the project (Jónasdóttir, 2002).
part to play in making stable democracies more democratic (Haussman and Sauer, 2007; Lovenduski, 2005b; Mazur, 2001; McBride and Mazur, 1995; McBride, 2001; Outshoorn, 2004; Outshoorn and Kantola, 2007).\(^5\)

The research programme \textit{Quality of Gender Equality+ Policy in the EU (QU-ING)} (2006-2011), funded by the EU Sixth Framework Programme, is a comparative analysis of differences, similarities and inconsistencies of gender+ equality policies between the EU and its member states.\(^6\) The project covers all EU member states, Turkey and Croatia.\(^7\) Particular attention is given to the voice and standing of civil society voices in policy-making and to the relation between state actors and civil society organisations. Several of the national level results indicate a shift in the relation between the state and women’s organisations, where there are increasingly regular contacts and connections between the two actors.\(^8\) \textit{Gendering Citizenship in Multicultural Europe. The Impact of Contemporary Women’s Movement} (FEMCIT) (2006-2010), funded by the EU Sixth Framework Program, is comprised of fifteen institutional partners. The aim of the project is to answer the questions: What role have women’s movements played in transforming European societies and European culture since the 1960s? What is the role and impact of women’s movements in changing conceptions and practices of citizenship in a gendered context?\(^9\)

These research programmes indicate a renewed interest in studying the relations between the state and women’s organising in civil society, albeit using diverse methods for data collection and focusing on different framings of the questions. Some of the research result indicate that there is an increased cooperation between women’s organised interests in civil society and the political system. The anti state, or anti establishment, strand seems to be on the decline – not only in the ‘state feminist states’ of Scandinavia – but also in for example Germany (Urbaneck, 2008), Austria (Tertinegg and Sauer 2008) and the UK (Strid, Armstrong and Walby, 2007, 2008). The women’s movement in Germany was initially strongly separatist (Bergman, 2002). The 1980s saw a shift in the relation between the women’s movement and the state (West Germany at the time). Previously separatist feminists within women’s organisations joined political organisations and entered academia as gender researchers. Women’s projects, for example

\(^6\) The + in “gender+” is used to denote the way in which gender always intersects with other inequalities. Within QUING, particular attention is given to multiple inequalities and their intersection (Quing, 2009).
\(^7\) The EU is studied on the same premises and by using the same methodology as the member states.
\(^8\) See QUING website at www.quing.eu.
women’s refugees, and help centres were institutionalised and professionalised. Simultaneously, political parties and the state modified their views of the women’s movement. In the UK, some women’s organisations in civil society have moved from being strongly separatist to being regularly consulted by the Home Office on draft White papers and parliamentary bills. This process is both formally institutionalised and informal (Strid, Armstrong and Walby, 2008). As an example among many, the civil society organisation Southall Black Sisters was publically given credit for having formulated the draft 2007 Bill on Forced Marriage in the UK (Lord Lester, 2007). Another recent example of institutionalised feminist politics is the forming of the Swedish political party Feminist Initiative in 2005. Swedish feminists organised themselves in the form of political party, ran for national Parliament in 2006 and the European Parliament in 2009.

As a matter of fact, in the various phases and waves of the women’s movement and in the organising of women’s interests, women have struggled for access to institutional political power and decision-making bodies (Basu, 1995; Flammang, 1997). In addition, after obtaining formal legal rights to access women have, more often than not, must continue to fight both to be let in and, when being in, to be able to use their potential power positions on equal conditions with men and for the their own concerns (Jónasdóttir, 1991: 172; Karlsson, 1996).

The founding of and the sustained existence of the EWL should be understood in this context. What is particularly interesting in the case of the EWL is not only its relation to the governing polity and the political authorities, but that the organisation was initiated from within the institutionalised political system. The European Commission, arguably the most powerful body of the EU, not only initiated the establishment of the EWL but has consistently financed and supported the EWL. Why does the Commission sustain the existence of the EWL by financing the organisation year after year? It is neither the first time in history nor the only example of male dominated institutions initiating or sustaining the establishment and existence of women’s organisations. Conversely, initiatives to women’s organising sometimes come from within a male dominated political institution. However, it does not mean that there is a total lack of resistance or that all inequalities between women and men have withered away. Apparently,

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10 Southall Black Sisters, established in 1979, is a UK civil society organisation predominantly active in violence against black and ethnic minority women (Southall Black Sisters, 2009). For a history of the first ten years of the Southall Black Sisters, see Hendessi, Mandana, Brah, Avtar and Sahgal, Gita (1990).

11 There is empirical evidence of male dominated institutions initiating the establishing of women’s organisations or women’s sections within that male dominated institution (Jónasdóttir, 1991; Karlsson, 1996).
women and women’s organising can be resisted (“forbidden”) and yet recognised at the very same time, simultaneously both constrained and promoted, in male dominated political systems.\(^{12}\) This complex phenomenon needs investigation. With this knowledge base, there is a need to further examine the role, function and organising of a transnational women’s interest organisation working from both the inside and the outside of the multiple levels of the European Union.\(^{13}\) This thesis is doing just that.

### 1.2 The European Women’s Lobby in previous research

Up until recently, the history of women organising to explicitly and directly influence EU policy as a whole has had a quite limited presence in research, although there are exceptions (Cichowski, 2003; Christiansen and Piattoni, 2003; Hoskyns, 1996; Roth, 2007; Wiercx, 2006; Woodward, 2002). Women organising on the level of the EU, rather than on member state level, to influence either member state politics or EU politics, has not been the main object of research. There is however a multitude of single policy issue studies related to gender equality, studies tracing the change in one policy area, or the background to a specific directive (Caporaso and Jupille, 2001; Ostner, 2000). The reasons and explanations most often offered include the limitations of the range of issues and policy areas dealt with by the EU, a limitation of EU competence, and a narrow focus on employment as the only policy area where the EU has legal remit (Lombardo and Meier, 2006; Ostner, 2000; Stratigaki, 2005). The idea seems to be that since the EU cannot legislate in areas most commonly associated with women’s interest anyway, such as reproduction (Elman, 1996) and violence against women (Hamner, 2000), why bother? Further, the EU has been treated as constituted by its member states, rather than as constituting a polity in its own right.\(^{14}\) This reasoning is, I contend, mistaken on at least three accounts.

\(^{12}\) The representation of men in the College of Commissioners is 70\%, when including the Director Generals and deputy Director General the number is 82\%. In the European Parliament, the representation of men is 65\% and in the European Economic and Social Committee, the number is 78\%. The EU27 average representation of men in government is 74\% and 76\% in parliament. See European Commission database *Women and Men in Decision-Making*. Accessed August 12, 2009.

\(^{13}\) ‘Transnational’ can be understood as the “non-state political activity which transcends the national orientation of groups and individuals, and on that basis creates new channels for communication and the forms of organisations and action” (Hoskyns, 1996: 15).

\(^{14}\) With the exception of QUING, the main research programmes on gender, women’s movement and the state described earlier in this chapter all focus on member state level without examining the EU as a polity in its own right.
Firstly, women’s interests are not confined to the content of policy, women’s interest include the very forms of policy-making. To disconnect such policy from women’s interests is not only misguided, but it draws on a specific kind of narrow thinking about what women’s interests are. My understanding goes beyond the narrow understanding of women’s interests and gender equality as encompassing only policy content on for example equal pay or the reconciliation of work and family life. Rather, EU policy has always concerned women’s interests in that the European Union project is a project dealing with (re)distribution of power, political decision-making and representation (see Streeck, 1995).

Secondly, the content of EU policy has in fact not been limited to employment and equal pay but covered policy areas concerning women’s interests going considerably beyond the domain of employment and equal pay. Although Article 119 of equal pay for equal work has been the main principle associated with gender equality policy in the EU since it was inscribed in the 1957 Treaty of Rome and despite the fact that the EU’s regulatory power lies in the area of employment, including pay, parental leave and pensions, the distinctions between domains and between institutions are not rigid. As will be argued later in this thesis, directives and action plans in these policy domains blur and transcend the boundaries between the private and public divide on the one hand, and between EU competence and member state competence on the other (Walby, 2004). Moreover, when analysed as an economic project where economic cooperation supposedly has a spill over effect into other policy domains such as social policy, the EU is still very much a matter of women’s interests.

Thirdly, women have in fact organised on the level of the EU since the very beginning of the EU, since the initial years of the “institutionalisation of European space” (Stone Sweet, Fliegent and Sandholtz, 2001b). Women have organised on European level and in the EU since the beginning of the cooperation surrounding the founding of the European Union in the late 1940s. During this time, the second wave feminist movement ascended globally, putting women’s rights issues

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15 Article 119 in the Treaty of Rome states that “Each Member State shall during the first stage ensure and subsequently maintain the application of the principle that men and women should receive equal pay for equal work ... Equal pay without discrimination based on sex means: (a) that pay for the same work at piece rates shall be calculated on the basis of the same unit of measurement; (b) that pay for work at time rates shall be the same for the same job.” (Treaty of Rome, title III: article 119).

16 This is, obviously not, to say that women’s organisations and women organising started in the 1940s, the history of women’s organising is extensively longer than that. Moreover, women have organised, and still do, within the EU without relating to the EU as a political system as such. The main point raised here is however, in terms of women organising in (what was to become) the EU goes as far back as to the actual founding of the EU.
on the policy-making agenda of national politics, suggesting that at least some women would organise and pressure for the inclusion of social politics and equality legislation in general and women’s rights in particular in the Treaty of the EC (Katzenstein and McClurg-Mueller, 1987). During this period, the end of the 1950s and 1960s, eleven associations that already were or later would become involved in women’s issues and/or women’s rights issues, set up offices in Brussels (Philip and Gray, 1996). Explicit transnational organising at EU level can be traced back to the beginning of the 1970s (Hoskyns, 1996). Women organising outside the formal political institutions of the EU influenced the EU without actually targeting the EU directly. The important effects on the EU by the non-institutional organising of women can be expressed in terms of political environment: women’s organising has changed the environment in which EU policy is made (Chickowski, 2003; Hoskyns, 1996).

But does the top down initiated EWL really make a difference for European gender relations, for European women, for EU women’s interests and for how those interests can be pursued – and who are those “European women” the EWL is assumed to represent? In other words: is the EWL worthwhile as a subject matter to study? Further, why study the EWL and not some other civil society organisation within the EU or close to the EU institutions?

There are, at least, three different kinds of arguments for why the EWL in particular should be studied: the scarcity of previous research; the content of that previous research; and the theoretical underpinnings of previous studies on women’s political organising. The third argument identifies a problem with the way in which the very question of whether or not women’s organising makes a difference for (European) gender relations is posed. I will return to this shortly.

The first argument to study the EWL, then, is based on the fact that there is very little, next to none, research focusing on the EWL as such. There is even less research focusing on the EWL as an intermediary of organised interests or research focusing on the way in which the EWL’s relation to the European Commission has consequences for the organising and pursuit of women’s political and social interests. There are no systematic studies describing the organisation or analysing its form, structure and activities in the context of institutional opportunities and constraints. There is, however, some research. In a three page note published in Feminist Review titled “The European Women’s Lobby” (1991) Catherine Hoskyns presents the launch of the EWL. Hoskyns describes the background, origins and initial year of existence of the EWL. The emergence of the EWL occurred in a time when, according to Hoskyns, national levels lacked similar structures for women to establish participatory and effective transnational
mechanisms (Hoskyns, 1991: 70). Hoskyns asks whether the EWL can develop sufficient expertise and competence to have “a real impact in the Brussels jungle” and to what extent it can become sufficiently broad-based to justify its claims to represent women across the EU (Hoskyns, 1991: 69). I take these questions on. Hoskyns’s account lacks any in depth analysis of the structure of the EWL, and any further empirical study of its role as an intermediary of interests within the EU. The two important questions posed by Hoskyns are rhetorical and necessarily left unanswered because of the lack of available empirical material; the EWL had just been established when Hoskyns’s article was published. I take these questions seriously.

In a later study, *Integrating Gender* (1996), Hoskyns discusses the EWL further. Here, the EU and the development of EU policy on women’s rights is the main focus. The sections where the EWL is described deal with two separate issues: women’s organisations’ inability to deal with inequalities other than gender and the history of EU level women’s organisations. The pages most relevant in terms of the EWL (pp. 185-189) describe the setting up of the EWL and the Migrant Forum in the context of the initially low representation of black and migrant women in both organisations. Hoskyns frames the formation of the EWL as the outcome of, on the one hand, opposing and conflicting ideas within the women’s movement over how women should organise and, on the other hand, as an interplay between women’s policy officers within the EU, individual women from the women’s movement and to a lesser extent women from the trade unions. The EWL is however not the focus of her book.

In “Multilevel action co-ordination in European contentious politics: The case of the European Women’s Lobby” (2001) Barbara Helfferich and Felix Kolb ask under what conditions public interest groups can influence EU policy? Helfferich and Kolb argue that multilevel organising is a necessary condition for successful campaigning at the EU level. They take the EWL’s campaigns surrounding the Amsterdam Treaty as an example of EWL lobbying and conclude that any impact the EWL had on the final Treaty was made possible through the organisation’s coordinated multilevel campaigning together with the affiliated organisations in an environment characterised by a window of reform. The window of reform, they argue, arose from 1) the new mandate of EU social policy, which was due to northern enlargement and the victory of New Labour over the Conservative party in the UK; 2) the EU legitimacy crisis after the conflicts following the Maastricht Treaty; and 3) the very decision to revise the Treaty in the Intergovernmental conference. The chapter, focusing on one EWL campaign and although discussing the EWL’s role within the EU, is not, nor does it intend to be, a comprehensive analy-
sis of the EWL as a platform for women to act as representatives of women’s interests within the EU. 

In the anthology Recognition Struggles and Social Movements (Hobson, 2003) Fiona Williams’s chapter “Contesting ‘race’ and gender in the European Union: A multilayered recognition struggle for voice and visibility” analyses the struggle to make the needs and claims of black, minority ethnic and migrant women in the EU member states visible at the policy-making level of the EU and at the level of “the then predominantly white, middle class European Women’s Lobby” (Williams, 2003: 121). Williams describes the EWL ‘Black and Migrant Women’s Project’ in order to “identify contacts and organisations among black and migrant women, and look at the barriers which exist to the greater visibility and representation of black and migrant women at the European level” (EWL, 2005: 5). Williams argues that black and migrant women’s struggle for visibility within the EWL was hindered by the specific top-down, bureaucratic organisational structure of the EWL along with a lack of prioritising differences as part of gender equality. Though this is more than well conceivable, Williams’s perspective, based on recognition and identity, leaves out that the EWL is representing interests rather than identities to the EU. I would further argue that it is this particular organisational structure of the EWL that has enabled the organisation to influence EU policy in the first place.

In “Global activism in ‘virtual space’: The European Women’s Lobby in the network of transnational women’s NGOs on the web” Tetyana Pudrovskia and Myra Marx Ferree (2004) use network analysis of internet links between thirty transnational women’s organisations and website content analysis to explore how the EWL positions itself and communicates its identity. Pudrovskia and Marx Ferree find that the EWL positions itself less globally than they had expected, and argues that this is a reflection of EWL’s “intra-EU mandate.” They also find that the EWL avoids the term feminist but, nonetheless, frames women as active, organised and emphasises agency and global sisterhood as themes. Compared to other women’s organisations’ websites, family and reproductive health are both under referenced policy areas. This, Pudrovskia and Marx Ferree conclude, is a reflection of policy areas marginalised by the economic terms of the EU mandate. Pudrovskia and Marx Ferree stress that the emergence of the EWL within Europe needs to be seen as a part of a global mobilisation of women activists in transnational advocacy networks. Though a thorough analysis of links between women’s organisations and web content, the focus is not the EWL and its role in EU politics or its role as a representative of women’s interests within the EU. The aim of
their study is not, contrary to my study, to discuss the constraints or possibilities provided by the EU for women to organise at the level of the EU.

If the first two reasons for studying the EWL are based on the lack of previous research, both in quantity and content, a third reason is based on the focus and theoretical assumptions of previous research where the motivation to study women in politics seems to have been based on ideas of what kind of difference, if any, women make in and to politics. I disagree with this very way of framing the question. Instead, my choice of subject and the way in which I approach it is in agreement with Sara Childs and Mona Lena Krook (Childs and Krook, 2005, 2006; see also Celis, Childs, Kantola and Krook, 2008) when they argue that it is vital that we study “how the substantive representation of women occurs” rather than whether or “when women make a difference” (Childs and Krook, 2006: 22). This research “is a question therefore not just of what interests are represented in the state, but, ultimately and crucially, of how they are represented” (Molyneux, 2002: 257). Theoretically, feminist research has argued that there is an interrelation between the number of women in political decision-making and the content of policy outcome (e.g. Phillips, 1995, 1998). Empirically, the concept of critical mass has been developed and operationally defined (Dahlerup, 1988; see also Studlar and McCallister, 2002). A fundamental argument in Childs’s and Krook’s research is that the likelihood of women representatives acting for women depends on a wide range of factors, and cannot be reduced to sex only. Such assumptions are criticised as reductionist and essentialist (cf. Dahlerup, 1988). Feminist research needs to relax “overlay restrictive analytical frames regarding the form and content of ‘acting for’ women” (Childs and Krook, 2006: 22) and instead take seriously the ‘acting as’. To emphasise and study how women organise and under what conditions rather than whom or what women represent or what difference they might make to politics, is imperative.

In these contexts, the existence and actions, the structure and functions, of the European Women’s Lobby provide an exceptionally interesting object of study. First, the EWL is situated, both in time and place, in the middle of an ongoing transformation of the political-institutional conditions of European societies in general, and the political institutional conditions for gender equality in Europe in particular. The expanding competencies and powers of the European Union change the way in which political decisions are formally framed, made, and implemented. Understanding how women and women’s interests are represented in this ongoing process is crucial. Second, the European Women’s Lobby sits at the

17 As an experiment of thought, change the question to ‘What difference do men do in and to politics?’
border of state/non-state organising. It could be argued that the relationship between the Commission and the EWL is so close that it is sometimes hard to see where one actor ends and the other begins (Greenwood, 1998, 2007b). It is not only the cooperation between the EWL and Commission that is underpinning such remarks; there is something of an overlap of staff as well.18 It could however also be argued that the EWL, through its organisational structure, is firmly rooted in the women’s grassroots movement. The national member organisations come from national political contexts constituted by both traditional anti-state as well as pro-state feminism. There is the technical policy expertise; but there is also the campaigning. There is the continuous criticism of the Commission for not fully exercising its power by dragging member states that do not transpose the gender equality directives fully to the European Court of Justice and for failing to take gender mainstreaming policy to its logical conclusions; but there is also the close co-operation between the EWL, the Commission and the Parliament. This very positioning of the EWL, inside and outside, constitutes a case for why the EWL should be studied.

The analysis of (mainly the lack of) women’s political and social influence has primarily been carried out from a perspective commencing either from within the political system and the formal political institutions, or from organised civil society.19 This thesis merges these two points of departures by focusing on and analysing the relation between women’s organised interests in civil society and the political system and by defining the subject of study as situated both within the institutionalised political system and in the environment of that very same system. When women organise as women in political terms but not on terms of the established political system they challenge established politics on several accounts: they

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18 Barbara Helfferich was the Secretary General of the EWL in 1992-1999, she left to join the Cabinet of the European Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs, Anna Diamantopoulou. Myria Vassiliadou, EWL Secretary General since October 2007, worked at the European Commission for three years as a Research Officer and managed numerous projects relating to the Social Sciences and the Humanities at the Directorate General for Research. She was the Scientific Officer for European Commission research on “Changing interests and identities in European border regions: EU policies, ethnic minorities and socio-political transformation in member states and accession countries” in 2006 and for European Commission research on “Co-ordination Action on Human Rights Violations” in 2005.

19 See for instance Malin Rönnblom’s Ett eget rum? Kvinnors organisering möter etablerad politik (2002). The title translates to A room of one’s own. Women’s organising meets established politics. Most exceptions are not from the 2000’s, for example The women’s movement of the United States and Western Europe. Consciousness, political opportunity, and public policy, (Katzenstein and McClurg-Mueller (1987) contains comparative analysis of the women’s movement and several organisations’ relation to the state or political system.
challenge the private woman-public man dichotomy; they challenge the ideas/ideals of individual contra group representation; they challenge the very basis of politics in that they organise on basis of social and socio-sexual relations rather than on basis of a specific view; and they challenge established politics by highlighting gender as a main basis of political organisation. Moreover, women organising as women and/or women organising for women’s interests openly suggest that there is a social and political difference between “the general interests” and women’s interests where the general interests or mainstream interests are more of men’s interest than women’s (see chapter 3.5).

1.3 Organising the representation of interests

Half a century ago, the influential neo-functionalist Ernst Haas argued that the progress and performance of the European Economic Community could be explained by the activities of interest groups (Haas, 1958). The question here is whether the opposite perspective is more useful, that is, whether or not the activities of interest organisations can be understood and explained in terms of European integration and the political institutions of the EU. This would not necessarily contradict Haas’s propositions that interest groups 1) form a means of contact between member states population and the remote centralised institutions of the EU, or that 2) by functioning as a means of contact interests groups could play a key role in combating the democratic deficit of the EU by legitimising the decisions of the European Union. On the contrary, I argue that these propositions still hold true when the original question is reversed. Reversing the question, whether the activities of interest groups can be explained by the EU institutions and institutionalisation of civil society organised interests would however generate further knowledge. In the half a century passed since Haas’s predictions, the European Union has evolved from a politically motivated economical cooperation based on an agreement over the production of coal and steel, without the direct involvement of civil or public interests, to a regulatory economic, social and political supranational union relying on the expertise and inputs of civil society interest organisations, policy networks and epistemic communities, (Greenwood, 1998, 2007b; Haas, 1992; Majone, 1994). The civil society organisations and net-

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20 According to Haas’s widely used definition, an epistemic community is “a network of knowledge-based experts or groups with an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within the domain of their expertise. Members hold a common set of causal beliefs and share notions of validity based on internally defined criteria for evaluation, common policy projects, and shared normative commitments” (Haas, 1992).
works, and their ability to act as representatives of organised interests, do however, I argue, rely on the extent to which their relations with the EU institutions are formally recognised and institutionalised. This remarkable transformation has taken place within a socially, culturally, historically and economically diverse geographical area lacking the most fundamental characteristics of the state: the monopoly on the legitimate use of physical violence within its given territory (Weber, 1947); the powers to tax and spend; and the powers to redistribute social goods (Walby, 1999). The highly decentralised political system of the European Union is ultimately based on the voluntary commitments made by sub-organisations (i.e. states) to administrate coercion and implement authoritative EU policy, thus paradoxically displacing the very same sub-organisations. The main intermediary associations of such a union are two: 1) political parties (bound by nationality in the Council of Ministers and, ideally, non-nationality bound in the Commission and the European Parliament), and 2) interest groups (lobbying institutions on both national and European level). This thesis focuses on the latter.

In the most recent decades, institutional arrangements have emerged bringing civil society organisations and/or non-governmental organisations institutionally into political decision-making (European Commission, 2005a, 2005b, 2005d, 2001a, 2000c).21 At the national level such institutions have emerged simultaneously as some crisis due to the decreasing members of political parties, and due to democratic decentralisation where social, political and economic power arguably have been redistributed between the state and the market, and between the state and society (Heller, 2001). At the EU level, these redistributions are made visible through a variety of advisory bodies and consultation procedures engaging (some, but not other) civil society interest organisations in, and into, the political community and through an increasingly technocratic policy-making style where the

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21 The European Economic and Social Committee’s institutional definition of civil society is “organisational structures whose members serve the public interest through discussion and function as mediators between the public authorities and the citizens” (European Economic and Social Committee, 2000: 107). However, according to the Commission “[...] problems can arise because there is no commonly accepted – let alone legal definition of the term ‘civil society organisation’. It can nevertheless be used as shorthand to refer to a range of organisations that include: trade union and employer federations; NGOs, such as environmental, human rights, charitable, education and training organisations etc; CBOs (Community Based Organisations), e.g. youth, family, and all organisations through which citizens participate in local and municipal life; and religious communities. So ‘civil society organisations’ are the principal structures of society outside of government and public administration, including economic operators...the term has the benefit of being inclusive” (European Commission, 2002: 6). (Compare corporatism as discussed in chapter 3).
presence and importance of epistemic communities have augmented. The redistribution of power at the EU level is particularly interesting to study since the institutions of the EU add an extra level to the (re)distribution of social, political and economical power and goods. The legitimacy of EU policy and decision-making is neither first, nor foremost, based upon the political representation of citizens’ interests through political parties. In some regards, there are no such European wide public society interests to represent via political parties. On the national level, the legitimacy of decision-making derives from open and free parliamentary elections held every few years holding decision-makers accountable to the decisions made. Individual citizens comprise the constituency. On the EU level, however, the decision-making and legislative powers are not concentrated in the European Parliament, the only directly and publicly elected EU body. The power to initiate EU policy belongs solely to the appointed European Commission. Further, the Parliament, elected by the citizens of the EU member states to represent their interests, is not a parliament in the more traditional sense: depending on subject area and policy, the European Parliament formally/institutionally either shares decision-making and legislative power with other EU institutions or the Parliament lacks it completely. Decision-making and legislative power is spread unevenly between the three main EU institutions, the Commission, the Parliament and the Council.22 These three institutions organise quite separate societal bases and representational principles for their decision-making legitimacy. Due to the structure of decision-making power in the EU and the institutional design of the Council, Parliament and Commission, I will argue that the EU polity requires the active participation of interest organisations in political decision-making. The EU is dependent on their participation for reasons of legitimacy and anchoring of the political decisions made.

Without the formal (and informal) participation of interest organisations, the EU would lack a direct pipeline to, or channels of, feedback from public opinion, in terms of political input as well as political output. More importantly, and in short, interest organisations legitimise EU decision-making to the European wide public. Interest organisations and professional lobbies provide information, expert knowledge and resources. They, ideally, have the capacity to act as, and actually act as, anchors of EU decisions in the member organisations which they represent. The EU has thus become a myriad of decision-making and implement-

22 Other EU institutions often referred to the main EU institutions include the European Court of Justice, the Court of Auditors, the Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions, the Committee of Permanent Representatives. The Presidency of the Council could also be regarded as a main institution (Senior-Nello, 2009).
ing institutions (formal and informal), business partners, networks, and last but not least, non-governmental organisations.

Brussels is often described as a hive of activity of organised interests and interest organisations. Organised interests are, for several institutional as well as non-institutional reasons, somewhat of a natural constituency of the EU supranational institutions. For integration and expansion purposes of the EU, which also coincide with the expansion of Commission competencies, interaction with organised civil society is crucial. In addition, the European Commission has historically perceived interest organisations as mediators between the EU and the European citizens. Interest organisations help resolve the problem of the structural remoteness between the EU institutions and the EU citizens; therefore, interest organisations are agents of legitimating of EU policy. In 2001, the Commission argued that

> Organised civil society represents the views of specific groups of citizens to the European institutions...and contributes to the formation of a European public opinion [...] promoting European integration in a practical way and often at Grass roots level (European Commission, 2001: 4) (emphasis added).

For these reasons, the formation, financing and maintenance of interest organisations, as well as regular formal and informal consultations with the same, are fundamental to the Commission. Until recently, consultation procedures involving organised interests in civil society were not formally regulated (European Commission, 2001a). The Commission has repeatedly argued for the possibility to consult widely, extensively and openly (European Commission, 2002, 1997b). Far from surprising then, the Commission has until recently rejected restrictions to accessing interest organisations. For example, the commissioners unanimously rejected the proposal for a system of accreditation in the early 2000s. One explanation for the lack of a formally recognised and institutionalised consultation procedure with interest organisations is the openness and freedom it gives the Commission (European Commission, 1997b). Secondly, and more importantly perhaps, is that the EU as a system of political power and economic performance is being constructed as we go. Non-regulated domains are part of the process of

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22 Other EU institutions often referred to the main EU institutions include the European Parliament, the only directly and publicly elected EU body. The power belongs solely to the European Parliament, the only directly and publicly elected EU body. The power ever, the decision-making and legislative powers are not concentrated in the EU. These three institutions organise quite separate societal bases for their decision-making legitimacy. Due to the Council, Parliament and Commission, I will argue that the EU polity requires the structure of decision-making power in the EU and the institutional design of the subjects and representational principles for their decision-making legitimacy. For these reasons, the formation, financing and maintenance of interest organisations, as well as regular formal and informal consultations with the same, are fundamental to the Commission. Until recently, consultation procedures involving organised interests in civil society were not formally regulated (European Commission, 2001a). The Commission has repeatedly argued for the possibility to consult widely, extensively and openly (European Commission, 2002, 1997b). Far from surprising then, the Commission has until recently rejected restrictions to accessing interest organisations. For example, the commissioners unanimously rejected the proposal for a system of accreditation in the early 2000s. One explanation for the lack of a formally recognised and institutionalised consultation procedure with interest organisations is the openness and freedom it gives the Commission (European Commission, 1997b). Secondly, and more importantly perhaps, is that the EU as a system of political power and economic performance is being constructed as we go. Non-regulated domains are part of the process of

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23 As of today, organised EU interest representation in the sector referred to as civil society, is centred on approximately 1500 formal interest organisations and groups (see CONECCS, Commission database; cf. Greenwood, 2007a). Out of these, some 65 percent represents business, 20 percent represents citizen interests and the remaining organisations represent trade unions and public sector organisations on national and regional level. In addition, there are approximately 350 large firms, 200 regions and 300 organisations concerned with commercial public affairs services. All of these are included in the EU definition of civil society.
creating the EU. The EU is yet an emerging political system, a polity still under
the process of construction. However, the process of consultation has become
increasingly regulated and institutionalised.

Whether formal or informal, the Commission consults civil societal interest or-
ganisations and organised interests during the policy-initiation and policy-shaping
phases. In addition, the Commission has set up policy expert networks of gender
equality in which representatives of, among others, organised civil societal inter-
ests participate. Expert networks offer input to policy; they do not offer output.
This is where organised interests become vital. The formation, financing and
maintenance of civil society interest organisations such as the European Women’s
Lobby are fundamental to the European Commission as organised interests since
they are a source of information and expertise; they offer input to policy shaping;
and they offer output in the implementation and consolidation phases of policy (I
will develop this in chapter eight).

The legitimacy derived from civil society interest organisations benefits the or-
ganisations by allowing them to (try to) influence EU decision-making, or at least,
they get to be among those preparing and making the decisions (to be among, to
have this presence is not necessarily to say that they have a controlling presence).
This is not free, however. Interest organisations wanting a piece of the cake, or
rather to make an impact on the cake and how it is cut into pieces, are limited by
the rules of engagement. This thesis investigates those rules.

1.4 Aim and research questions

On a general level, this thesis addresses the present and changing conditions for
women to organise and act politically on the level of the European Union. It ad-
dresses the organisation and institutionalisation of women’s social, political and
economic interests at EU level. The focus is women’s civil societal organising and
the organising of women’s interest in the European Union: How and why are
women increasingly organising on the EU level? How and why has the EU pro-
vided opportunities and/or constraints to facilitate women’s civil society organis-
ing?

More specifically, I address and examine how formal institutions have struc-
tured and provided opportunities and constraints for women to mobilise and or-
organise to act on the level of the European Union, and why. I study how women
organise and under what conditions rather than what difference women make to
politics. I study the European Women’s Lobby and the relation between the
European Women’s Lobby and the EU institutions in order to ask specific questions about the relation, organisation, institutionalisation and representation of women’s organised social and political interests at the level of the EU.

The questions I ask concern the changed and changing institutional conditions for political and social gender equality in Europe. They concern the development of gender equality policy and gender machinery within the EU. They concern the nature of the power of the EU.

The next part of the thesis, “Interests and institutions” asks how and why women have organised at the EU level. What kind of organisation is the European Women’s Lobby? How is the EWL organised, and why is the EWL organised in such a way? How are women’s interests represented by the EWL? How, and why, have the EU institutions provided opportunities and constraints for women’s political organising?

Part three of the thesis, “Representation and organised interests”, explores the following questions: How is the EWL involved in the different consultation procedures at the EU level? What is the background of developing rules of representativeness? What are the criteria of EU representativeness? Why are there criteria for consulting interest organisations in the first place? Is the EWL representative of women’s interests? If so, how and why? What resources and capacities does the EWL have to be, or to become representative?

To address the questions I look at the essential features that condition EU interest representation, the conditions developed for organised interests to participate, and the capacities of European Women’s Lobby to organise and act in relation to those conditions.

1.5 Disposition

Part I: Framing the problem

The first chapter of this thesis, the one just presented, outlines and contextualises the general problems addressed. The aim is to focus on women’s civil societal organising and the organising of women’s interest in the European Union. I state the main questions to be: how and why are women increasingly organising on the EU level? How and why has the EU provided opportunities and/or constraints to facilitate women’s civil society organising and the pursuit of interests? The context is set as the changed and changing institutional conditions for political and social gender equality in the EU. In the second chapter I present and discuss the
EU as a specific kind of political system and politico-institutional context in which the European Women’s Lobby has been set up and exists.

Chapter two describes the structure of the EU and the power distribution within it. The aim of the descriptive analysis is to enable an analysis of the ways in which the specific forms of EU governance provide opportunities and constraints for women to act and organise in order to pursue their social and political interests at the European level.

In chapter three, I take the EU as a distinctive form of polity or political system as point of departure to search for relevant theories to understand and analyse my material. I ask what theories we need to better understand women’s organising and the organising of women’s interests in the EU. The conceptual framework elaborated includes elements taken from four different bodies of theory: systems analysis, institutionalism, corporatism and interest theory. The chapter ends with a presentation of the research design that specifies the questions of this study.

In chapter four, I present the material and the methods I have used to gather the material needed to understand the organising of women on the EU level. This material includes a survey, interviews, observations, official documentation and literature/previous research.

Part II: Institutions and interests

In chapter five, I examine the formation of EU level women’s organisations in civil society in parallel with the developments of gender equality policy and institutional changes in the EU. I show how internal institutional developments of the EU have offered an opportunity for women in civil society to organise to pursue their interests. I argue that, for example, the Single European Act and the equal pay directives, and the impact the EU has had on gender relations are all institutions which could be understood as having offered opportunity structures and necessary conditions for women’s EU level mobilisation. I analyse these developments with a view of EU institutional changes, and the growth of women’s civil society organisations at the EU level which led to the formation of the EWL in 1990. In chapter six I analyse the establishment of the EWL, ask, and answer when, how and why the EWL was established, what kind of organisation the EWL is, and I investigate the aims of the EWL. I ask if and how the EWL provides a platform from which women can generate and sustain their presence in EU politics as well as respond to, or protest against, the preferences of the political authorities of the EU polity.

Part III: Representation and organised interests

In chapter eight, I lift focus from the EWL to return to the wider context of the EU political system. I explore and analyse the basis of legitimacy of European Commission decision-making from the perspective of the representativeness of civil society organisations and the way in which the EWL adapts and adjusts to the conditions of representativeness as developed by the EU institutions. I use the set of criteria of representativeness as defined by the Economic and Social Committee and clustered by the Commission’s White Paper on Governance to consider in what way the EWL fits in to a corporatist model of political representation with organised interests and political legitimacy through representativeness of organised interests. The chapter examines the ways in which the corporatist arrangement between the European Commission and organised interests place demands on the organisations representing societal interests, and how these demands are met.

Part IV: Wrapping it up and moving forward

The fourth part contains the conclusions. In chapter nine, the final chapter, I summarise the thesis and my key findings. In the penultimate section of the chapter I revisit the Commission’s problem concerning the lack of legitimacy and suggest that institutionalised consultations with representative organised interests carries a higher potential to combat the democratic deficit than both transparency and shifting power to the European Parliament. Some ways forward and future research are suggested.
I use the full set of motions adopted at the EWL 2005 General Assembly and compare them to the activities the EWL undertook in 2006 to examine if and how demands from the member organisations are aggregated and articulated at the EU level. In chapter seven, I investigate what the EWL actually does, how the EWL does it, and why the EWL does it. I study three different strategies in three different policy areas, including lobbying campaigns, multi-level organising, and the capacity of the EWL to create and develop platforms for the representation of women’s interests. I also study the potential impact the EWL had on the Commission’s gender equality Roadmap. Though there are many policy areas, I focus on three: gender equality policies and legislation; women in decision-making; and violence against women.

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The European Union is a polity in constant change. The ways in which decisions are made, policy developed and institutions emerge are not set in stone; new values and windows for interest organisations to develop contacts with the EU institutions open and close. This chapter sets out to understand the politico-institutional context of the European Union, a context in which the European Women's Lobby has been set up and exists. It sets out to describe the distribution of power within the EU and to analyse what kind of polity the EU is. This is a necessary step to facilitate the understanding of the existence, activities and structure of the European Women's Lobby.

The European Union is conceptualised as a specific form of polity different from the traditional western electoral democratic polity. It is, nonetheless I assume, a democratic polity of a certain kind. By this understanding, I remain critical of the critique of the EU polity as simply a non-democracy and argue that this critique is based on a misconception of what kind of polity the EU is. I want to extend the notion of what kind of representative principles the EU system draws on. Quite obviously, the EU system cannot be seen as simply an underdeveloped liberal democratic polity, designed as such systems are by one single form of democratic principle, that is, the liberal democratic representation of individuals and individual preferences. The EU systems draws on three, not one and not two (Crum and Fossum, 2009), principles of representation and each of the three can be found in the Parliament, the Council and the Commission respectively. Making these three different principles visible opens up for an alternative understanding of the way the Commission works, a way which may not render the critique of non-democratic decision-making obsolete, but misguided. The procedure by which decision-making power is exercised, and the system in which the Commission operates, through managerial politico-economic principles, technocratic efficiency and corporatist features of policy-shaping, especially through the social dialogue, has extensive consequences from the perspective of women's interests and the organising and representation of those interests. The question to keep in mind here is then: what are the consequences of this form of polity and its decision-making procedures for the organising of women's interests and the representation of women's interest at EU level?
2 EU INSTITUTIONS AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

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24 Göhring (2003) goes a step further and claims: “In sum, the Union has been in a constant state of flux over the past two decades.”
2.1 Aim of chapter

The aim of this chapter is to describe the power distribution within and the structure of the EU as to enable an analysis of the ways in which the specific form of EU governance provides opportunities and constraints for women to act and organise in order to pursue their social and political interests at the European level. Can the structure of EU governance and the EU institutions help explain the existence and presence of a European women’s lobby? The aim is also to examine what kind of representation and representational bases the different institutions of the EU system draws on. It will be explored if, and if so, how the decision-making system of the EU is equipped to engage in, confront and challenge the under-representation of women in EU decision-making.

2.2 Main institutions

The Commission

When the Parliament is referred to as the democratic institution of the EU, the Commission is often referred to as the least democratic. The commissioners are appointed rather than elected and the decision-making of the Commission is often criticised for being opaque. How is the Commission organised? What kind of institution is the Commission? How is the answer important to the understanding of women organising on the EU level? The last question will be addressed later on.

The Commission embodies and promotes the common interest of the EU. It is the EU executive power and is responsible for initiating policy, proposing legislation, implementing decision and upholding the EU treaties. The Council appoints the President of the Commission after nominations from the member states and the Parliament has to approve of the President. The President appoints the commissioners. The two Vice Presidents are chosen from within and by the

25 This criticism was raised as early as in the 1960. De Gaulle famously referred to the Commission as “an embryo technocracy, for the most part foreign” (quoted in Senior-Nello, 2009: 52).
26 The Lisbon Treaty proposes that the Commission President is to be elected by the European Parliament, based on nominations by heads of state and of governments of the EU member states. The result of the EP elections should be taken into account, suggesting a closer politico-ideological connection between the majority of the EU and the Commission (President).
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The Council

The Council is the main decision-making institution of the EU. It cannot initiate policy, but it can approve or disapprove of the Commission’s proposals. The Council can, if acting as a whole, compel the Commission to introduce a proposal; it cannot determine the content of the proposal (Crombez, Groseclose and Krehbiel, 2006). The Commission’s effective monopoly on the introduction of legislation and regulations remains (Thomson, 2008). Government members from the member states gather within the Council of Ministers. There is no Council of

Directorate-generals and cabinets

Each commissioner is responsible for a policy area, divided into Directorate-Generals (DG). DGs are the Commission’s equivalent to national ministries. Approximately 25,000 civil servants work in the DGs, which contain topic specific units. The DGs represent a division by policy sector, sometimes with fierce rivalry between them, for example between DG Environment and DG Industry (Bomberg and Petersen, 1999; Ross, 1995). Different topically oriented units are placed in each DG. The DG for Employment and Social Affairs, the one of most importance of the EWL, contains the Equality for Women and Men Unit. There is no DG for equality.

The Cabinets are the personal advisers of the commissioners. Each commissioner has six to eight personal advisers serving in the cabinet. Advisers cannot be of the same nationality as the commissioner, further moving the national element away and reinforcing the Commission’s mandate to represent the EU as a whole rather than individual member states (Donelly and Ritchie, 1994).

The Lisbon Treaty stipulates a smaller number of commissioners from 2014, where there will be commissioners from two thirds of the member states on the basis of equal rotation between the member states.
Ministers for equality between women and men. Different policy areas are dealt with by different constellations of ministers. Gender equality and equal opportunity policies fall upon the Council of Social Affairs, which is composed by the ministers for social affairs in respective member state. Due to the policy- and the decision-making process of the EU, the Council has often the final word concerning legislation and programmes in this field. Rarely, if ever, does it have the initial word. This structure has implications for what we chose to study when we are studying the interactions between organised interests in civil society and EU institutions.

The Parliament

The European Parliament is usually referred to as the democratic, public and the most transparent and open institution of all EU institutions (Bomberg and Peterson, 1999; Hix, 1998, 1999; Wallace and Wallace, 2004). It is the only European institution elected directly by the citizens of the member states. In contrast to member state parliaments, the Parliament does not have full legislative power. It can give political signals and it has control over the EU budget. It also issues reports on its own initiative. It drafts reports on the Commission’s proposals, organises public hearings and defines budget priorities. At the same time, the Parliament has a reputation as powerless and money-wasting, attracting incompetents and politicians deemed unsuitable for national office – as well as committed and skilled parliamentarians and recognised politicians (Gallagher, Laver and Mair, 2006).

The decision-making power of the European Parliament is limited in several ways, most significantly by the Commission’s monopoly to initiate legislative proposals. However, the incremental nature of the EU integration process and

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28 The European Women’s Lobby, and other organisations and actors – including the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality in the European Parliament – have been, and still are, lobbying for the creation of a Council for Equal Opportunities.

29 There are several important differences between the EU and the EP and other political systems with parliaments. The relation between government and parliament differs from the relation between the Commission and the European Parliament. The European Parliament is not equivalent to a national parliament. The European Commission is not a government; the commissioners are not drawn from a legislature: the commissioners are not accountable to the European Parliament as ministers in parliamentary systems; only the President of the Commission is individually accountable to the European Parliament; the composition of the Commission is not based on the majority party in the Parliament as chosen by the voters; the European Parliament cannot ‘drop’ the Commission: the commissioners are not accountable to the European people; and a single commissioner cannot be ousted from office. These particular conditions, and their consequences, are discussed further in chapter eight and nine.
the processes of amendments, revisions and reformulation of the Treaty of the European Union on several occasions have meant that the rules and distribution of powers have become less straightforward.

Article 192: 2 of the Treaty of the European Union states that the Parliament, through a majority vote, may request that the Commission formulates a proposal on any matter covered by the Treaty (TEU, 1992: article 192: 2). There is a fragmentation of powers which combined with the style of EU policy-making partly explain the sheer number of lobby organisations involved in EU policy processes. Many lobbying firms in Brussels have been set up simply to monitor its rivals’ contacts with members of the European Parliaments and to make sure that the rivals don’t get the upper hand (Greenwood, 2003a).

The Economic and Social Committee

The European Economic and Social Committee, founded in 1957 under the Treaty of Rome, represents interests within ‘organised civil society’ by defending their interests in discussions on social and economic EU policy prior to decision-making. The committee is the self-declared “bridge between Europe and organised civil society” (EESC, 2009a). In its role as an intermediary between EU organised interests and the Commission, it functions as a gatekeeper of EU level organised interests and the EU polity. When initiating and shaping new policy in the field of social policy, the EC Treaty compels the Commission to consult the European Economic and Social Committee. The main trend is an extension of the advisory role and influence of the committee. The Single European Act, the Maastricht Treaty, the Amsterdam Treaty and the Nice Treaty have reinforced and extended the range of policies that must be referred to the European Economic and Social Committee. The Amsterdam Treaty also made clear that the European Parliament should consult the committee. The current 344 members of the committee are drawn from economic and social interest groups, nominated by the

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30 The use of organised in “organised civil society” is especially important to remember here. It distinguishes individual citizens of the European Union from organisations of various pre-supposed group interests. What is to be represented here are interests beyond individuals.

31 “Our strength lies in our role as representatives of civil society, in the breadth of our mission, in the experience and skills of our members who are an integral part of economic and social life, and in the quality of our opinions. This strength will enable us to contribute with renewed enthusiasm to a most ambitious and exciting project: building a united Europe.” (Rangoni-Machiavelli, former President of the European Economic and Social Committee 1998-2000) (EESC, 2005).
national governments and appointed by the Council. The term of office is four years.

There are six sections within the Committee, including employment, social affairs and citizenship which is the section that deals with organised interests in the fields social inclusion, gender equality and discrimination. Members belong to, or are drawn from, one of three constructed groups: 1) employers, 2) employees and 3) “various interests.” On average, the European Economic and Social Committee issues 170 documents/opinions a year, where approximately 15 percent are own initiative reports. Since 1 January 1995, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions have shared a common core of departments with approximately 520 staff. The institutional relations and cooperation between the Committee and the European Commission has intensified over the past years. It is seen as in the common interests of both (European Commission, 2005d). The intensified cooperation is part of “the creation of a more intensive culture of dialogue and consultation with organised civil society and its representatives in the drafting and implementing of the Union’s policies and decisions” (European Commission, 2005d: 1). There is no specific gender machinery within the Economic and Social Committee, gender equality, or ‘women’s human rights’ are included in working group three, Various Interests. The European Women’s Lobby is a member of the committee’s Civil Society Liaison Group. The EWL is the only women’s organisation represented in the group (EESC, 2009c).

32 Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom have 24 members each, Poland and Spain 21, Romania 15, Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, the Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden 12, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Lithuania and Slovakia 9, Estonia, Latvia and Slovenia 7, Cyprus and Luxemburg 6, and Malta has 5 members in the committee.

33 The other five groups are 1) agriculture, rural development and the environment, 2) economic and monetary union and economic and social cohesion, 3) external relations, 4) The single market, production and consumption and 5) transport, energy, infrastructure and the information society.

34 Various refers quite literally to various; members of the committee may at any time form categories representing the “various economic and social components of organised civil society in the European Union” (European Economic and Social Committee website, accessed June 8, 2009).
2.3 EU governance

Textbooks on the EU and EU decision-making have, at least, three common thematic denominators: 1) decision-making in the EU is complex, complicated and often incomprehensible to anyone but experts, 2) the EU exercises governance rather than government, and 3) a lengthy section on the division and location of power (Bomberg and Peterson, 1999; 1986; Hix, 1998; Melin and Schäfer, 2004; Wallace and Wallace, 1996, 2004, to mention a few). In addition, such books most often share a fourth common feature: the lack of a gender perspective. The complexity of the decision-making process arises from and is explained by the use of multi-level governance rather than government. Governance, as distinct from government, is usually understood as not only multi-level, but deliberately or openly multi-sectional. The system of multi-level governance is usually referred to as a governing structure where sub-national, national and supranational institutions, interests and actors are all involved in the decision-making process which combines supranational and intergovernmental decision-making elements.35 In a weakly, or multiply, institutionalised and resource poor system of governance, combined with a constantly changing constellation of participants and actors during the decision-making process, the opportunities for policy networks, interests groups and expert networks to influence decision-makers are striking (Greenwood, 2003a, 2003b; 2007b; Kyrou, 2000; Rhodes, 1997).36 The structure of EU

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35 According to Rhodes (1996) the term governance has at least six different meanings: the minimal state; corporate governance; new public management; good governance; socio-cybernetic systems; and self organising networks (1996, 660). Rhodes defends a definition of governance as “self-organizing, interorganizational networks” and argues that the networks in fact complement “markets and hierarchies as governing structures for authoritatively allocating resources and exercising control and co-ordination” (1996: 652). As will be discussed in chapter eight, the Commission uses none of these six different meanings of governance. Instead, the Commission defines governance as “rules processes and behaviour that affect the way in which powers are exercised at European level, particularly as regards openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness and coherence” (European Commission, 2001a: 8). Governance does not necessarily involve all or any of these goods.

36 Even though the popular view of the EU is that of a resource strong and money wasting set of political bodies, the EU is comparatively financially poor. The 2006 budget amounted to 111.9 euro billion in payment appropriations, or 1.01% of Gross National Income (GNI), and to 121.2 billion euro in commitment appropriations, or 1.09% of GNI. The EU budget financed from own resources provided by the member states lay within a ceiling of 1.24% of the GNI of the entire Union. The 2004 budget ceiling of the EU equalled 1.27% of the GNP of the EU. The 2003 budget of 1.02% was below that ceiling (European Commission, 2001f). In comparison, there are approximately 23,000 bureaucrats (administrative officials, experts, translators, interpreters and secretarial
governance is vital since it not only sets limitations and offers possibilities of multi-level access for interest and lobby groups such as the European Women’s Lobby, but it also sets a framework for how women’s interests can be institutionally organised and represented at the EU level.

It is not only the institutional opportunities for organised interests to influence that are striking; the capacity of interest organisations to adapt to the multi-layer structure is salient (Thomson, 2007). In 1986, when the European Community members signed the Single European Act and thereby committed to the realisation of the Single Market by the end of 1992, certain legal competences and decision-making responsibilities were shifted from the national to the European level (SEA, 1986). In conjunction to the Single European Act, interest groups established organisations at multiple levels, aiming for, and recognising the importance of, local, regional, national and European level presence. Prior to the Single European Act, interest organisations and lobbies mainly focused their activities and resources on national political and administrative institutions, reflecting that decision-making power was concentrated at the national level and to national institutions representing national politics and interests (Mazey and Richardson, 1993b; Kohler-Koch, 1997). With the Single Market, new and old, economic, political and social actors – public, private and business interests – tried to establish direct channels of access to EU decision-making institutions by setting up offices in Brussels (Mazey and Richardson, 1993b).

The establishment of the European Women’s Lobby coincides with the introduction of the Single European Market. The European Women’s Lobby was one of many interest organisations which realised the opportunities of and the needs for multiple layered and multi-level strategies of lobbying early on in the 1990s (Helfferich and Kolb, 2001). In the case of the European Women’s Lobby, national members focus on, but are not confined to, national level decision-making and participation in European level campaigns administrated through the EWL’s Brussels based secretariat (Gréboval, interview December 10, 2004; Collins, interview December 13, 2004).

The impact of the Single European Act brings the third common denominator of EU textbooks on decision-making to fore: power. More specifically, the textbooks do not deal with the nature of power as such, but rather with the location of power. They ask at what level EU decision-making power is located: national, European or both? And further: whether EU level institutional powers lie with the Commission, the Council or the European Parliament. This third common de-
nominator is more often than not discussed in terms of theories of European integration in general, and within the theoretical frameworks of either inter-governmentalism or neo-functionalism in particular. Neo-functionalists maintain that in a system as complex as the EU, the state can no longer be considered the ultimate policy-making unit or the central actor (Haas, 1961: 366-392; Kyrou, 2000; see also Schmitter and Streeck, 1991: 169-187). Inter-governmentalists, on the other hand, argue that member states do in fact control decision-making. Some inter-governmentalists claim that elite actors within the member states control the political agenda of the EU (Schmitter, 2000). The argument is roughly that domestic elite interests are allowed to influence the position of the member state on particular issues since domestic interests must be appeased for a government to retain political power on national level (Moravcsik, 1993; Putnam, 1988). Moravcsik argues that the EU strengthens rather than weakens the nation state as opposed to the more common ideas of the general undermining of state power. When national level state leaders and representatives of national interests disagree and the ministers in the Council cannot reach an agreement, policy decisions requiring consensus rather than qualified majority voting fall back on national governments (Moravcsik, 1993). The EU thereby empowers national governments by “limiting decision-making to relatively non-controversial matters” and leaving high politics to be dealt with at national level (Milward, 1992). Kaczyski argues that the Commission has become increasingly reluctant to deal with controversial matters over the last few years, and suggests that one of the explanations may be the political context that followed the rejection of the Constitutional Treaty and the Treaty of Lisbon, rather than a real change within the Commission (Kaczyski, 2008).37 Neo-functionalists meet this argument by saying that even if, as inter-governmentalists claim, member states in their pursuit of national interests are the source of most policy initiation at EU level, it does not mean that they exert control over the EU decision-making process (Thomson, 2007). The European Commission often welcomes initial policy initiative of member states but then takes control over the decision-making in a way not always welcome by the original national initiator (Cram, 1997; Crombez, Groseclose and Krehbiel, 2006; Thomson, 2007). In this sense, the EU has become “a polity in its own right” where decisions arise from inter-institutional bargaining from within the EU system itself (Bomberg and Peterson, 1999: 8).

From this perspective then, firstly, it is imperative for lobbying organisations to organise both at national and EU levels. Secondly, the problem of national, or

37 The revised version of the Treaty of Lisbon was ratified on November 3, 2009 when the Czech Republic became the last EU member state to ratify the treaty.
member state, representation effectively put forward by neo-functionalists and reiterated by globalisation theories is that numerous policy issues go beyond national borders and cannot effectively be dealt with by a single member state. The transnational character of gender equality issues such as for instance trafficking in women, labour migration and the global labour market necessitates an organisation lobbying for women’s social and political interests on national and supranational level. In political systems where decisions are taken at multiple levels, political and social interests call for interest representation at multiple levels. Nationally based and geographically limited organisations (this is not to say that nationally based organisations per definition are geographically limited, but rather that when they are, they) exert a lesser chance than multiple-level organised organisations to influence supranational decision-making.

Through its national umbrella organisations, the European Women’s Lobby organises both at national and European level. Coordinated through national umbrella organisations, European Women’s Lobby national level members organise and act locally, regionally and nationally. In this sense, what makes the European Women’s Lobby especially interesting is its somewhat global vision of gender equality and the framing of gender inequality (or discrimination) as a universal problem combined with local objectives and actions (Roggeband, 2004). It allows for national and cultural specific actions for the promotion of gender equality. In that there is no single, clear cut, definition of gender equality in the writings of the European Women’s Lobby, the European Women’s Lobby stays away from defining the content of gender equality. A wide range of national variations between the positions, policies and preferences, as well as practical actions of the member organisations is possible.

2.3.1 Decision-making

The basic institutional framework of the EU’s decision-making process was set out in the 1957 Treaty of Rome: the Commission of the EU would propose, the European Parliament would advise, and the Council of Ministers would decide. The European Court of Justice would interpret whenever conflict occurred. Principally, the division of decision-making competence remains the same. Changes in, or perhaps additions to, the structure were introduced by the Single European Act where competence shifted from national to European level (SEA, 1986) and by the Maastricht Treaty where the Parliament was given a budgetary responsibility and the competence of co-decision with the Council on certain matters (TEU,
1992). The Nice Treaty increased the number of members of the Parliament, reduced the number of commissioners and changed the rules of qualified majority voting in the Council (Nice Treaty, 2001).

When proposing new legislation the Commission chooses which decision-making procedure to follow. This “choice” will, in principle, depend on the legal basis of the proposal as stated in the Treaties. In practice however, this means that not only is it the exclusive right of the Commission to initiate and propose legislation, the Commission also decides in what way, by which EU institutions, the proposed laws will (or will not) be amended and passed. There are two main procedures for enacting new EU laws: co-decision and consultation (TEU, 1992: article 251-252). Assent is a third, rarely used, decision-making procedure. The decision-making procedures are separated by the way in which the Parliament interacts with the Council.

Co-decision

Under the co-decision procedure, decision-making power is shared between the Parliament and the Council; neither the Council nor the Parliament can overrule the other. The Council uses the decision-making procedure of qualified majority voting, under which the preferences of any individual member state may be outmanoeuvred by a coalition of other member states: under qualified majority voting, individual member states lack the possibility to veto decisions. Equal opportunities and gender equality policies in Directorate General Employment and Social Affairs are sorted under social policy, which in turn is sorted under the Internal market. Internal market affairs are policy decisions taken under the co-decision procedure. This means that the preferences on specific issue of a nationally limited organisation or organisation lobbying the national level may be outmanoeuvred at the same time as the national member state is outmanoeuvred. This leads to the conclusion that it is more rational to focus the lobby activities to the Commission, since neither the Council nor the Parliament can outmanoeuvre each other.

By the time of the introduction of the Single European Act – sometimes referred to as the ‘legislative hyperactivity of the 1992 project’ – the rush to com-

38 Assent involves decisions on association agreements with non-EU members and the accession of new member states. Assent is a “cruder form of co-decision”, the procedure under which the European Parliament cannot propose amendments, but they can veto proposals (Corbett, Francis and Shackleton, 1995: 212). Even though the Parliament hesitates to veto a proposal, in theory the assent procedure has expanded the power of the European Parliament.
plete the internal market combined with the use of qualified majority voting led to more decisions than ever before being taken at policy shaping level. The period, the early 1990s is the same period as when the number of lobbies in Brussels increased dramatically (the European Women’s Lobby was one of many) and the already established lobbies became highly professionalised (Hull, 1993; Mazey, and Richardson, 1993a; Mitchell and Mazey, 1993).

Consultation
Under the consultation procedure, the Council consults the Parliament as well as the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. The European Economic and Social Committee and its members issue opinions on European policy and European interests to the Commission, Council and the Parliament. Under consultation, the decision-making power of the Parliament is limited. The Parliament can approve the Commission’s proposal, reject it, or ask for amendments. However, the Commission can reject the Parliament’s decision and send the proposal to the Council in whichever state – with or without considering the verdict of the Parliament. The Council either adopts the Commission proposal or suggests amendments. If the Council amends the proposal, it must do so unanimously. In practice, it means that the Parliament has no formal influence under the consultation procedure; the European Parliament simply gives its opinion.39

2.3.2 Power distribution
The question of power distribution at between the main three policy-making and policy-shaping EU institutions has been widely debated.40 To the EU citizen, the

39 Note how the official website of the EU (http://europa.eu) on matters of decision-making initially presents consultation as a process with parliamentary influence, but that when co-decision is described it is described in contrast to the consultation procedure as a procedure where “the Parliament does not merely give its opinion: it shares legislative power equally with the Council” (Europa, 2009).

40 In this section, I mainly focus on the policy-initiation and policy-shaping phases of decision-making. This is not to say that policy implementation is a non-political process possible to separate from the policy formation stage. As different interest struggle to influence policy initiation and formation – the allocation of values in policy shaping – competing interests also struggle to influence the implementation stage. For a theoretical approach to implementation as politics and power and an overview on policy-making process theory, see for instance Ingrid Pincus’s doctoral dissertation The Politics of Gender Equality Policy: a study of implementation and non-implementation in three Swedish
division of powers might more resemble a “confusion of powers” (Allot, 2003: 218). Nonetheless, power relations between institutions and organisations are vital if we want to understand which actors influence policy- and decision-making, and how. What is important to remember however, is that the main characterising feature of any multi-level system, and the very definition of multi-level decision-making, is that different decisions are taken at different levels; at each level, different issues belong to different institutions. In consequence, one approach in trying to understand the decision-making complexity is to start from the assumption that “different kinds of theories are appropriate for different parts of the EU puzzle” (Sandholtz, 1996: 427; see also Hix, 1998, 1999). What we can hope for is to find a general framework for analysis; a framework that assists in identifying the differences and similarities, the specificities of the EU system.

Bomberg and Peterson (1999) have suggested a three level analysis of EU decision-making: a history-making level; a policy-setting level; and a policy-shaping level. According to this scheme of thought, the dominant institutions and political authorities at the history making level are two: the European Council\(^{41}\) – the EU board of directors – and the national governments in the Intergovernmental Conference.\(^{42}\) In some regards the European Court of Justice and its rulings could also be considered a dominant authority at the history-making level as its rulings may change the path of institutions. At the policy setting level, the dominant actors are the Council of Ministers, the Committee of Permanent Representatives and, when decisions are taken under the principle of co-decision, the Parliament. At policy-shaping level, the Commission, the (for consultation only) committees of the Par-

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\(^{41}\) The European Council is not to be confused with the Council of the European Union or with the Council of Europe. The European Council, informally called the European Summit, is a meeting of the Heads of State or Governments of the European Union member states and with the President of the European Commission. There are on average four European Councils a year. The Council of the European Union is often referred to as the Council or the Council of Ministers. This Council is the main EU legislative body. The Council has a President and a Secretary General. The President of the Council is a minister of the member state currently holding the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The Presidency rotates in a pre established order every six months. The Council of Ministers and the European Council/Summit are EU institutions whereas the Council of Europe is not. The Council of Europe, based in Strasbourg, was established in 1949 and is a completely separate international organisation. At present 47 states are members of the Council of Europe. See www.coe.int.

\(^{42}\) The Intergovernmental Conference is a term used to describe negotiations on Treaty revisions. The conferences are convened at the initiative of a member states or by the Commission. Treaty revisions or institutional changes must always be the outcome of an Intergovernmental conference, the conference therefore play a major role part in European integration.
liament and the Council working groups are the formal dominant actors. There is however a phase prior to the Commission puts an issue onto the agenda, the phase where most lobbying actually occurs. To be able to account for this phase of the policy-making procedure, and the specificities of organised interests in it, I add a level of policy-initiation to Bomberg’s and Petersen’s analysis. The two phases of initiating and shaping should not be conflated but kept separately. When shaping policy, the Commission seeks consultation or is, under certain circumstances, compelled by the treaty to do so, whereas in the phase prior to shaping policy, organised interests seek the units within the Commission.

At each policy-making level except the history-making the European Commission exclusively holds the formal agenda setting power: the Commission alone is responsible for proposing and drafting legislation (TEU, 1992: article 189b, 1). This means that no EU legislative decision can be taken unless the commissioners jointly decide to put an issue or issue proposal on the agenda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision type</th>
<th>Dominant Actors (relevant actors)</th>
<th>Example of policy phase and action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy-initiating</td>
<td>Commission, Organised interests</td>
<td>Initiate consultation on Single European Market, Lobbying units in the Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy-shaping</td>
<td>Commission, Council committees, EP Committees, EESC, Organised interests</td>
<td>White paper on Single European Act, Amendments, Opinions, Opinions, Lobby national level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy-setting</td>
<td>Council, COREPER (EP under co-decision)</td>
<td>Agree on Single European Act, Opinion on Single European Act, Agrees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History-making</td>
<td>European Council, Court of Justice</td>
<td>Endorse Internal Market</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given that we are interested in interest organisations and their representation in policy-making and the conditions for influence of particular interest groups the sensible place to start investigating decision-making would be the division of powers between the Commission and the Parliament at the policy-initiating level, and the relations between the interest group in question and the Commission (for policy-initiating and shaping) and the Parliament (for policy-shaping and setting). Given that we are mainly interested in policy-initiating and shaping and the role of European Women’s Lobby in this process, that is, the sub-systemic level, and if the answer to the ‘power location question’ has neo-functional tendencies rather...
than intergovernmental, this third question would be narrowed down to involve
the Commission, the Parliament and the European Women’s Lobby. A basic cri-
terion for the European Women’s Lobby in this regard, or any lobby or interest
organisation, to adopt to this system and hence find the opportunities to influence
the policy-initiating level is to develop institutionalised formal structures as well
as individual relations with individuals within the Commission and within the
Parliament.

It seems, then, that we have already arrived at one general, basic conclusion to
the why question posed in chapter one: How and why have women organised on
EU level? They have organised in a way that enables the building of formal insti-
tutional as well as informal relationships with the political authorities understood
to be the most likely to set the political agenda of the EU. This general conclusion
obviously needs to be developed further and aided by a theoretical understanding
of institutions and interest mediation (see chapter three).

2.4 Access points and gender machinery

2.4.1 The Parliament

The European Parliament is constructed through a rather complex system of
committees, rapporteurs and inter-groups. Legislative proposals from the Com-
mission are sent to the Parliament and its party-groups or political groups. The
political groups are organised by political affiliation rather than by nationality.
As of present, there are seven political groups in the Parliament.43 In order to do
the preparatory work for Parliament’s plenary sessions, the members of the Par-
liament are divided into a number of specialised standing committees which
amend and adopt legislative proposals and initiate own reports.44 The committees

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43 The political groups organised by party affiliation in the EP are: 1) Group of the Euro-
pean People’s Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats, 2) Socialist Group
in the European Parliament, 3) Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for
Europe, 4) Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance, 5) Confederal Group of the
European United Left/Nordic Green Left, 6) Independence/Democracy Group and the 7)
Union for Europe of the Nations Group.

44 There are 24 EP Committees: 1) Foreign Affairs, 2) Development, 3) International
Trade, 4) Budgets, 5) Budgetary Control, 6) Economic and Monetary Affairs, 7) Em-
ployment and Social Affairs, 8) Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, 9) Indus-
try, Research and Energy, 10) Internal Market and Consumer Protection, 11) Transpor-
t and Tourism, 12) Regional Development, 13) Agriculture and Rural Development, 14)
Fisheries, 15) Culture and Education, 16) Legal Affairs, 17) Civil Liberties, Justice and
Home Affairs, 18) Constitutional Affairs, 19) Women’s Rights and Gender Equality, 20)
consider the Commission’s proposals and, where necessary, draw up reports to be presented to the plenary assembly. There are twenty-four standing committees, one of which is the Committees on Women’s Rights and Equal Opportunities. The committees are not bound by political party affiliation; they consist of individual members from all parties represented in the Parliament and of individuals without party affiliation. The committees are thus excellent institutional opportunities or sites for cross party/cross political interests and issues. Women’s and socio-sexual interests mark a good example of this (Svensson, interview December 8, 2004). Each committee has its own secretariat, which provides information, expertise and knowledge to the committee on any proposal; the secretariats are a vital source of information for outside interests. Outside interest organisations and lobbies try to develop informal networks and contacts with the secretariat staff, and when successful, this means that interest organisations can get a heads up on the Commissions legislative ambitions, as well as the direction of the European Parliament’s preferences. Established, long lasting and structured organisations and lobbies are far better at developing such relationships than temporary single issue lobbyists (Svensson, interview December 8, 2004).

Rapporteurs

Rapporteurs are members of the European Parliament with the task to prepare the Parliament’s responses to Commission proposals. Each political party group in the Parliament appoints a shadow rapporteur to monitor the process and to ensure that the response is in agreement with the interests of that party group. The structure of politically appointed rapporteurs and shadow rapporteurs offer opportunities for outside interests and lobbies to make themselves essential and perhaps even indispensable by providing expert information (Gréboval, interview December 10, 2004; Greenwood, 1998). The EWL secretariat closely follows the appointments of rapporteurs and tries to make sure to establish contacts with them as early on as possible; many times the EWL is already in contact with the rapporteurs (Gréboval, interview December 10, 2004). If the secretariat of a committee provides interest groups with information output from the European

Petitions, 21) Human Rights, 22) Security and Defence, 23) Crisis of the Equitable Life Assurance Society, and 24) Alleged use of European countries by the CIA for the transport and illegal detention of prisoners


46 Worth mentioning here is that one of the more frequent former EP rapporteurs, Swedish parliamentarian Marianne Fredriksson, is actually an individual supporting member of the European Women’s Lobby.
Parliament, the rapporteurs offer the interest organisation opportunities of input to the EU institutions. Lobbyists and interest organisations would be very rational were they to develop a close, formal or informal, relationship with the rapporteur, or the “very lonely person sitting in front of a blank piece of paper wondering what to write on it” (Hull, 1993: 83) responsible for producing legislation proposals and drafts (Greenwood, 2003a: 3). Most commonly on this level, the rapporteurs in the Women’s Rights Committee send their drafts to the European Women’s Lobby asking for input and amendments, or they request meetings with the European Women’s Lobby policy officer in charge of the specific dossier that the report deals with. Hence, the existence of any coming report on gender equality, including violence, which is being produced by the Parliament, is generally already familiar to the EWL (Gréboval, interview December 10, 2004).

**Inter-groups**

Important opportunities for outside input are provided at policy-shaping and policy-setting levels by the inter-groups of the Parliament, the unofficial groupings of members of the Parliament organised around specific interest areas. The inter-groups are important for several reasons, mainly since they 1) are organised around the specific interests of members of the European Parliament, and 2) the inter-groups constitute the first level of policy-setting. At the same time, the individual members of the Parliament in the inter-groups are members of various and official standing committees within the Parliament. Inter-groups report to the rapporteur, the rapporteur reports to the standing committee, which in turn present the legislative amendments for decisions in the Parliament. No interest organisation can hope to change or exercise influence over legislation in the policy-shaping phase unless the rapporteur and/or inter-group raise the issue to the standing committee.

Early on in the 1980s (after the first open European Parliament election in 1979) when the first unofficial inter-groups of the Parliament began to emerge, the College of questors – the committee responsible for financial matters directly concerning members of the Parliament – realised that the Parliament did not have the resources necessary to finance them all. The members of the Parliament in the inter-groups were then approached by organised, mainly public (that is, non-business), interest groups from outside the formal EU institutions offering to provide financial and secretariat resources for their day-to-day activity (Greenwood, 1998). Today, the inter-groups are so closely associated with different interests and lobbies that, mainly socialist, members of the European Parliaments have
raised some concern as to whether the inter-groups are being manipulated by the lobbies (GUE/NGL, 2004).47

Parliament gender machinery

The European Parliament is organised in different parliamentary Committees, including the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality (hereafter the Women’s Right Committee). There is no equivalent committee on men’s rights. The Women’s Rights Committee has played an important role in advancing gender equality issues within the Parliament. The Women’s Rights Committee is composed of forty members of the Parliament and twenty-eight substitutes (January 2007). The Women’s Rights Committee gives opinions on legislative proposals, policies and actions concerning equal opportunities. It writes reports on the Commission’s proposals that touch on women’s rights and organizes public hearings where various groups and actors from the scientific community as well as from the organised interests community, are invited to speak. The European Women’s Lobby is regularly invited to public hearings on gender equality (WRC, 2004, 2003).48 In that the Parliament controls the execution of the budget, the Women’s Rights Committee generally defends the budget allocated to social non-governmental organisations in the gender equality field. The Parliament does however not control the budget of the A-line funding, which is the budget by which the European Women’s Lobby is funded.

The setting up of women’s rights units within the European institutions during the 1970s and 1980s was accompanied by the increase of women members of the Parliament. The first European Parliament election conducted on direct universal suffrage increased the percentage of women from 5.5 percent (11 out of 198) to 16 percent (66 out of 410). This lead to the setting up of an ad hoc Committee on Women’s Rights with the task to prepare a report on the situation of women in Europe for debate in the European Parliament (Hoskyns, 1996). In 1984, the ad hoc committee became the permanent European Parliament Committee on Women’s Rights (replaced by the Women’s Rights and Equal Opportunities Committee in 1999 and now under the name Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality).

47 GUE/NGL is the European parliamentary group of the European United Left and Nordic Green Left. See http://www2.europarl.eu.int/gue/showPage.jsp.
46 During September 2006-january 2007, where I participated in the day to day work of the EWL, the EWL was invited to such hearings on several occasions (see chapter 4.2.4).
2.4.2 The Commission

Following the equality legislation of the three directives of the 1970s, several women’s and equality offices were set up within the European Community. These agencies and offices, consisting of information services, equality units and parliamentary committees, served as a supporting infrastructure of feminist activists, networks and women’s organisations. The Women’s Bureau in Directorate General V: Employment and Social Affairs, and the Women’s Information Service in Directorate General X: Information and Culture Centre were both set up in 1976 to assist initiate and promote equality standards and legislation alongside gender sensitive policies. By expanding in competence throughout the 1980s and 1990s, these policy units provided, and still provide, women’s organisations and activist with formal points of access and influence in the EC policy process (Hoskyns, 1996). The policy units offered women and/or feminist activists and organisations access to state institutions as well as a somewhat stable relation to potential policy allies within the political system (Woodward, 2002).

The Commission hosts three gender equality structures. One is responsible for gender equality policy, one constitutes the main civil society channel, and one is responsible for internal gender equality.

The Equal Opportunities Unit based in the EU Commission Directorate General for Employment Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities is the main agency for women’s policy within the EU. The Equal Opportunities Unit is responsible for ensuring member state compliance with EU Directives on equal opportunities for women and men. The Equal Opportunities Unit is also charged with the implementation of the Community Framework Strategy on Gender Equality and the present Roadmap for Gender Equality (European Commission, 2000a; 2006a).

49 Compare the environmental movement where national implementing environmental agencies are utilised by environmental non-governmental organisations as policy access points (Cichowski, 2003; Haas 1990; Haas, 1993; Kronsell, 1997ff).
50 The EWL has been lobbying for a Directorate on Equality within Commission (EWL, 2005b). It seems, however, that there will be a new directorate of human rights, with a Commissioner for Human Rights rather than a Commissioner for Equality. During Commission President Barroso’s re-election campaign, he presented his proposals for future commissioner posts. At a meeting on September 9th with political groups in the Parliament, Barroso promised a human rights commissioner post and thereby creating a separate portfolio for fundamental rights and civil liberties. On September 16, 2009, Barroso was re-elected for a second five-year term as president of the European Commission. Such directorate, albeit not an equality focused one, gives some hope for women’s organised interests as it offers and institution from which to lobby for violence against women. The human rights framework specifically encompass women’s human rights and classifies violence against women as a breach of the same (Hubert, 2009).
51 See chapter five for a discussion of the equal treatment directives.
The Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities Between Men and Women was set up in 1986 by a decision the Commission made in 1981 (European Commission, 1981b). It is an advisory body composed of ministerial representatives from the member states of the EU. The Advisory Committee is an independent cross-sectoral body meeting at least twice a year at the Commission’s headquarters to assist the European Commission on the formulation and implementation of new policies that are understood as having an effect on gender equality and equal opportunities. Its official remit has changed from advise to assist the Commission in the formulation and implementation of Community measures aimed at promoting equal opportunities for women and men. The Advisory Committee is composed of sixty-eight members with a three-year renewable term of office. Each member state appoints one from among the officials of Ministries or Government Departments responsible for promoting equal opportunities to participate in the Advisory Committee. A second member state representative and seven representatives of EU level employers’ and employees’ organisations are appointed by the Commission. The Advisory Committee is the main unit where civil society institutionally can advise and assist the Commission on new policy, it as a main access point. The unit negotiates the EU five-year plans for gender equality. The Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities Between Men and Women offers an institutional platform for regular consultations between EU in-

A decision in 2008 amended the original 1981 decision by increasing the number of members from 20 to 68; by changing the status of employers’ and workers’ representatives from observers to members of the committee, and more notably changing the task of the Committee from “advise the Commission on the formulation and implementation of its policy to promote women’s employment and equal treatment” (European Commission, 1981b: art 2 and 3) to “assist the Commission in formulating and implementing the Community’s activities aimed at promoting equal opportunities for women and men, and shall foster ongoing exchanges of relevant experience, policies and practices between the member states and the various parties involved” (European Commission, 2008f: art 1 and 3). Prior to the 2008 amendment, there was a range of minor changes of the organisational structure and function of Advisory Committee (European Commission 1982: 35, 1995: 43, 2003, 2006c: 1)

See note 18 for the EU definition of civil society.

stitutions and civil society organisations (European Commission, 2008f). For women’s civil society organised interests this is arguably the most important group within the Commission, the EWL has what is called observer’s status in the Advisory Committee and is represented by two members.

In addition to the Equal Opportunities Unit and the Advisory Committee there is the Commissioners’ Group on Equality. The group is composed by the President of the Commission and three commissioners. The group assesses and maintains equal opportunity between women and men at the European Commission level. In particular, this group engages with gender mainstreaming into all services and policies at the intra-commission level.

The Commission has set up three networks of experts to provide external expertise to the Commission in the field of gender equality policy. These are the Network of experts on employment and gender equality issues; the Network of experts in gender equality, social inclusion, health and long-term care (both since November 2007) and European Commission’s Network of women in decision-making (since June 2008). The latter network is meant to provide an EU level platform for the exchange of good practices and successful strategies to improve the representation of women in decision-making (Commission, 2008e). There are fifteen experts in the network, one of whom is was the President of the EWL when the network was set up; two other experts are representatives of EWL member organisations.55

The European Institute for Gender Equality was up on 20 December 2006 to assist the European institutions and the member states in the promotion of gender equality in all Community policies and resulting national policies (EC, 2006). In its role it should provide expertise, improve knowledge and raise visibility of equality between men and women.56

55 Kirsti Kolthoff, President of the EWL until 2008, Gabriella Canonica, Regional Coordinator Business and Professional Women-Europe and Leena Linnainmaa, President, European Women’s Lawyers Association.

56 In the end of 2006, the establishment of a European Gender Institute was agreed upon after years of arguments and disagreement among the EU member states. The proposal finally accepted was a compromise proposal put forward under the Finnish EU presidency. The Gender Institute, initially meant to be up and running in 2007, came into function in 2009. It has the function of a policy and research centre on gender equality related issues. Its staff is planned to grow from fifteen in 2007 to thirty in 2013 and the Institute has an annual budget of approximately 7.5 million euro (proposed budget for the period 2007-2013 is 52.5 million euro). Following a Council decision on 1 December 2006, the Institute is based in Vilnius, Lithuania. The Gender Institute has a rotating Board where eighteen member state level representatives are appointed by the Council plus one member is appointed by the Commission. There are no representatives from the NGO sector or from the Social Partners (European Commission, 2006c). The discussions to set up the institute started in December 2000 when the European Council called on
2.5 Summary and discussion

There seems to be a general agreement among EU scholars and EU citizens that the EU suffers from a problem of legitimacy, characteristically depicted by the somewhat renowned ‘democratic deficit’ (Greven and Pauly, 2000; Eriksen and Fossums, 2000; Kohler-Koch and Eising, 2000; Weiler, 1999). This literature usually depicts the European Parliament as the only (somewhat) democratically legitimate institution.

The competence to initiate or propose legislation belongs exclusively to the Commission. It has the effective monopoly on introducing legislation. The competence to pass a given legislative proposal, under the procedure of co-decision under which internal market affairs is sorted, is shared between the European Parliament and the Council. The day-to-day work of consulting experts and suggesting revision or amendments prior to the passing of any legislation at the level of policy-shaping takes place in the inter-groups of the European Parliament. However, prior to draft legislation reaches the European Parliament, the Commission must consult interest organisations representing civil society, employers and employees via the Economic and Social Committee, management and labour in the Social Dialogue and non-governmental organisations via its institutionalised consultation procedures. In addition, the Commission’s networks of experts provide information and input. As far as interest organisations are concerned, the multi-level structure of EU decision-making processes provides multiple channels of influence, but the possibility to lobby for various issues increases the earlier in the process of policy-initiation and shaping an interests group is consulted or the earlier an interest group targets the policy-initiating in the units of the Commission and the rapporteurs in the parliament.

The European Commission to prepare a study on the creation of a European Institute for Gender Equality. On the basis of the results of the study, an informal meeting of the ministers for equality was held in May 2004. The European Commission presented the proposal that was negotiated in May 2005. The task of the institute was decided to include supporting the Commission and the member states in 1) fighting sex-based discrimination, 2) promoting the equality of sexes and 3) raising awareness among EU citizens on questions of equality through diverse activities (European Commission, 2005c; European Commission, 2006c). The exclusion of representation of women’s NGO’s from the board of the Gender Institute is quite remarkable, as they, in the originally proposed structure of the Gender Institute, were proposed to be on the board and functioning as input to the Institute. During a conversation I had with one of the Permanent Representatives in Brussels, it became quite clear that the view of the Swedish permanent representation in Brussels was that the quality of the Gender Institute had been (rightly) sacrificed in order to ensure that the Gender Institute would be up and running in 2007.
What kind of institution is the Commission? How is the answer important for the understanding of women organising on the EU level?

So far, what has been said is that the main institutions and interactions to study if and when we’re interested in the structure and influence of interest organisations like the European Women’s Lobby are the institutions with the power to initiate policy and the institutions with the power to shape policy, that is, the European Commission, the European Parliament and the European Economic and Social Committee. The structure of the decision-making process and the horizontal and vertical distribution of power suggest that interest organisations and lobbies are more likely to have an impact if they are organised on multiple levels and if they can provide the resources policy-makers are lacking. In the remaining part of this chapter, I will introduce the problem of legitimacy and suggest that the representational basis of the European Commission is organised interests, not individual citizens as for the Parliament, nor member states as for the Council. I will reconnect to both of these topics and discuss them further later on in the thesis (chapter eight).

The European Commission is depicted as the epiphany of a democratically illegitimate institution. There is an argument that increasing the legitimacy of EU decision-making requires a redistribution of power from the Commission to the European Parliament. Such redistribution, more extensive than that of the Nice Treaty, would remedy the democratic deficit by (Bomberg and Peterson, 1999; Gallagher, Laver and Mair, 2006; Hix, 1998; Kyrou, 2000; Melin and Schäder, 2004; Senior-Nello, 2009). There is a second type of argument advocating a higher degree of transparency in the decision-making procedures of the European Commission. Transparency would increase the accountability of the institution and thereby the legitimacy of its decisions (European Commission, 2001a; 2006; Gallagher, Laver and Mair, 2006; Senior-Nello, 2009). I will later argue that neither of these two strategies to increase the legitimacy of the EU is adequate, as they rest on a problematic conception or idea of what kind of polity the EU is and what kind of institution the Commission is and should be. This debate has come to discuss the problems of democracy and the democratic deficit in terms of representation where the Commission has been criticised for not being elected, lacking accountability and not representing the EU citizens in the way we are used to.

57 The Nice Treaty, signed in 2001 and entered into force on 1 February 2003, increased the Parliament’s powers with a slight broadening of the scope of the co-decision procedure and by the requirement that the EP must give its assent to the establishment of enhanced cooperation in areas covered by co-decision. The EP will also be asked for its opinion when the Council pronounces on the risk of a serious breach of fundamental rights in a member state.
in western liberal democracies. However, what is to be represented in the institutionalised community with the Commission is not the people or a demos as aggregated numbers of individual citizens but rather organised interests. In the Commission papers (European Commission, 2001a, 2001c, 2006b) the demos of parliamentary democracies have been translated into policy networks, epistemic communities, and membership based civil society organisations in general, and accountable, transparent, large, geographically spread organisations that represent an interest or interests of general concern of the EU particular. The liberal electoral notion of representation as we know it, in which interest representation consists of an aggregate of the citizenry, is not a relevant model to understand the European Commission. The Commission allocates a different kind of representativeness, namely that of representative associations/organisations, which runs and develops outside, or perhaps parallel to, representative/electoral democracy found in the Parliament and in various European Parliaments. Here, it is rather a model influenced by corporatist features that is becoming predominantly visible. In this latter model, the basic unit is not aggregated individuals, but interest organisations representing sectoral interests within the economy and interest organisations for the labour market in an organised civil society. Organisations are consulted, they negotiate and co-operate with the European Commission. The Civil Dialogue, developed as a Social Dialogue for civil society, is based on civil society organisations consulted by the European Commission, and legitimately representing the interests of their members. While citizen participation takes place within the system of representative democracy of the European Parliament, participation by representative organisations develop outside the system of representative democracy. This means then that we can find two quite different and contrasting models, or elements of two contrasting models of accountability and representation within the European Union: the electoral/liberal and the corporatist. The relationship between these two models is not clear: they run parallel and operate in different parts of the same system. Corporatism is a useful concept in that it makes visible and stresses that politics and political systems can neither easily be described, nor explained, in simply elitist or pluralist terms. In this sense, corporatism as a concept certainly complicates, offers nuances and thereby contributes to the picture of political power in the EU and of the institutionalised relations between the EU and civil society. While the EU system of representation through the lobbying of interest organisations and consultations with civil society might, at a first glance, be characterized as ‘open’ or ‘pluralist’, or ‘participatory’, the European Commission, as analysed here, show quite another picture, namely that of a more closed and corporatist policy-making style.
Studies of gender and corporatism have shown that women and women’s organised interests (as women rather than for instance workers) tend to be underrepresented in the process of corporatist policy-making. What is overrepresented, or at least favoured, are male dominated class interests (Bergqvist, 2004, 1994; Hernes, 1982, 1987). Corporatist arrangements are, or at least have historically been, more exclusionary of and discriminatory against women than the more open electoral/parliamentary system. Via the Social Dialogue, the Social Partners, and the policy style of the Commission, corporatist arrangement and decision-making are increasing in the EU. A similar development is taking place in a Civil Dialogue (European Commission, 2001a, 2000c; European Economic and Social Committee, 2006). As for the representation of women and women’s interests, this is problematic since it is more difficult for women to gain access to corporatist arrangements than to directly and openly elected bodies controlled via mechanisms of transparency and openness. The more democratic and the more open an institution is to public criticisms and scrutiny (citizens, media, voters et cetera) the higher the degree of women representatives (compare the first open European Parliament election and the increase in women parliamentarians).

What are the consequences of a similar policy-making style, only in the form of a Civil Dialogue consisting of civil society organisations rather than a Social Dialogue? What are the implications of such policy-making and political system for women’s organised interest and interest organisations in the EU? What does it mean to understand the Commission in corporatist terms and to argue that the Commission needs such a system for its legitimacy? What are the consequences for the organising of women’s interests at the EU level? What does corporatism suggest is lost, and what is gained? As I will analyse in following chapters, the implications include a specific structure, or way, of organising of women’s interests in the EU.

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58 Bergqvist’s analysis of women’s representation in Swedish trade union goes further and Bergqvist fears that the new form of corporatism at EU level could lead to a situation where some of the gains women have made on the national arena are lost on the European arena (Bergqvist, 1994, 2004).
THEORETICAL APPROACH

The point of departure here is that the EU is a distinctive form of polity or political system. Among the distinctive features is that lobbying by various organised interests is not only tolerated, but expected, promoted and supported by the EU system. Accordingly, the long standing European-wide political activities of many women's organisations successively resulted in an established EU related lobby based in Brussels, the European Women's Lobby.

Before moving on with examining what theories and concepts we need to better understand this phenomenon, one important question needs to be asked: what does the assumption that the EU is a distinctive form of polity imply for the degree of freedom in choosing theories and analytical frameworks? In other words, can we take for granted that theories and concepts that have been developed for studies of states and political institutions are relevant in the study of the EU and of women's organising? The answer depends on which research tradition is taken as the meta-theoretical (that is, the ontological, methodological and epistemological assumptions and principles) background of the actual research project. There are, roughly, three different views on the question of the boundedness between the empirical object of study and the theory (or method) with which the object is approached: total independence, the view that empirical facts are and must be theory neutral; 'qualified' independence, that is, the view that there is a degree of boundedness between theory and object; and total dependence, that is, the view that theories are and must be object specific. The first approach, the empiricist, is method driven. The second approach, the realist, is problem driven. The third approach, the interpretavists, is theory driven (Shapiro and Wendt, 1992). A problem driven approach allows me to start with the actual problem and then ask: what kind of theories and concepts do I need to better understand or explain the problem at hand?

3.1 Aim of chapter

This thesis explores the organisation and representation of women's interests in the political system of the EU. It aims to understand how and why women organise to pursue and represent their interests on the level of the EU and how and why the institutions of the EU have provided opportunities and constraints for that organising and representation. To explore this, we need a set of theoretical con-
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cepts, or sets of theories. This chapter aims firstly to generate and present a theoretical framework that enables analysis of the reality of the organising of women’s interests in the political system of the EU and of the relation between women’s organised interests and the EU institutions. Secondly, the aim is to generate more precise theoretically framed research questions that specify the general questions posed in chapter one. The conceptual framework elaborated here draws on several research disciplines within the study of politics: political science, sociology and gender studies. From these three disciplines, four bodies of theory are utilised: systems analysis, institutionalism, corporatism and interest theory, including theories of women’s interest representation. Systems analysis is used to set the most abstract level and framework for analysis – to define the EU as a distinct political system and to identify the relevant structures and functions to analyse. Institutionalism is used to provide an understanding of institutions as structuring social phenomena, as durable, path dependent, yet changeable in the EU political environment. Corporatist theory narrows the research questions and makes visible the specific opportunities and constraints provided by the institutions. Interest theory, as utilised here, is used to distinguish between the form side and the content side of women’s interests and to identify the specific form women’s interest representation takes in the EU.

3.2 Political systems

First of all, what is a political system, how can we understand the EU’s distinctiveness as such? What are the specificities and what is it we need to analyse? A revisit of the classic terminology of David Easton and Gabriel Almond frames my analysis of the organisational and functional design of the EU system in which organised interests, among them women’s organised interests, operate. In making political systems comparable, systems analysis makes visible and highlights the distinctiveness of a political system (Hix 2005: 1-9; Kassim, 2003: 140-2; Mair, 2006). To Gabriel Almond, the purpose of the concept of the political system is

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69 Structural functionalists generally argue that there is little use and less reason in comparing structures/institutions of highly differentiated political system. Susser (1992) disagrees and exemplifies the comparison of the structures of authorities of a western democracy and those of an African tribe and argued that the two structures simply lack in comparability whereas the “functions, by contrast, are eminently comparable”... “If a prime minister and a tribal chief are difficult to compare institutionally, they may nevertheless embody comparable political functions. As such, they may be analytically commensurate despite their vastly disparate institutional structures” (Susser, 1992: 205). Almond puts this argument forward in the following way: “If the structures of political
“to separate out analytically the structures which perform political functions in all societies” (Almond, 1960: 211). Almond identifies two functions common to and performed by all political systems: input and output (Almond and Coleman, 1960: 11, 17). Output functions are discerned into three sub-functions: rule making, rule application and rule adjudication (Almond, 1960: 206; cf. Davies and Lewis, 1970). Input functions are discerned into four sub-functions: political socialisation, interest articulation, interest aggregation and political communication. The functions performed/functional analysis leads to asking question such as: how are interests articulated in different political systems? How are articulated interests aggregated in different political systems? How are interests communicated? (Almond, 1960: 222). Each identifiable function is backed by a structure which performs the function. Where the articulation of interests is the function, interest organisations are the structure (Almond, 1960; Almond and Powell, 1966; Bregnsbo, 1975). Almond identifies four such structures of interest organisations performing the function of interest articulation: institutional interest groups, non-associational interest groups, anomic interest groups and associational interest groups (Almond, 1960: 238ff). Institutionalised interest organisations are groups that somehow exist within the legislature, bureaucracy or within the political parties. All political systems have a structure that performs the function of interest aggregation, all political systems have “some way of aggregating interests, claims, and demands which have been articulated by the interest groups of the polity” (Almond, 1960: 243). These groups are thus not only part of civil society, but somehow institutionalised within the very decision-making institutions.

David Easton shares some of Almond’s ideas about the political system, but is more concerned with the processes of interaction in the political system than with institutions and the structure of behaviour (Davies and Lewis, 1970: 49). This concern makes response and feedback exceedingly important in Easton’s terminology. Easton defines political system as “a set of interactions abstracted from the totality of social behaviour, through which values are authoritatively allocated for a society” (Easton, 1965b: 57). To Easton, the political system is the major and gross unit of analysis. The basic unit of analysis is interactions. Persons engaged in such interactions, are members of the system, that is, persons in their political capacity. Members are the basic structural unit of analysis (Easton,
1965a: 57). Easton denies that social systems can be understood as aggregates of individuals and insists that all social systems are composed of interactions between people (Easton, 1965a: 36-45; Easton, 1953: 97). The political system is a complex set and sequences of processes through which inputs are converted to outputs (Easton, 1953; 1965a, 1965b; 1990). Easton suggests we start with defining a political system as a set of variables that assist in understanding, describing and explaining something about the behaviour of men (Easton, 1965a: 30-34). The variables selected should be those that through experience, insight, reason and previous research have shown to be likely “to give us the most economical and most valuable understanding of why people behave in politics in the way that they do” (Easton, 1965a: 32). We then move on to study “the authoritative allocation of values for a society” (Easton, 1965b: 50; Easton, 1965a: 57). The authoritative allocation, which necessarily is perceived of as binding and legitimate, is what separates politics, political interactions, and political behaviour from other kinds of societal interactions (Easton, 1990: 275; Easton, 1965a: 50, Easton, 1953: 129) for instance economic allocations through the market. The political system consists of all those activities and interactions that relate to the authoritative allocation of values for the whole society.

Other activities or interactions are seen as variables in the system’s environment. This environment contains its own systems, such as the biological system and the social system, the latter of which the economy is a sub-system (Easton, 1965a: 70, 59-75). Various demands arise from the environment; the political system is open to influences and demands from its environment, the environment is in turn open to influences from the political system. As such, there is no reason to assume that the political system would not be able to encompass, or be immune to, supports and demands arising from interests based on sex/gender power relations. Easton conceives the political system itself as a process of conversion where inputs are converted to outputs (Easton, 1965b: 72-73), that is, the functions of input and output are not necessarily completely separate, but exist on a continuum of conversions. The processes of input and output are necessarily interrelated. There are two types of inputs: demands and supports. Supports are what permit the system to satisfy demands. Easton identifies three objects of sup-

61 There is an ambiguity in Easton as to what actually constitutes the basic unit of the system, an ambiguity with consequences for the degree of Easton’s methodological individualism. In A Framework for Political Analysis (Easton, 1965a) it seems that the basic structural unit of analysis is simultaneously a member, in her political capacity, of the political system (1965a: 57) and interactions (1965a: 49). The latter unit, interactions, as a basic unit of analysis is not compatible with methodological individualism.

62 The constructivism in Easton’s behaviouralism necessitates the abandoning of any ideas about political systems as real entities or given by nature (Easton, 1965a: 26-37).
port in the political system: the political regime, the political authorities and the political community (Easton, 1965b: 179). The regime is composed of a set of ideas, values and norms that are working together to institutionalise a method for dealing with political problems (Easton, 1965b: 192ff; Davies and Lewis, 1970: 57). The authorities are composed by those in office, the officials that have as their function to process and convert inputs to outputs. The authorities must “be able to obtain the commitment of the relevant members of the system for the adoption and attainment of these objectives or neutralize those who might be opposed” (Easton, 1965b: 205). The political community is individuals, groups and organisations who generate input into the system. The interactions between the political authorities and the political community in terms of input and output characterise the openness of the system. The gatekeepers guard the entrance to the conversion process of the system and are the “structural regulators of the volume of demands” (Easton, 1965a: 122), that is, a kind of institutional, cultural and structural filtering device. Easton identifies, for example, interest groups, the media and political parties as gatekeepers.

This way of thinking means that, in principle, anything and everything can be politicised, given that the articulation and aggregation of interests make it past the gatekeepers of the system.

The outputs of a political system are the policies that authoritatively allocate valued things, decisions and the implementation of those decisions. Outputs generate support by satisfying demands. Outputs travel back to the input side of the system via a feedback loop, if the outputs have been satisfactory, they will generate renewed supports. Stress occurs when the input of demands becomes too heavy or when the input of supports becomes too light. Demands are too heavy when they cannot be converted into decisions (volume stress) or when their nature requires excessive time to be converted into decisions (content stress). The consequence of excessive demands is the system’s inability to produce output that generates the necessary support for the decision-makers (output failure). If the members of a system, through a process of political socialisation, have learnt to conceive the system as legitimate and its outputs as authoritative, demand satisfaction may be low without causing stress on the system (Easton, 1965a: 119-122; Easton, 1965b: 37-69). The erosion of support for the authorities, the regime, or the political community is the second major cause of stress for a political system (diffuse support). Stress, whether arising from excessive demands or insuf-

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61 Regime in Easton’s terminology could be translated to Almond’s political culture, that is, a system’s specific set of attitudes, norms or its political culture. At the time, this definition marked an expansion of the scope of political studies.
sufficient supports, undermine the political system’s capacity to perform its functions of making decisions and gaining their acceptance as authoritative. However, a political system has, Easton argues, a remarkable capacity to sustain itself by responding constructively to stress. The system may adapt slightly to changing political conditions, or it may transform the structures, processes, and even the goals of the political system in order to ensure its survival. Easton argues that the ability to fundamentally transform themselves makes political and social systems more adaptive than biological systems (Easton, 1965a: 127-130; Easton, 1965b: 31-33, 379-464). The political system is “a goal-setting, self-transforming and creatively adaptive system” (Easton, 1965b: 366).

Now, then, how useful is Easton’s framework for studying the EU, a system of governance rather than government? Secondly, how useful is Easton, or systems analysis in general, when studying women’s organising or gender relations? The second question could quite possibly be answered with the counter-question ‘why would it not be useful?’ There is, firstly, nothing in Easton’s framework for studying the political system and the authoritative allocation of values that out-defines or disqualifies gender relation analysis. On the contrary, early on, feminist research found Easton’s framework useful for analysing women’s participation in politics (Halsaa, 1977). Secondly, feminist theory has, independently of Easton, utilised the system level approach. Walby uses the concept of regime to set a framework for analysis on a systems level. The concept of the gender regime is used to think comparatively about gender relations and to emphasise the interconnectedness between different domains of the gender regime. The gender regime encompasses all institutions and takes all other regimes (e.g. capitalist, racist) as its environment (Walby, 2009a: Walby, 2002).

As regards the first question, how useful is Easton to study the EU when the EU is characterised by a system of governance rather than as a system of government? This may be a valid question; the European Union is not a state. It lacks some of the most commonly used defining characteristics of a state: the monopoly of the legitimate use of violence within its territory and the right to tax and spend; legal remit in welfare policy. The EU is unique in its institutional design

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64 Both Jónasdóttir (1994) and Connell (2002) have theorised gender and power relations on a systems level. Connell’s terminology utilise the concept of gender order. Jónasdóttir (and the earlier Walby) uses patriarchy. In Jónasdóttir’s case, the sex/gender system, or the socio-sexual system are also concepts used to theorise gender and power relations on a systems level (1994).

65 The claim that the EU cannot tax and spend, that is, that the EU lacks redistributive remit is open to debate. The Common Agriculture Policy and the Structural Funds, which together make up approximately 80 percent of the EU budget, are certainly redistributing financially between member states, social groups and individuals.
with a multi-levelled distribution of policy- and decisions-making power. The EU is a distinctive form of political system (Kohler-Koch, 1996) but it is nonetheless a political system. It allocates values authoritatively. Using Easton’s political system is useful for clarifying similarities and differences between states and the EU as a specific form of polity. It highlights both the specificities of the EU, and the functions we recognise from other forms of political systems. In this case, in terms of which inputs and mechanisms of support are of pivotal importance to the political system at hand and the relation between the authorities and organised interests in that system. By understanding the EU as a political system in Easton’s terminology we can identify the institutions characterised by their authoritative allocations of values; the support and demands, input and output, of members in their political capacity – understood as individuals, social groups and interest organisations. Further, Easton’s system allows for identifying how authoritative decision-making has significant impact on the allocation of economic resources and makes visible the continuance of feedback between outputs and demands upon the system (Borchorst, 2006).

3.3 Institutionalism

This thesis explores the changed and changing institutional opportunities and constraints for women to organise and pursue their interests in the political system of the European Union. Institutions and institutionalism are central organising concepts to this exploration. Studying institutions, and the way they function, contribute to understanding the relationship between political authorities, political culture/ regime, the political community and their environments.

Studying institutions contributes to the understanding of the articulation and pursuit of interests and demands, and how cultural norms and values both provide political opportunities and constraints, (Easton’s regime) (Goodin, 1996; Jónasdóttir, 1997; March and Olsen, 1984; Mazey and Richardson, 1993).

Institutions are structuring social phenomena. They can be both formal (for example constitutions or directives) and informal (for example norms) and enable social and political interaction among and between individuals and groups. Institutions are presumed to be (relatively) stable over time. Institutions effect and limit the behaviour of individuals: institutions provide opportunities and constraints. Institutions make up the basis for a mutual understanding of social, moral and political values among individuals (Åström, 2004: 40). Institutions

66 See Rittberger (2003) for an account of institutionalist change beyond institutionalism.
provide an explanatory framework for policy outcomes (Hall, 1986; Hall and Taylor, 1996; March and Olsen; 1989, 1984).

On a general level, there is an agreement among institutionalists that institutions specify what is possible and permitted and what is not. Individuals and individual action are shaped by and do not act in isolation from societal structures. In “their collective enterprises [individuals] act through structures and organisations and institutions” (Goodin, 1996: 13). In the words of Shepsle “institutions are the social glue missing from the behaviourist’s more atomistic account” (Shepsle, 1989: 134). Institutionalism, so defined, is a reaction against the methodological individualism of the behavioural revolution in western political science, specifically with the more recent influence and growing dominance of rational choice theory. By both definition and methodology, behavioural approaches tended to increasingly emphasise agency and actors at the expense of political institutions. Institutionalism does not reject agency or the concept actors, but complements and alters them. Institutions are expected to shape interests, activities, resources and ultimately the behaviour of actors. The behaviour of actors, in turn, is expected to alter institutions. If Easton’s (at least the later Easton) member is an individual person in her or his political capacity or role, the institutionalist concept of actor is not limited to denote the individual. In institutionalist theory, actors can be individuals, organisations, or states. These actors have interests and demands, which they articulate and pursue. Their actions and choices are subject to rules, norms and procedures.

**Historical institutionalism**

Hall and Taylor (1996) distinguish three main strands of new institutionalisms; rational choice, sociological, and historical institutionalism.67 For the aims of this study the third strand, the historical institutionalist, is the most fruitful one. When rational choice institutionalists conceive the world as made up by individuals or organisations striving to maximise their material well-being in a political system made up by static institutions, sociological institutionalists conceive the world as that of individuals or organisations trying to find, define and express identity in ways that are socially and morally acceptable. While both may be, to some extent, helpful when investigating the EU and even women’s organising, neither is helpful enough when trying to understand the changed and changing

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67 Others have been more liberal in their categorisation of institutionalism. Peters identifies six different types of institutionalisms 1) rational, 2) historical, 3) sociological 4) empirical 5) interest group and 6) international institutionalism (Peters, 1999).
institutional possibilities and constraints of women organising in the EU to represent women’s social and political interests.

The main distinguishing feature of historical institutionalism is that intuitions emerge historically and that they are changeable. Institutions do not emerge out of thin air. Historical institutionalism holds that institutions, albeit acknowledging that institutions tend toward stability and path dependency, are not static (Pierson, 2004). Institutions are simultaneously durable and changeable. When new institutions emerge (thus, they are not created) the past intervenes. We can therefore not necessarily always expect an institution to work in the way it was designed to work. For feminist research, this means that institutions, intentionally or unintentionally, once designed to exclude women can be challenged and changed. However, the opposite is also the case: institutions designed to increase gender equality may very well fail to do so. The prominent role given to power is a second distinguishing feature of historical institutionalism. Power, from a historical institutionalist point of view is asymmetrical and relational. There are no scenarios of freely contracting individuals negotiating their social and political interests, but rather political sites where institutions give some groups, organisations or interests disproportionate access to the decision-making processes. Further, there is no emphasis on how such institutions make everyone better off in the end, but rather the investigation of whether some groups win access, and some groups loose access. The understanding of the state/governing body is less that of a neutral broker between competing interests and more that of a “complex of institutions capable of structuring the character and outcomes of group conflict” (Hall and Taylor, 1996: 938). Historical institutionalists do not deny that there are important variables other than institutions having an impact on political outcomes. However, institutions are important since they are the central point of much political activity; institutions are important because they provide incentives and restraints for political actors. Institutions provide the structure within which “social interactions, as opposed to random encounters, take place; they tend to pattern behaviour in particular ways” (Stone Sweet, Fliegstein and Sandholtz, 2001b: 7) and may work as either constraints or opportunities to individuals and (interest) groups. What people, groups or organisations ought, wish or want to do, and what they actually can do ultimately depend on what various institutions make possible (March and Olsen, 1984, 1989).
Explaining institutional change

A central claim made by institutionalists is that once formal and informal arrangements become institutionalised in the political system, the institutions assume a certain robustness, or rigidity. Institutions are difficult to change. Institutional rigidity is often discussed in terms of path dependency. Path dependency is a distinctive perspective on historical development (Pierson, 1993, 2000). Path dependency in policy-making is explained by “the persistence of policy monopolies by some organizations in government” (Peters, Pierre and King, 2005). Path dependency includes a specific notion of social causation in that it rejects, what Hall and Taylor refer to as, a traditional view where the “same operative forces will generate the same results everywhere” and instead favours that the “effect of such forces will be mediated by the contextual features of a given situation often inherited from the past” (Hall and Taylor, 1996: 941). Institutions are thus (relatively) persistent forces and as such, institutions push historical development along specific set of paths (March and Olsen, 1984; North, 1990).

To account for more sudden or radical change after long periods of stability of policy-making institutions or political systems, to explain diversions from the path, to understand what shakes the rigidity and brakes the dependency, the concepts of punctuated equilibrium (Kingdon, 1984) punctuations (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993; Jones and Baumgartner, 2005) and tipping point (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998) have been utilised. Such concepts draw on sudden change after long periods of persistence. The notion of various forms of punctuations which suddenly change the agendas of institutions and the political system as a whole has become widely used in political science. In feminist theory, the concept of tipping point to explain sudden changes in sets of institutionalised gender relations, conceptualised as a gender regime, has been utilised by Walby (2009a).\(^{68}\)

To specify the content of institutional opportunities and constraints, to better understand the patterns and conditions of interactions between authoritative decision-making institutions and aggregations or coalitions of interest organisations in the political system, we now turn to corporatist model(s) of interest intermediation and organising.

\(^{68}\) The concept of tipping point has recently been utilised to discuss in what way the recession in the real economy following the financial crisis of 2007 will create the potential for a global tipping point away from neo-liberalism towards social-democracy or xenophobic protectionism (Walby 2009, 2009b).
3.4 Corporatism

One of the specificities of the EU institutions is the way organised interests are becoming institutionalised intermediaries between members of the political community and the political authorities. As such, there are institutional opportunities, and constraints, for organised interests to be involved in policy-making. The Commission not only tolerates lobbying by organised (and non-organised) interest groups, it promotes and supports it. Corporatism is a set of theories used to analyse this relationship between political authorities and organised interests.

Corporatism developed as a counterbalance to pluralist understandings of interest organisations and their relationship to the political system. According to the corporatist view, the systems of interest organisations and interests groups developing in Western Europe in the period following World War II seemed to contradict the pluralist versions of systems of interest organisations. Interests in Western Europe were not, as pluralists argued, organised in accordance with the principles of liberal democratic theory (Williamson, 1989). The political system was not constituted by an infinite number of associations acting in open, fair and plural competition. Nor were the organisations created spontaneously; they were created by state incentives (Williamson, 1989). There are some shared basic assumptions made by corporatists and pluralists. There is an agreement that the importance of formal associational units is growing and that functionally differentiated and conflicting interests persist and expand (Williamson, 1989; Cawson, 1985). However, there are fundamental differences. The most fundamental difference is that the constituent units in corporatist thought are not primarily, or in the last instance, individual citizens (persons) but political-economic needs defined as such from above and organised as interests. In corporatist systems, organised interests are limited in number. They are non-competitive, hierarchically ordered and functionally differentiated. The constituent units of pluralist systems are unlimited, or at least unspecified in number. They are voluntary, competitive, non-hierarchically ordered and self-determining interest organisations. In corporatist theorising, the interest articulation of the units are specially licensed, subsidised, created or otherwise controlled by the political authorities in exchange for representative monopoly (Williamson, 1989). Where pluralists perceive spontaneous organising and quantitative proliferation, corporatists comprehend controlled emergence and quantitative restrictiveness; where pluralists perceive competitive interaction, corporatists comprehend complementary interdependence. In corporatist theory, the political authorities are not merely referees or neutral brokers as in pluralist theory. The political authority is not an entity which merely
the role of interest groups in shaping politics seems to follow an established pattern: the highly path dependent activity in that “apparently any piece of academic writing about making. Schmitter classifies this extended version of his original definition of cor-
tem, the processes within the ‘black box’ and in the output function of policy-
are incorporated in both the policy-formulation and implementation of policy, and implementation of policy (Lehmbruch, 1979b: 150). Interest organisations are organised into a limited number of singular, compulsory, non-competitive, hierarchically-ordered and functionally differentiated categories, recognized or licensed (if not created) by the state and granted a deliberate representational monopoly within their respective categories in exchange for observing certain controls on their selection of leaders and articulation of demands and supports (Schmitter, 1979: 13, Schmitter, 1974: 93-94). 69

Societal corporatism and state corporatism

The ideal-typical definition of corporatism or corporatism as a “constructed type” as developed by Phillipe Schmitter, holds corporatism as a:

System of interest representation in which the constituent units are organised into a limited number of singular, compulsory, non-competitive, hierarchically-ordered and functionally differentiated categories, recognized or licensed (if not created) by the state and granted a deliberate representational monopoly within their respective categories in exchange for observing certain controls on their selection of leaders and articulation of demands and supports (Schmitter, 1979: 13, Schmitter, 1974: 93-94). 69

A significant feature of corporatist systems is the political authority’s utilisation of its monopolistic power to organise, regulate and handle political, economic and social interests in society. In an ideal-type form of corporatist regulation of organised interests, representative monopoly is given in exchange for certain demands and supports. Corporatism is not merely a pattern of interest intermedia-
tion; it is a specific way of policy formulation “in which formally designated interest associations are incorporated within the ‘authoritative allocation of values’ and implementation of policy (Lehmburgh, 1979b: 150). Interest organisations are incorporated in both the policy-formulation and implementation of policy, that is, they are expected to participate in the input function of the political system, the processes within the ‘black box’ and in the output function of policy-making. Schmitter classifies this extended version of his original definition of cor-

69 Triantafillou comments, quite humoristic, that writing on corporatism seems to be a highly path dependent activity in that “apparently any piece of academic writing about the role of interests groups in shaping politics seems to follow an established pattern: the introduction to the topic includes the original definition of corporatism by Schmitter” (Triantafillou, 2003: 4).
poratism as corporatism2 and the version of corporatism as interest intermediation as corporatism1 (Schmitter, 1982: 262).

Schmitter identifies two corporatist subtypes: state corporatism and societal corporatism (Schmitter, 1974, 1979; Wilson, 1990; Wilson, 1983). State corporatism can be considered a “strong version” of corporatism (Bergsgard and Rommetvedt, 2006: 9). State corporatism tends to be associated with “political systems in which territorial subunits are tightly subordinated to central bureaucratic power” (Schmitter, 1974: 105). In political systems defined by state corporatism elections are in principle non-existent, the party system is dominated or monopolised by a weak single party and political groups, interest organisations or subcultures based on class, ethnicity, region, gender, religion etcetera are suppressed. State corporatism is associated with an anti-liberal authoritarian and neo-mercantilist state political system (Schmitter, 1979: 22). Societal corporatism, sometimes referred to as neo-corporatism, is a “weaker version” of corporatism (Bergsgard and Rommetvedt, 2006: 10). Political systems characterised by societal corporatism are systems with relatively autonomous, multilayered territorial units. The electoral process and the party system are described as open and competitive. The political authority is seen as ideologically varied, potentially inclusive and coalition based (Schmitter, 1974: 22). Where state corporatism is associated with authoritarian and neo-mercantilist political systems, societal corporatism is a component of post-liberal, advanced capitalist, organised and democratic political systems (Schmitter, 1979, 1974). In state corporatism, interest or-

70 There are alternative conceptualisations of the forms of corporatism. Lehbruch (1979a) develops the concept of liberal corporatism, identified as a specific form of corporatism characterised by the high degree of cooperation between and among the interests groups themselves. Liberal corporatism is distinguished from traditional pre-industrial European corporatism on the one hand, and from the authoritarian corporatism of fascist regimes on the other (Lehbruch, 1979a: 53-61). The institutionalised integration of competing and conflicting social interest groups is voluntary. The groups involved have a large, and essential, element of constitutional autonomy (1979: 54). Theoretically, a premise of liberal corporatism is an interdependency of interests in society, as opposed to societal view based on conflict of interests (as in the Marxist concept of class conflict). Lehbruch sees liberal corporatism as an institutionalised form of policy-making (Lehbruch, 1979b: 150). Additional conceptualisations of corporatism include: interest representation as a more extensive system of political participation (Benjamin, 1980); corporatism as an economic system contrasted to capitalism and socialism (Pahl and Winkler, 1976); a device for managing conflict in advanced capitalist societies (Wassenberg, 1982); Marxist versions where corporatism becomes a tool “of social control to emasculate trade unions and working class movements” (Offe, quoted in Wilson, 1983: 107). Schmitter himself comments how confusing the use of the concept of corporatism has become, and suggests to simply starting labelling the different versions of corporatism corporatism1, corporatism2, corporatism3… corporatismn (Schmitter, 1982: 263-264).
ganisations are dependent, auxiliary organisations whereas in societal corporatism, interest groups are autonomous. Hence, it can be argued that the “distinction between societal and state corporatism is largely based on the degree of dependency [of interest organisations]” (Ziegler, 1988: 18).

The societal corporatist perspective is useful to understand the political system of the EU where organised interests are subsidised by the Commission, included in various working groups and committees, and where organised interests enjoy a consultative status. Such perspective highlights how organised interests not only enjoy advantages from the governing body, but how organised interests implement the wants and needs of the political authorities through various programs. Specifically, this is useful as it makes visible how organised interests can be utilised by the political authorities to gain access to policy domains outside of their legal remit. This interdependency may be a constraint as to what organised interests can do, what issues they can push for and what agenda they can have (Adams, 2002; Cockburn, 1996, 2003; Garton, 1999; Greenwood, Grote and Ronit, 1992; Hobson, 2003). In consequence, the incorporated organised interests are, or at least have the potential to become, institutional methods by which the political authorities exercise social stability as well as system wide consensus on social and economic policies. The incorporated interests function as intermediaries between ruler and ruled, as agents of consensus in the political system.

**Corporatist tendencies and trade offs**

In a political system drawing on a corporatist model, certain features and mechanisms of control can be expected. Firstly, a corporatist model, whether in its state version or societal version, would make visible a smaller number of organised interest groups having access to the policy-making and decision-making functions and authorities of the political system. The number of organised interest groups with access to the political authorities is necessarily limited. The institutionalised cooperation between organised interests and the authorities on the one hand, and the cooperation between organised interests on the other, are emphasised. As such, corporatism is a specific form of political system of interest intermediation and interest representation. To grant representative monopoly, the Commission would ultimately subsidiise, if not create, groups of organised interests at the EU level and implement regulations of interest representation that privileges some interest organisations over others. The political authorities, in this case the Commission, would specifically formulate regulations which grant some form of concrete and potentially a controlling presence to certain organised interests in either
the social, economic, legislative, and/or bureaucratic policy-making institutions. The formulation of such regulations can either be formal or informal. In its informal version, where rules and norms are used to regulate organised interests, we would, at EU level, be able to identify some structure of informal consultation procedures and ad hoc meetings including personal relations and ‘off the record’ discussions between the Commission and organised interests – in this particular case the EWL. In its formally institutionalised form, we would be able to identify formal rules regulating the organisational structure and the very interactions between the Commission and organised interests. Such regulations specifically privileges certain interests and (certain forms of) interest organisations. The granting of representative monopoly is part of the exchange of power which characterises the relationship between the Commission, or state, and the organisations involved in corporatist policy-making. Ideally, organised interests gain access to the policy-making process and the Commission gains support and input.

An additional argument in this thesis is that the specific structuring of organised interests should also be understood in the light of the Commission’s need for legitimacy. Hence, being a party to this exchange comes with constraints and opportunities. We would thus not only expect to be able to identify the granting of privileges, but also certain mechanisms of control or regulation of organised interest at the EU level. PerOla Öberg refers to this mechanism of corporatism as the theory of exchange, where the leaders of organised interests, in order to participate in the corporatist exchange, must somehow “deliver” its grassroots members and the latter’s demands to the policy-making process. In this delivery, there are certain compromises to be made. The leaders of organised interests must show themselves capable of moderating radical demands put forward by its members and to discipline members into following decisions despite internal organisational opposition (Öberg, 1994). If this is to hold true, there must be an internal structure of the interest organisation enabling both moderation and discipline. There must be a decision-making structure that allows for the leaders of the organisation to, if not overrule its members demands, to at least allow for the alteration or mainstreaming of demands understood as too radical. Alternatively, there would have to be some form of process where radical demands are filtered and de-radicalised. For the discipline side of the corporatist exchange, we would expect to see some form of internally accepted means to either silence radical members or to ultimately exclude them from the organisation.

Interest organisations are defined and driven by two different but not mutually exclusive forms of logics. One is defined by the logic of membership, the other by the logic of influence (Benz and Burkard, 1998; Dölvik, 1997; Hyman, 2005;
Corporatism as an approach

Corporatism has been criticised for not being able to fully account for interest intermediation and representation in the modern state. But corporatism is a relative tendency, not an absolute one (Wilson, 1983). Political systems regarded as corporatist may handle some decision-making and intermediation of interest groups in a slightly pluralist manner. Systems regarded as pluralist handle some interest mediation in a slightly corporatist manner: political systems may not be completely corporatist, but they may handle some, many or an overwhelming proportion of value allocation in a corporatist manner. Much recent research analysing specific industrial sectors or businesses have used the analytical tools of corporatism, which is not to say that the entire political system functions in a corporatist way (Greenwood, Grote and Ronit, 1992). In addition, the way political systems handle interests and interest groups vary over time. Studying the EU as a political system may incline us to ask the question: is the EU as a whole, corporatist or not? I will refrain from asking or attempting to analyse or answer that question. Instead, I agree with Wilson in regarding corporatism as an analytical tool and a relative tendency (Wilson, 1990). There are several corporatist

71 This has been strengthened by the European Commission’s strategy of ‘domestication of contention’, which targets representatives of civil society and trade unions alike.
European Union structural and institutional arrangement and more notably institutions with corporatist features. Even more notably, corporatism is a useful concept in that it makes visible and stresses that politics and political systems can neither easily be described, nor explained, in simply elitist or pluralist terms. In this sense, corporatism as a concept offers nuances to the picture of institutions’ interactions with interests.

Corporatism is a theoretical approach to analyse the relation between organised interests and the political authorities. Corporatism is also a political practice. As such, corporatism has been rigorously criticised. From a gender perspective it has been argued that processes of corporatist bargaining and negotiation are undeniably dominated by men. Corporatist provisions serve as a site for political interaction by the leaders of state/governing institutions and organised labour and capital. The leaders negotiating in corporatist political systems, the power elite, are most likely to be recruited from the top of various institutions, organisations, business, management etcetera. Those institutions and organisations have historically been exclusively dominated by men, and women have consequently been under represented in the process of corporatist bargaining and negotiating (Bergqvist, 2004; Cockburn, 1996). The general pattern in corporatist political systems is that men and male-dominated class interests are favoured (Bergqvist, 2004; Hernes, 1982, 1987). Women are increasingly present within the parliaments, but they are not increasingly present in the power elites outside of the parliament in corporatist systems. Corporatism reduces the importance of electoral parliamentary governances. Winning elections might guarantee a seat at one of the bargaining tables, but there are many bargaining tables and the formal hierarchy is only a part of the decision-making structure and structure of control. This is perhaps most simply expressed in the words of Rokkan: votes count, but resources decide (Rokkan, 1966).

Schmitter himself claimed some twenty years ago that that research on and research influenced by neo-corporatism has shifted (sideways, as he expresses it) from an earlier preoccupation:

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72 The position of the state in corporatist theory seems, quite paradoxically one might think, unclear: the state recognises, if it doesn’t create, representational monopolies for certain controls of, among other things, interest articulation (compare neglect of the state in (extreme forms) of pluralist theories). But, after recognising the involvement of the state, how does the state grant/recognise monopoly? What concessions does it extract? According to Wilson, in the intermediation between states and groups, neo corporatist theory concentrates on the groups and ignores the state (Wilson, 1983: 111).

73 The full sentence is “Votes count in the choice of governing personnel, but other resources decides the actual policies pursued by authorities” (Rokkan, 1966: 105).
The way in which corporatism is utilised here, is in a combination of ‘old’ and ‘new’: old in the way that I withhold the importance of the structure of organised interest intermediation, new in that I find little use in speculating in the origins of corporatism but rather focus on its empirical existence and assessments of the consequences of corporatist presence in institutionalised politics and interest mediation. What is left then is a corporatist understanding of how interests are organised by and in the institutions of the political system, analysing how and why organised interests are structured as they are, and to the benefit of whom – with what gains and with what losses and in whose interest and what interests? We now turn to the concept of interest.

3.5 Interests

One of the specificities of the EU political system is the institutionalised representation of organised interests as the basis for input legitimacy and output of the European Commission. This relation is explicitly organised around social interests and lobbying activity, not around individuals or aggregates of individual preferences. One of the specificities of the European Women’s Lobby is that the organisation mobilises and organises interests as women, separately from men. Central to both the specificity of the European Commission and the specificity of the European Women’s Lobby is that gender based interests are somehow the basis of organising.

The concepts of interests and interest group have a long history in the political and social sciences.74 This history has been full of conflicts and contradictory

74 According to Jónasdóttir, questions of how to define group or interest group can be traced back to the behavioural revolution in western political science. Central to the discussion was whether ‘interest group’ was to be defined by objective characteristics alone, or if some sense of shared beliefs, attitudes or consciousness among individuals constituting a group was needed, (Jónasdóttir, 1991: 179). To Diamond and Hartsock, the historical foundation of the interest group framework is part of the grounds for rejecting it (Diamond and Hartsock, 1981: 719). Easton refers to the theoretical debates over objective and subjective interests as ‘age-old’ (Easton, 1965a: 312).
views, both in feminist and non-feminist thought (see for example Jónasdóttir, 1991, 1994). However, thinking in terms of, and theorising the concept of, interests have been on the decline in the political and social sciences during the past two or three decades. This decline is not a consequence of developments in the social and political reality, but a consequence of political science itself (Baumgartner and Leech, 2001). Interests and the concept of interests seem to have moved from being central in the scientific study of politics to either be taken for granted or rejected: both without substantial theorising. More recently, however, there has been a reawakening in the interest of interests (Borchorst, Christensen and Siim, 2008; Baumgartner, Gray and Lowery, 2009; Gray, Lowery and Godwin, 2007; Jónasdóttir and Jones, 2009). Interests are being reclaimed (Jordan, Halpin and Maloney, 2004).75

The questions here, then, are: is it relevant to use the concept of interests and can women be assumed to have common interests? If not, why not? And if women can be assumed to have common interests, how can this commonality be understood and conceptualised? To begin with the first question. The idea that women’s political concerns are relevant to be conceptualised in terms of common interests has been rejected by feminist scholars on, at least, two different grounds: either by rejecting the concept of interest, or by rejecting the concept of group. In the first case, interest theory as such is seen as inappropriate for women’s concerns (Diamond and Hartsock, 1981). The concept of interests is not appropriate to understand or analyse women’s political struggles. The very language of interests is conceived of as inapt to understand political life as it fails “to assign priorities to human wants, needs, objectives, and purpose, and in so doing implicitly supports the right of the strong to prevail in every contest” (Bay, 1980: 332, quoted in Diamond and Hartsock, 1981: 719). Diamond and Hartsock (1981) argue that feminist theory needs to move beyond a theory of interests and replace it with a theory of needs.76 They ground their reasoning in a specific form of socialist feminist standpoint, and thus attempt to make a “clean break with the as-

75 Using a highly unscientific, yet amusing, method returned 5.680.000 results on Google scholar for ‘interests’. In comparison, ‘institution’ returned 4.440.000 and ‘identity’ 3.040.000. Ignorance returned 1.320.000 hits.
76 A decade prior to Diamond’s and Hartsock’s article, Jessie Bernard had called into question the interest group framework arguing that it was inappropriate when studying women and children. Rather, the approach to studying women and children should proceed from the concept of common needs/common public interest/good solutions (Jónasdóttir, 1991: 151f. See also Bernard, 1971).
sumptions of the interest group framework” (Diamond and Hartsock, 1981: 720).77

The second ground for rejecting that women’s concerns are relevant to be conceptualised in terms of common interests is to reject the concept of group. The arguments made for the rejection of ‘group’ concern the diversity of women (Watson and Pringle, 1992; see also Gunnarsson, 2008). Butler argues that since women are so diverse we can no longer define them as a group and that the “[v]ery subject of women is no longer understood in stable or abiding terms” (Butler, 1990: 1).78 The post-structuralist argument is that to think of groups, women or others, as having interests in common, is essentialist and totalising. Group thinking imposes common concerns on a necessarily heterogeneous divided category of women (Watson and Pringle, 1992).

Far from everyone rejects the concept of interests or the concept of group (or women as a category, see Gunnarsson, 2008). To return to the initial question: if women can be assumed to have common interests, how can this commonality be understood and conceptualised? On a basic level approach, interests can be understood and analysed as empirical generalisations about individual ideas or individual preferences on specific political issues, that is, interests are conceptualised as subjectively held attitudes (Jónasdóttir, 1991: 160). Social and political interests are nothing more, and nothing less, than an articulation of individual preferences on specific issues in specific contexts where common interest may exist as empirically verifiable generalisations.

Another approach in understanding how a commonality of interests can be theorised and understood includes turning to a different kind of social and political theory based on assumptions about certain gendered interests. Such assumptions are grounded in a theory of a historically specific society and the different or equal conditions of women and men in that historically specific society. Within this field, theorists have derived common interests from for example the sphere of reproduction. Abby Peterson defines women’s issues or women’s questions

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77 In their dialogue with Virginia Sapiro, Diamond and Hartsock accuse Sapiro with the “failure to make” such a “clean break” (1981: 720) while fundamentally disagreeing with Sapiro on the basis of common interest which Virginia Sapiro traces to the reproductive division of labour (Sapiro, 1981). Sapiro argues that, as interests and interest groups are legitimately defined by the allocation of responsibilities in the sphere of production, the private distribution of reproductive responsibilities should also be a legitimate basis for defining common interests and interest groups (Sapiro, 1981: 183).

78 It may be worth noting the roots of this criticism, which underpins much post-structural criticism of the concept of women’s common interests. Butler, who is one of the most often referred to in this tradition, writes in the foreword to Gender Trouble, that her concern is to “criticise a pervasive heterosexual assumption in feminist literary theory” (Butler, 1990).
“through the value system of women’s culture” (Peterson, 1981, here from Jónasdóttir, 1991: 160), a specific feminist, or “womanist” political regime, in Easton’s terms. Virginia Sapiro derives common interests from the reproductive division of labour (Sapiro, 1981). Sapiro argues that, as interests and interest groups are legitimately defined by the allocation of responsibilities in the sphere of production, the private distribution of reproductive responsibilities should also be a legitimate basis for defining common interests and interest groups (Sapiro, 1981: 183). Hernes, on the other hand, distinguishes between women organising as a source of power for men and a power base for men on the one hand, and women’s resources and organisations as a power basis of their own (Hernes, 1982; cf. Jónasdóttir, 1991: 152).

However fruitful, the problem with the above approaches is that none of them analyses women’s interests by providing a theory of social and political antagonism based on sex/gender. This is the ambition of Jónasdóttir’s (1991: 150-180) theorising. Jónasdóttir shares some of Diamond’s and Hartsock’s critique of the limitations of interest theory, and argues that “all the values that women strive for cannot be contained in the historically-conditioned, utilitarian conception of interest” (Jónasdóttir, 1991: 152). Jónasdóttir’s ambition is quite different from that of Diamond and Hartsock: it is not to abandon the concept of interests and replace it with a theory of needs, neither is it to trace the commonality of women’s interests to solely or mainly the reproductive division of labour (Sapiro, 1981). It is rather to “transcend the either/or situation that the Diamond and Hartsock versus Sapiro debate suggests” (Jónasdóttir, 1991: 152). Doing this relates to a specific shortcoming of Sapiro, Hartsock and Diamond, and others, namely that they fail to take into consideration the specific, and specifics of, the actual society in which we live. It is not women-versus-state that characterises gender relations and power in modern western capitalist systems; it is women-versus-men. What is to be analysed is sex/gender versus sex/gender (Jónasdóttir, 1991: 153). The concept of interests is useful, if re-defined. If so, the concept of interests “is particularly significant in analysis of the society we actually live in” (Jónasdóttir, 1991: 152, see also 157-159, 164ff, 168ff).

For the purpose of this thesis, which is analysing part of the society we actually live in, Jónasdóttir’s concept of interest will be used. She makes a distinction between a form/formal and a content/substantive dimension of interests where having a controlling presence is derived from the formal side. The struggle for formal presence, the right for the members of a group to be included as influencing members, that is, having not just a right to access the decision-making institutions, but having the right to a controlling presence once there is a common inter-
What is fundamental here, as opposed to a post-structuralist approach, is the empirical point of departure. Women do mobilise to pursue and represent their interests. They do so on no other ground or commonality than that they are women. The fact that women mobilise and organise as women, that is, separately from men, indicates either that women’s interests are distinctive, or partially somehow different, from an assumed general interest, or that women have interests related to and derivable from a more or less ‘durable inequality’ in relation to men (Tilly, 1998). The former would in turn indicate a view of society-state relations, how the social and the political meet and merge, which is in tune with the interest group theory of the classical behavioural pluralism of Bentley or even Truman, with neo-pluralism and with corporatism (Truman, 1951). The struggle over how the social and political meet is a struggle between a plurality of groups. The latter view, that the commonality of women’s interests can be derived from a durable inequality, implies a view of a more fundamentally gendered social structure. This, in turn, builds on a view that takes the mobilisation and collective action in certain social structures to be expressions of ongoing interest struggles in that certain structure. In a capitalist system, the mobilisation is an expression of an interest struggle based on class and constituted by worker versus capitalist; in a gender system (gender regime, patriarchy, durable unequal system), mobilisation is an expression of an interest struggle based on gender and constituted of women versus men. Collective action and women’s organising can thus be understood as an expression of ongoing interest struggles in a gender regime.

3.6 Summary and research design

Easton argues that the framework of the political system can be used to analyse any concrete political system. The structures and functions performed are general and exist in all political systems. In this study, I have used Easton’s framework first of all to highlight the differences and similarities between the EU and conventional state organisations and thus to clarify the specific character of the EU as a political system. Secondly I use it to identify the relevant structures and functions to focus on in my analysis of the organisation, aggregation and articulation of women’s interests in the EU. As such, Easton is not used to generate theory driven questions or hypothesis, but as an overall framework of analysis which
identifies the structures and functions to study further. For the purpose of this thesis, these key functions are input (demands and supports), output, and feedback. The structures through which these functions are performed are the authorities and the gatekeepers in the environment. The first part of this research project uses these functions to highlight the differences and similarities between the EU and other political systems; to identify the key functions and the structures and to ask how those specificities change, shape and institutionalise the ways in which interests are represented in this system – where, when and how are women’s interests represented? The European Women’s Lobby situated in the environment is, in this context, a structure performing the function of input, output and feedback. The question is whether or not the organisation acts as a gatekeeper and as an intermediary of interests between the political authorities and the environment: if and how does the EWL put demands on the political system and lend its support to the same system by representing its national level member organisations? Is the EWL providing the function of feedback? Can the EWL be identified as acting as an ‘agent’ of political socialisation, a function which’s necessity increases when public support for the political authorities (the Commission) decreases or is generally low? When this support is low, Easton argues, institutional political socialisation must be increased or the institutions must change. To socialise members (organisations and individuals) into supporting existing institutions means that a system may be perceived of as legitimate and not put under stress (i.e. its outputs are accepted as authoritative) even though demand satisfaction is low. Can the EWL be understood as performing this function of socialising the members of the political system? Is the EWL somehow legitimating EU decision-making?

In a context of weak support for the political institutions, we have seen that institutionalists argue that institutional change is difficult, slow and path dependent. The way in which the past intervenes when institutions are changed, institutionalist argue, means that we cannot expect an institution to work in the way it was designed to work: gender blind institutions, intentionally or unintentionally, designed to exclude women can be challenged and changed and institutions designed to advance gender equality may fail to do so. To specify my research question about the institutional opportunities and constraint, such perspective on institutions means that we need to 1) identify and analyse institutions beyond those specifically targeting gender equality and 2) ask how, specifically, do those institutions constrain and make possible the pursuit of women’s interests?

Corporatism identifies further specific opportunities and constraints. To further specify my questions, corporatist theory is utilised where I perceive the po-
political authority (the Commission) as not merely a broker refereeing the struggles between competing societal interest groups. Rather, the Commission is identified by its regular use of its internal sovereignty to shape and manage interest groups’ behaviour. I thus use the corporatist perspective to identify the relationship between the EWL and the Commission, between organised interests and the political authority, and to specifically ask what the trade off in such a system of interest representation is. What is included in the corporatist bond between the EWL and the Commission? What specific opportunities and constraints can be found in my empirical material? Is this a case, as corporatist theory suggests, where the EWL is being created, subsidised, maintained by the political authorities/the Commission, and is the EWL granted representation in policy-shaping and policy-making institutions that comes with the corporatist price of organisational structure, a control of member organisations and an exclusion of some specific interests? Can the EWL deliver what the Commission wants the EWL to deliver? If corporatist theory holds true, we would expect to see a trade off where the EWL is somehow constrained by the Commission granting the organisation some form of representative monopoly. If so, what are the costs of this? Is the EWL constrained as to what interests and issues the organisation can push for and for what agenda it can have? Is the EWL agenda controlled by the Commission? Is the organisation co-opted and controlled by the Commission?

Does the EWL secretariat, its leaders (or someone else) manage its members in specific ways? What ways? Corporatist theory suggests that there is a trade off between influence and legitimacy: organised interests are given influence in exchange for legitimising top-level decisions and the decision-making institution. What is included in the trade off between the influence gained by the EWL and the legitimacy gained by the Commission? Is the corporatist exchange working? Has the EWL been granted representative monopoly in exchange for certain demands – what is included in those demands? What is being restricted? Are there, for example, interests that cannot be lobbied for or interests that have disappeared from the EWL agenda?

How does the corporatist exchange work in practice? That is, how does the EWL deliver its grassroots and their demands to the Commission? Are those demands moderated, de-radicalised, through the process by which they are delivered? If so, then how are the member organisations disciplined? Is there, within the EWL organisational and decision-making structure, a way through which member organisations and their demands can be both moderated and disciplined? In what ways is the EWL driven by the logic of influence and the logic of membership? Is one predominant or is there a balance between the two? If the logic of
influence is predominant, we would expect to find that the EWL has adapted its means, methods and structure to the policy-initiating and shaping process of the EU, but at the cost of losing the capacity to sufficiently articulate the preferences and needs of its member organisations. Is there a distance, an alienation, between the EWL secretariat and the member organisations? Or is the logic of membership predominant? The latter would mean that the EWL sufficiently aggregates, articulates and represents its members, but with less possibility of influencing the decision-making process. Or, is there a balance between the two logics? Is the EWL simultaneously aggregating, articulating and representing its members interests, and organised in such a way to enable a concrete influence on the decision-making? What kind of interests are we talking about here?

Drawing on a theory of interests that differentiates between the form and the content side of interests and argues that the very interest of having a controlling presence in politics in itself is a political interest of women (and men) means that my study opens up for looking at not only what concrete specific issues that are being promoted by the EWL. It means looking at the organisational form of the EWL and how the organisations has been created to be used as a platform from which women can formulate, articulate and lobby for their more specific, content oriented interests in politics. This means that I ask how women act as women rather than on what issues do women act. Looking at interests as both form and content (though focusing on the former) how, more concretely can the EU be understood to either promote or restrain women’s interests? Does the EWL constitute a ‘platform of presence’ from which women can aggregate, organise and pursue their interest in politics? What are the specificities of this platform? Content wise, the subjective interests of women, does the Commission encompass, pick up the issues and preferences expressed by and lobbied for by the EWL? Does the EWL have any impact on the formulation of gender equality policy in the EU? What have been the potential costs and compromises made to gain such influence? (See Appendix B).
Method is most often associated with a number of related assumptions of the social reality in which we conduct our research. These assumptions are generally of epistemological, ontological and/or ideological nature and as such they include something more than the actual techniques used for gathering material and information; they include methodology rather than just method. However, in this thesis, neither methodology nor method is the primary concern: the primary concern is the questions I am attempting to explore. Methods are chosen as a tool to enable and facilitate reliable knowledge concerning some specific conditions about social reality: I select methods for gathering material depending on the research questions posed and the subject matter of my study, I do not select method because I believe that one method is a priori superior to another (cf. Esaiasson et al, 2002; Danermark et al, 2003). The criteria for applying one method rather than another is simply its correspondence with the reality I intend to investigate (Holme and Solvang, 1997). Thus, method is a tool assisting towards achieving a systematic gathering of information and material, assisting in utilising the material gathered, and assisting in presenting the results in such a way that they can be controlled and evaluated by the scientific community and beyond. Moreover, the results generated by research and assisted by the specific method are to enable knowledge and awareness about the societal conditions and relations we are facing (Holme and Solvang, 1997: 12f). Qualitative research has many aims, including generating theory or the empirical description of previously under-researched phenomena (Nylen, 2005). The aim here is to offer a theoretically informed understanding of the empirical conditions at hand and to thereby fill existing voids and contribute to the body of knowledge concerning the institutionalisation and organising of women’s interests. In this particular case, the organising of women and women’s interests in and by the European Union. To produce knowledge about this, I start with the actual problem at hand and ask: what kind of material do I need to study and analyse in order to understand how women organise at EU level and how and why has the EU offered opportunities for women to organise and act at the level of the EU?
4 METHOD AND MATERIAL

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4.1 Aim of chapter

The aim of this chapter is to present and discuss the material and the methods by which I have gathered my material and how I have utilised this material. A range of different methods to collect my material have been used, including interviews, observations and a survey.

4.2 Material

The material gathered and analysed can be summarised as belonging to five different categories of secondary and primary sources: literature; official EU documents; official EWL documents; interview; survey and observation. A review and discussion of previous research, studies and literature is used to address existing voids in the body of knowledge and pinpoint my questions.

4.2.1 Survey

To study the organising of women’s interest at EU level, I needed to identify the key players, the key women’s organisations. At this time, in 2003, I had started to come across the European Women’s Lobby in a wide range of settings and documents relating to women’s organising and women’s interests at the EU level. The name kept popping up all over the place, to put it somewhat plump. I moved on by studying the EWL website, looking at the range of members, associated groups and policy areas. The EWL seemed, at this time, to be involved in almost all civil society gender equality groups at the EU level. However, websites and web links can be rather deceiving. The picture presented by the organisations themselves is a picture controlled by the organisations. It does not necessarily reveal the real involvement or say much about the actual strength of the organisation. I needed to know more before deciding to spend the next five years researching the EWL. To start the research, I wanted to know whether or not the EWL was at all an interesting subject matter of study and an important actor within the EU. I decided to turn my attention to the members of the European Parliament for this purpose: did the members of the European Parliament know about the very existence of the EWL and if so, did they perceive the EWL as a key actor? To retrieve a better understanding of the position of the EWL within the EU political system, I sent a questionnaire to the members of the European Parliament (MEPs) with one purpose in mind: to find out whether or not the EWL was an important actor...
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I asked the MEPs if they had heard of the EWL; whether or not they had ever contacted or been contacted by the EWL and, if so, how regularly. Could they formulate, in a sentence or two, what the EWL was working for? Was the EWL important in their work as members of the parliament? Was the EWL important beyond their work as parliamentarians, and if so, important for what? The result of the survey was clear: the MEPs regarded the EWL as a main civil society actor in the area of women’s interests at the EU level. Not only was the EWL well known as a main actor, it was also seen as an important actor in organising interests; in raising awareness of gender equality and women’s interests both inside and outside of the European Parliament; and as an important actor in representing women’s interests. To a somewhat lesser extent, the EWL was said to be vital to some of the parliamentarians in their political work on gender equality. There were, of course, those MEPs who had never heard of the EWL. There were however no MEPs active in the area of women’s rights or gender equality that did not know of the organisation. The survey provided me with background information and showed some interesting results. For instance, more than 90 percent were familiar with the EWL, and most of the MEPs were able to, in their own words, freely formulate what the EWL is and what the aims of the EWL are. To follow up on the result of the survey, I sent an e-mail to each party group leader and members of the Women’s Rights Committee asking them to formulate more freely their knowledge about and contacts with the EWL. I also asked to meet with four MEPs for an interview. Once again, the result was conclusive: the EWL is the main organisation to study when we want to understand more about the organisation of women’s interests at the EU level.
4.2.2 Interviews

Interviews and meetings with key agents and informants have been used as an important source for completing, revising and cross checking official documents and previous research, and to generate new knowledge about the reality at hand: about the organising of women’s interests as seen from the women organising themselves, and as seen from those in position of institutionally structuring that organising. I have interviewed both actors within the European Parliament (six), and EWL staff (four) and EWL members (two). In addition, I have had quite an extensive amount of informal conversations with EWL staff, EWL general secretaries, two presidents, EWL members, parliamentarians and two women working for the Commission. These latter conversations are not referred to or quoted directly in the thesis. The information received is however used as background knowledge or to confirm information obtained through formal interviews and observations.

EP interviews

During the period 2004-2006 I carried out interviews (December 2004) with four women members of the European Parliament and two assistants. I have had more than a few ad hoc, spontaneous meetings with some parliamentarians, the kind of meetings where I accidentally ran into to someone and asked a question or two (September 2006-January 2007). A second form of encounters has been useful in retrieving information: meetings and conferences within the European Parliament which did not have the primary purpose of providing me with information, but in the interactions between us, there was of course a transfer of knowledge which I have found very useful for my research. Examples of such meetings that I have attended include public hearings in the Parliament, meetings within the Women’s Rights Committee, EWL conferences and presentations of the EWL in the Parliament.

I interviewed four female Swedish MEPs, one male assistant to an MEP (December 2004) and one female assistant to an MEP (November 2006). One of the MEPs and the female assistant requested to remain anonymous. Prior to the interviews I sent a letter describing my research questions and explaining why I wished to interview the person the letter was sent to. When I interviewed the MEPs, the questions dealt with their respective cooperation and connections with women’s organisations in civil society, groups in the parliament and the EWL. I asked about the work with the EWL and how women’s interests were represented. Did they ever contact the EWL, did the EWL contact them, had they been
to the secretariat and so forth? I asked what the Parliamentarians thought about the importance of the EWL, how they worked together and in what way they had contacts with the EWL and other organisations representing women’s interests at the EU level. We discussed what women’s interests were and how the MEPs used the EWL to retrieve information about national level grassroots’ preferences and input from the same. I interviewed the assistants because I thought they might be less political in their reasoning and less strategic in their answers. This turned out to be a somewhat false assumption as the MEPs spoke rather openly and freely in general. In this context, it was interesting to note the complete openness of some of the members of the European parliament whom I interviewed. One parliamentarian stated that “I don’t know anything about the EU really, I’m just a small town woman fed up with gender inequality (Heed, interview December 11 2004).”

**EWL interviews**

I interviewed two policy officers and the policy director at the secretariat of the EWL in December 2004. The interviews did not have the character of question-answer/question-answer, but rather the structure and form of a conversation. Depending on who the interviewee was the themes explored varied. When I interviewed the policy director I asked questions relating to the very mode of lobbying, the connections between civil society groups, and the relation with the Commission. I asked the policy officers about their respective policy area, and how lobbying was carried out within that area. We further talked about in what way the preferences of members were articulated at the level of the EWL; how interests were or were not filtered via the process of motions. When interviewing the staff of the EWL, I was interested in the internal structure of the organisation, the relation between member organisations and the contacts/relations with officials in the European Commission and Members of the European Parliament. More generally, these interviews provided me with knowledge about the EU system as such, and more importantly, EWL perspectives and activities within the EU system and about lobbying the EU. I asked about the constraints and demands put on the EWL by the Commission and about the autonomy of the EWL. I asked how the EWL cooperated with other women’s organisations and about the relation to individual MEPs, commissioners and Commission bureaucrats.

I interviewed two representatives from EWL national co-ordinations via e-mail and discussed the gains and costs of being a EWL national co-ordination with women representatives from one national co-ordination in a less formal face-to-
face encounter. The latter took place as I attended the Swedish Women’s Lobby’s
general assembly in September 2004.

4.2.3 Observations

The majority of my observations of the EWL were made from September 2006 to
January 2007 as I spent time at the EWL secretariat in Brussels. This time gave
me invaluable inside information about how the EWL works and its relation with
the EU decision-making institutions; the relation with politicians on both the EU
and the national levels; the relation between the EU level civil society groups; the
position of the EWL within the EU system and an understanding of lobbying as
based not only on persuasion through letters and phone calls asking politicians to
do something, but rather lobbying as based on good quality research, networking
and information spreading.

The time spent at the EWL secretariat was spent in a somewhat dual capacity. I
was both an intern and an employee and I simultaneously conducted field re-
search and carried out observations for my thesis. This could have led to some
tensions. However, I never experienced any direct conflicts of interests. I think
there are several valid explanations for this. One explanation, and probably the
main one, is the very nature of my research as first and foremost empirical. I am
not trying to answer questions about whether or not the EWL is good or bad for
women; whether or not the EWL is doing a good job; or how the individual staff
members conduct their jobs. I am not evaluating or making any direct normative
claims about the organisations or the people who work for the EWL. I am inter-
ested in the structure and functions of the EWL within the EU system and the
very phenomenon of a unified European wide women’s lobby.

A second explanation is that my dual role was known and outspoken from the
start. In my letter asking to do an internship, I informed the staff member in
charge of the application process, Clarisse Delorme, that I was a PhD candidate
researching the EWL and the institutionalisation of women’s interests in the EU. I
also informed the staff at the secretariat once I arrived. I was surprised and
somewhat impressed with the openness and professionalism of the EWL staff in
this regard. Although it was made clear from the start that I was both an intern
and a researcher, the staff willingly allowed me access to any documents and ar-
chives and I participated in staff meetings as any other member of staff. In my
first meeting with the general secretary, Mary McPhail, I was asked in what way
the EWL staff could assist me in my research.
A third explanation is the very open and frank environment at the EWL office. One of the first questions I got as I arrived was: are you here as a researcher or as an intern? My reply to this was quite simply 'both'. The possible complications of this dual role were thus discussed early on, and I could be completely open about my aims and my agenda.

In addition to observations made at the secretariat in Brussels, I attended a board meeting in Brussels (January 2007); I attended the EWL General Assembly in Prague (2006); and I attended a regional consultation with the UN special rapporteur on violence against women in London (January, 2007). This allowed me to study the interactions between the representatives of the national and European member organisations; between the EWL staff at EU level and the member organisations; and the intermediation with other international institutions. It gave me the opportunity to understand the process of motions, decision-making and networking between the member organisations and between the national level organisations and the EWL secretariat. I attempted to study the relationship between the staff and the member organisations in particular from the view that I had previously picked up regarding the differentiation between secretariat level and membership level. I had obtained the impression that the secretariat was somehow “running the show.”

To understand the process of motions on national level and the relation between national level /EU level I also attended the Swedish Women’s Lobby’s General Assembly in Stockholm 2006.

4.2.4 Documentation

**EWL documents**

Most of the EWL documents I have studied are official papers available from the EWL website. They include position papers, research publications, policy documents, press releases, monthly newsflashes and Annual Reports. There are some exceptions where documents are not available online, documents that I have obtained directly from the secretariat. Those documents include, for example, members’ motions and membership application letters. I have studied policy documents to pinpoint the stance of the EWL in various gender equality issues. In this respect, I have also used position papers. The EWL monthly Newsflash, which I started subscribing to in 2003, and Annual Reports have been used to retrieve knowledge about what areas and issues that are being prioritised and how these

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79 www.womenlobby.org
areas and issues are conceptualised, what lobbying campaigns that have been most important and to sketch the actual history and development of the EWL. The EWL statutes have provided me with an understanding of the internal organisations structure. Here, the study of the statutes in combination with observations at the General Assemblies at both the EU level and member state level have been crucial to acquire an understanding of how the organisation’s structure works in practice, and how the processes of decision-making at the General Assembly has implications for the moderation of demands. I have managed to obtain the full set of the 2006 motions, including the amendments, which the EWL member organisations put forward to the General Assembly, the work programme from 2006 and the work programme that the EWL sent to the European Commission in 2006 (the work programmes are adopted and then implemented in the following year, in this case 2007). The latter constitutes the basis of the EWL work contract with the Commission. The motions contain the preferences and demands of the member organisations and I have used the full set of the motions and compared them with the work programme 2006. This comparison enables me to examine to what extent demands are articulated and moderated through the process of voting on motions and to what extent the adopted motions are included in the EWL work programme. A second step involved comparing the adopted motions with the actual activities undertaken by the EWL staff and Board the year following the adoption of the motions (2006). This comparison has enabled me to examine the articulation and aggregation of demands; whether or not the adopted motions lead to actual activity and lobbying, that is, whether or not the voice granted to membership organisation leads to any actual impact or if the voice is silenced when it comes to interest articulation.

The staff at the European Women’s Lobby secretariat has been most helpful in providing me with information both through allowing me to spend time at the secretariat and also by giving me access to documentation such as membership lists and strategy documents. Certainly, there are things I have missed or may not have been given access to. There is also a risk that what I perceive of as the helpfulness of the staff has made me somewhat biased in my readings – this is always a risk in empirical research.

**EU documents**
I have reviewed and analysed public EU reports, communications, frameworks, codes of conduct et cetera, that is, open sources. Official documents from the principal EU institutions are published in the Official Journal and made available
through the EU websites. Community legal instruments have been studied, including directives. White Papers, Green Papers, Work programs, Commission communications, Parliamentary reports and the EU websites are also a main source of material. Community legal instruments are those instruments that are available to the EU institutions. There are four such legal instruments and they carry different status (TEU, 1992: article 249): Regulations (binding in their entirety and directly applicable in all member states); directives (bind the member states as to the results to be achieved and have to be transposed into the national legal framework); decisions (fully binding on those to whom they are addressed); and recommendations and opinions (non-binding, declaratory instruments). The latter belongs in the category of soft law, which in contrast to directives, regulations and decisions are not legally binding. The lack of a legally binding effect needs to be differentiated from the potential impact in practice; soft law measures such as guidelines, declarations and recommendations can produce legal effects and have an impact on policy development. Commission Green papers are papers published to launch a consultation process at European level. Civil society organisations are invited to raise their opinions on the content of green papers and some are consulted prior to the publication of a green paper. Green Papers are documents published by the European Commission to stimulate discussion on given topics at European level. They invite the relevant parties (bodies or individuals) to participate in a consultation process and debate on the basis of the proposals they put forward. Green Papers may give rise to legislative developments that are then outlined in White Papers. Commission White Papers are documents containing proposals for Community action in a specific area. If and when the Council accepts the proposals of a White paper, the latter can lead to an EU action programme in the area or ‘mould’ the development of EU policies. A White Paper normally follows on from a Green Paper.

4.3 Summary and discussion

I have gathered a considerable amount of primary sources, most notably the material I gathered through observations at the EWL secretariat and at the General Assembly, and through my interviews. Nonetheless, secondary sources have also been used. Even though primary sources were collected at a specific time and

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80 All EU official documents are available from the official website http://europa.eu/index_en.htm.
81 A full list of Commission White Papers published from 1985 can be found at http://europa.eu/documents/comm/white_papers/index_en.htm
moment, they provide me with both a general overview and a richness of nuances and details of the daily work at the EWL secretariat, the EWL relations with the political authorities of the EU, and the relation between the EWL secretariat, Board and member organisations.

**Reflexivity**

There are, as always in research, tensions within the methods used and in the material I have gathered. Most conspicuously, the potential tensions arise from the fact that I was an intern at the EWL and simultaneously a researcher. There are no guarantees that this dual role has not had an effect on the study. One could however argue, as does for instance Rönnblom (1999) that such a dual role creates a closeness to the research subject which enables a positive effect on the study as it leads to a better understanding of the research subject (Rönnblom, 1999).
Part II

Institutions and Interests
A reoccurring question in EU gender studies is whether or not the EU is good for women. Does the EU promote women's interests? The answer is sometimes a one-dimensional policy-content oriented 'no' (Guerrina, 2002; McGlynn, 2000). There are, however, considerable variations in the views on the extent to which developments within the EU have increased or decreased gender equality and on the extent to which the EU has promoted women's interests. There is an argument that the EU could have the potential to transform gender relations at large (Walby, 2004). Others view the EU as incapable of achieving anything beyond equal treatment as sameness (Rees, 1998). There is an argument that the EU is truly toothless outside the policy field of employment and has had a very limited impact on gender equality (Elman, 1996; Stratigaki, 2005).

Even within the policy field of employment, existing EU policies to increase women's participation in the labour market (for example European Commission, 1996, 1997a, 1998, 2001) have been criticised for exclusively targeting labour market regulation and competitiveness (Ostner, 2000); not challenging the norm of the (male) full time worker (Duncan, 1996; Ostner and Lewis, 1995); and for how the shift from reconciliation (understood as the possibility to combine paid and unpaid work) to employability in employment policy has become a detriment to the progress of gender equality (Stratigaki, 2004). What these studies have in common, in addition to being critical of the EU's potential to transform gender relations, is a focus on the content of policy as the problem. The criticism of the content of EU policy is important criticism, but it shows only one side of the coin.

There are exceptions to this focus on policy content. There are EU studies of the parliamentary representation of women (Lovenduski, 1986; Marsh and Norris, 1997; Stevens, 2009; Woodward, 2002) of the factual or possible interaction between femocrats, academics and formally organised voices in the women's movement (Woodward, 2004); studies of how the form side of decision-making has, or has not, had an impact on gender equality and gender equality policy (O'Connor, 2006); and studies of the mobilisation of women's groups (Hoskyns, 1996; Lombardo, 2003).

Here the purpose is to underline and analyse the importance of the other side of the interest coin as well, that is, the development and existence of the EU and EU policy as an arena for women to generate and sustain their presence in politics. The content oriented extent of this impact is another question. This means moving away from a strictly policy-content oriented analysis and considering...
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more power-oriented issues in terms of women’s interests and the concept of interests as developed by Jónasdóttir (1988, 1991, 1994).

In this chapter, what I am interested in is not a quantitative measurement of the increase or the decrease of gender equality through gender equality policy, but the ways in which EU institutions, including policy, offer both a potential for and part of an explanation to why women organise and pursue their interests as women at the EU level. A second way to think about how the EU offers an opportunity is to look at policy as an institution. Are there significant overlaps between the policy domains so that the EU does in fact deal with what often is regarded as women’s issues beyond the area of employment and the economic domain? This approach questions the rigidity and robustness of political institutions and politically constructed boundaries between policy domains by making the interconnectedness and spill over between the different policy domains visible. As such, the approach is a theoretical one. Empirically, an indicator here is the extent to which the EU supports women’s organisations in civil society that predominantly mobilise to pursue issues other than employment and equal pay.

5.1 Aim of chapter

The aim of this chapter is to analyse how EU institutions and their development, including policy, can be understood as an opportunity and support for women to organise and pursue their social and political interests within the European Union. I ask how the institutional developments are related to the growth of women’s organisations. I ask how institutions not necessarily designed to challenge gender inequality may have come to do so and how women have organised to make use of those opportunities. I ask how the EU has had an impact on member state level and how this impact can be understood as a form of institutional opportunity for women to organise and pursue their interests. By showing how the constructed boundaries between different domains of EU policy are interrelated and how there is a spill over from one domain to the other, which expands the domains in which the EU has an impact on women’s interests, I make the claim that the EU offers more opportunities where women can intervene as organised interests. I support this claim by mapping the main EU women’s organisations and the policy areas in which they are active. What women’s organisations are supported and/or financed by the EU? What are the impacts of EU policy?
5.2 Gender equality institutions as opportunities and support

Following the Treaty of Rome, signed in 1957, local and national interest organisations and pressure groups started paying attention to the increasingly significant and unparalleled development of Community institutions.\(^{82}\) The origin of the European Community lies in the economically motivated European Coal and Steel Community. This origin made the cooperation exclusively economic, never outspokenly social.\(^{83}\) The Schuman Plan, elaborated by Jean Monnet and put forward by the French foreign minister Robert Schuman in 1950, aimed at making war in Europe unthinkable and materially impossible by creating a common market for coal, iron, and steel in Europe (Schuman Declaration, 1950).\(^{84}\) Six countries signed the Treaty of Paris in 1951 establishing the European Coal and

\(^{82}\) The institutionalisation of the European space and the integration of Europe are remarkable from many perspectives. One rarely discussed is how the creation of the EU was academically and theoretically informed from the very start. Theories of political integration, most notably functionalism as developed by David Mitrany and Ernst Haas, were the leading ideologies behind the union building. Usually, research and academic scholars engage later on in the process of organisation evaluation. There are, of course, exceptions where it could be argued that political philosophy and theory to an extent always have had an influence on state formation. Some of the more notable ones include, for example, John Locke and the American constitution; the 1700s France; and the influence of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky on the communist state formations.

\(^{83}\) This is a modified truth. Even though the agreement to lift restrictions on related imports and exports among members was the outcome of negotiations, the creation of a European Economic Community had political and social implications as well. The ECSC was a cold war enterprise and to rebuild a stronger Federal German Republic, stronger in terms of remilitarised and fiscally fit, was politically motivated rather than economically. Secondly, the economic arrangements were expected to have a spill-over effect into the political and social spheres. Thirdly, as will be discussed later on in the chapter, the rigidity of domain separation in theory is not possible to uphold in reality.

\(^{84}\) The Schuman Plan would provide Germany with the possibility to restore some international respectability. For the French it would mean a conclusion of the French occupation of the Saarland, which was only seen possible were Germany to be part of a common market in coal and steel (Swann, 2000). The cooperation would be profitable for both parties as it would ensure the fusion of markets and the expansion of production. The UK’s somewhat uneasy relationship with the EU can be traced back to the very founding ideas of the Schuman Plan. According to the Schuman Plan the production of coal and steel should be pooled and placed under the authority of a supranational High Authority. In doing this, the aim was to eliminate national barriers to trade and increase competition. There would however be regulations. The High Authority was to levy taxes, fix minimum prices and production quotas in times of imminent and manifest crisis. British Prime Minister Clement Attlee, speaking in the House of Commons, said “we on this side [of the House] are not prepared to accept that the most vital economic forces of this country should be handed over to an authority that is utterly undemocratic and is responsible to nobody (quoted in El-Agraa 2007; cf. Swann 2000). The UK refused the invitation to join.
Steel Community. The cooperation based on the Schuman Plan had nothing to do with gender equality or women’s rights. Instead, the origins of EU women’s policy lie in the Treaty of Rome, signed seven years later. Article 119 of the Treaty of Rome states that

Each Member State shall during the first stage ensure and subsequently maintain the application of the principle that men and women should receive equal pay for equal work ... Equal pay without discrimination based on sex means: (a) that pay for the same work at piece rates shall be calculated on the basis of the same unit of measurement; (b) that pay for work at time rates shall be the same for the same job (Treaty of Rome, 1957: article 119).

Article 119 continues, after the commonly quoted section above, that the purpose is “to correct or eliminate the effect of specific distortions which advantage or disadvantage certain branches of activity.” The obligation to “ensure the application of the principle of equal pay for equal work” fell on the member states (Treaty of Rome, 1957: article 119). Thus, gender equality provisions and norms in the EU have primarily economic, not political or social origins.

This first Community level gender equality provision was labour market oriented and had the purpose to eliminate market distortions (Szyszczak, 2000). It was the French who, for economic reasons, insisted on the inclusion of an equal pay for equal work provision in the Treaty. French worker protection legislation included laws on equal pay and was more advanced than the corresponding legislation in the rest of the Community member states. Consequently, French women workers had higher wages than women throughout the rest of the Community. The French argued that the worker protection legislation constituted market inequalities between the Community member states. In order to make up for competitive disadvantages that the French protection legislation created, the legislation should have to be harmonised, that is, legally binding in the entire Community area. Any other decision would run badly with the Community’s ambition to create a common market by removing barriers toward the mobility of goods and labour, capital and services, while still enhancing each member state’s competitiveness. As a result, Article 119 was inserted into the Treaty section on social policy (Hoskyns, 1996; Ostner, 2000).}

85 The signatories were Belgium, France, West Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Italy.
86 For a fuller account of how and why Article 119 was included in the Treaty, see Hoskyns, 1996: 52-57 and Mazey, 2000a.
During the following decade, the inter-governmental cooperation developing in Europe remained a mainly economic agreement. Gender equality and social issues were at best left somewhere in the margins. However, the equal pay principle, though not designed to enhance gender equality, has in fact been used by women and women’s organisations for that very purpose (Cichowski, 2003). Further, it has been argued that it was mainly industrial and business interest organisations that paid an increasing attention to Community institutions (Greenwood, 1998, 2007b). The dominance of business interests is partly explained by the direction of the development of the Community and the content of Community policy. However, what is often lacking in the mainstream literature on EU interest organisations and lobbies covering the initial years of the “institutionalisation of European space” (Stone Sweet, Fliegstein and Sandholtz, 2001b) is that from the 1960s until the end of the 1970s organisations that already were, or later would become, involved in women’s issues and/or women’s rights issues, set up offices in Brussels (Philip and Gray, 1996). This is the time frame when the second wave feminist movement ascended globally (Katzenstein and McClurg-Mueller, 1987) and positioned women’s rights issues on the policy-making agenda of national level politics.

5.2.1 Opportunities to mobilise

Equal pay for equal work became one of the Community’s founding principles when equal pay was adopted in 1957 (Treaty of Rome). For many years article 119 constituted not only the first European Community equal treatment principle; it was the only one. However, the equal pay principle was never used. No attempts were made by national governments to apply article 119 once the Treaty came into force. It was not until the late 1960s when a group of Belgian women organised to pursue their interests of equal pay and equal treatment in the workplace that the article was implemented.

A case of mobilisation using the equal pay principle

In the late sixties Belgian women in armaments factories raised their collective of voices as women and started campaigning to push the demand of equal pay for equal work. Simultaneously, a group of Belgian airhostesses had come together to pressure for equal treatment at the workplace. A group of women lawyers decided to take the primacy of Community law to the test and brought the case before the Belgian court. The result of the three different groups of women acting
simultaneously and collectively was the Defrenne case. The Defrenne case refers to the Belgian airhostess Gabrielle Defrenne who was working for the Belgian airline Sabena. Being a woman, Defrenne was forced to retire at the age of forty with minimal severance pay and loss of pension entitlements. The retirement age for men was sixty. The Defrenne versus The Belgian State was taken to the Belgian Administrative Court for the annulment of the special pensions scheme for air crew, on grounds that this annulment was contrary to article 119 of the Treaty of Rome. At the basis of the case against the state was the argument that the pension scheme in question could be regarded as deferred pay. With women's and men's different retirement ages, it was argued that the pension scheme constituted discrimination based on sex. As there was no explicit statement on equal pay under Belgian law, the Administrative Court referred the case to the European Court of Justice. The ruling of the court was that pay as defined in article 119 did not include pay from statutory social security schemes and therefore discrimination on grounds of sex resulting from such schemes was not covered under the article. Even though the case was dismissed, it sparked off another wave of organising. This time, the organising was made up by women both from within and outside of the Community institutions, most notably by women from within the European Commission (Hoskyns, 1996). When a second and a third round of the Defrenne case ended up in the European Court of Justice, with a slightly different framing, the political context had changed. In the third and final Defrenne ruling, the European Court of Justice made clear that article 119 had the same legal effects as any other Treaty article and as such it could not be ignored or overruled: it was valid on national level just as any other principle or article of the Treaty.

The Equal Pay Directive (75/117/EEC), the Equal Treatment Directive (76/207/EEC) and the Social Security Directive (79/7/EEC9) are outcomes of the actions and actors, a combination of institutions and interests, sparked of the Belgian women organising and mobilising on EU level. By using article 119 of the Treaty of Rome to demand equal pay and equal treatment in the workplace women took a discrimination case to the European Court of Justice, thus surpassing national level courts, to get a ruling on European level. The Defrenne I, Defrenne II and Defrenne III rulings of 1971, 1976 and 1978 provided supranational opportunity structures for women across Europe, by allowing women to demand protection from labour related discrimination and when not protected bring discrimination claims before national and European courts. The 1976 Defrenne ruling led directly to the activation of article 119 in the Treaty of Rome.
(article 141 in the Treaty of Amsterdam) and to the adopting of a chain of implementing directives on gender equality in the workplace.

This comprises an example of when EU institutions have constituted a platform to be used by women to organise in the pursuit of their interests. There are further conclusions to be drawn. Firstly, the mobilisation surrounding the Defrenne case was generated by the possibility offered by the EU for its citizens to side-step national level courts and governments. Women organised on the EU level in order to use the available EU institutions to pursue their interests on national level, thus surpassing the decision-making authorities on national level by going directly to the European level. It is an example of women using the EU level and the European Court of Justice to push the national level to not only implement, but to legislate on equal treatment or gender equality in the first place. Prior to the final Defrenne ruling, there was no legislation protecting women from pay discrimination in Belgium.

Secondly, the Defrenne case shows how EU institutions have provided an opportunity structure for women to organise, as women, to pursue their social and political interests. It is not only the case that the ruling at the EU level made equal pay legally binding in the member states, it is also the case that the equal pay principle generated a mobilisation of women who organised as a collective.

Thirdly, the mobilisation surrounding the Defrenne case and the outcome of the mobilisation show how institutions originally not designed to target gender equality issues or women’s interests have in fact been used to do so. Institutions are changeable and although path dependent, not set in stone.

5.2.2 Impacts beyond the economic domain

The 1970s witnessed a period when gender equality became increasingly important to the European Community (European Commission, 1974; 1975), not least because of women’s increasing mobilisation (Cichowski, 2003). Following the Paris Summit in 1972, the European Commission was asked by the EU heads of government to draw up a social action programme (European Commission, 1974). The programme, adopted by the European Council in 1974 lists as a priority “the undertaking of action to achieve equality between men and women as regards access to employment and vocational training and advancement, and as

87 The meaning of gender equality has been, and still is, changing in EU policy. What earlier was referred to as equal treatment became equal opportunities and in the late 1990s gender mainstreaming was introduced (see e.g. Booth and Bennet, 2002; Rees, 1996).
regards working conditions including pay” (European Council, 1974: 3). This was, as Meehan has argued, part of the 1970s attempt to enhance the popular legitimacy of the Community. Part of this popularisation of the Community was lead through the strengthening of social policy (Meehan, 1993). Despite the underlying rationale, it can be argued that women encountered a somewhat more favourable policy-making atmosphere on Community level than in the member states.88

The Equal Pay Directive was the first European Community directive on equality of women and men (Council Directive 75/117/EEC). The directive relates to member state application of the principle of equal pay for men and women. Not only did the directive prohibit pay discrimination between women and men for equal work by stating that equal pay for equal work should be the ruling principle; equal pay should also be applied to work of equal value:

[...] for the same work or for work to which equal value is attributed, the elimination of all discrimination on grounds of sex with regard to all aspects and conditions of remuneration. In particular, where a job classification system is used for determining pay, it must be based on the same criteria for both men and women and so drawn up as to exclude any discrimination on grounds of sex (Council Directive 75/117/EEC: article 1).

In the year following the first directive on equal treatment of women and men a second equal treatment directive was adopted (Council Directive 76/207/EEC). The 1976 Equal Treatment Directive concerning employment, vocational training, promotion and general working conditions extended the principle of equal treatment. It did so by extending the narrow focus on the absence of sex discrimination in employment and by including areas outside of the actual workplace:

88 The atmosphere obviously differed between the different member states. The policy development in the Nordic countries may be classified as creating a somewhat more favourable atmosphere than the Community level rather than the other way around. However, the Nordic countries were yet not members of the Community. Denmark, the first to join, joined in 1973, Sweden and Finland joined in 1994, and Norway and Iceland are not EU members. Iceland submitted its application for EU membership to the Swedish EU Presidency on July 16, 2009 (Government of Iceland, 2009). Norway has held two referendums on the issue of EU membership (1972 and 1994) but a majority of the Norwegian population rejected EU membership on both occasions. Prior to the referendums, in 1962, Norway did actually apply for membership. The accession negotiations, which took place simultaneously as the negotiations with Denmark, Ireland and the UK, were all suspended as the French rejected the UK’s application (Seeeter, 1996).
Any form of discrimination based on sex, either directly or indirectly, is prohibited as concerns access to the job market (selection criteria), vocational training, promotion and general working conditions. (Council Directive 76/207/EEC: Article 1).

Where the previous directive on equal pay had talked about the absence of discrimination in the workplace, the Equal Treatment Directive states that the principle of equal treatment includes more than the mere absence of discrimination in employment by, to a certain extent, authorising affirmative action.89 Both of these directives have an anti-discrimination and equal treatment focus and their scope is limited to the labour market and employment. The scope of the latter directive is wider than the Equal Pay Directive of 1975, but they are in effect seen as limited to the economic domain of women’s and men’s lives. In 1979, the principle of equal treatment was extended to include equal treatment for men and women in matters of social security (Council Directive 79/7/EEC). The 1979 Social Security Schemes introduced the principle of equal treatment in the areas of security benefits, pensions, and health insurances etcetera but only applies to the working population, it thus provides for the implementation of the principle of equal treatment in risk areas such as sickness, disability, old age, workplace accident, occupational sickness and unemployment. As such, its application is limited to the labour market, employment policy and the economic domain. The directive is seen as limited to the economic domain of women’s lives, and thus incapable of challenging the underlying structure of the gender regime (Walby, 2009b).

**Economy and the Family**

From 1992 to 2003 there is a set of directives that extends equal treatment to women and others who are in so called a-typical employment, that is, employment not necessarily based on the model of the full time worker. They are the directives regulating maternity, paternity and parental leave and flexible working hours (Council Directives 92/85/EEC, 93/104/EC, 96/34/EC, 2000/34/EC). Such employment-focused directives included non-discrimination against part-time working, and should of course be seen in the context of the EU agenda on full employment. The strategy of the directives is based on the goal of full employment and the reconciliation of working and family life rather than on the same-ness strategy found in the equal treatment directives of the 1970s and 1980s.

89 The Court of Justice of the European Communities did however, by the Kalanke and Marshall rulings, manage to reverse the process towards positive action as a means to combat inequalities and unequal treatment in employment (Lundström, 1997).
Though formally limited to women’s and men’s capacities to work, the directives in effect also regulate women’s and men’s capacity to care. Child care is incorporated into the organisation of work (Walby, 2004). The reconciliation strategy and the directives, although formally limited to the economic domain of the labour market and employment, clearly spill over to the private domain of family life. When the capacity to be in paid work is regulated in number of hours, so is the capacity to be in un-paid work. A second example of EU policy having extensive consequences for the organisation of the family constitution is the 2000 directive which prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation in employment (Council Directive, 2000/78/EC). For employment, this means that ‘non-standard’ families are to be included in the employers’ family based benefit policies. Even more importantly, it requires a legal recognition of homosexual families. Further, the Commission has put forward a proposal for a Council Directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation by both the public and private sector in several areas outside the labour market (European Commission, 2008g). These areas include health care, social care, social security, education and the supply of goods and services, including housing. A general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation on the grounds of religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation is already established by Directive 2000/78/EC. In the aftermath of these directives, EU member states have begun to legally recognise civil partnerships, thus challenging the heterosexual family norm (Kuhar, 2009; Strid, Armstrong and Walby, 2008). The non-discrimination directive has serious implications for the right to fertility treatment, adoption, artificial insemination and family constellations (Carbin, Harjunen and Kvist, 2009).

A further area where the EU’s prohibition of discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation will have an impact outside of the economy is migration and family reunification.

**Economy and Sexuality**

Similar arguments can be made for the policy domain of sexuality. Sexuality, reproduction and family policy fall outside of the legal remit of the EU. However, the free movement of people, goods and services is ensured by the Treaty. In consequence, women in member states where abortion and/or contraceptives are illegal cannot be prohibited to travel across the border to the neighbouring country to access these goods or services. Not only can such travel across borders not be forbidden, but free movement of services requires that a member state provides
information about the existence and accessibility of these services. The right to sell a service or goods in any EU member state makes it illegal for another member state to limit information about the existence and availability of these services. Women from Ireland, where abortion is illegal, can cross the border to the UK to obtain an abortion (Best, 2005). Spain has more liberal abortion legislation than the UK. This has led to the UK Crisis Pregnancy Centres having to inform women who have gone passed the number of weeks of their pregnancy for having a legal abortion in the UK about the possibility of travelling to Spain to obtain, what in the UK would have been regarded as an illegal, abortion (Strid, Armstrong and Walby, 2008).

The Council Directive on Community Law as concerns Pregnancy and Motherhood of 1992 aims to protect pregnant women from the various physical and psychological risks involved in certain jobs (Council Directive 92/85/EEC). The employer must assess the employees’ duties and job situation, and if the assessment reveals a threat to the safety or health of pregnant workers, the employer must ensure that she is assigned other duties or temporarily excused from work. The directive goes even further by stating that women may not be required to work at night either during their pregnancy or during a period of time following leave subsequent to the birth of a child, the length of which is specified by legal bodies (Council Directive 92/85/EEC). Though exclusively targeting the domain of the economy and the policy field of employment, the directive in effect regulates the family and private life of women workers. It even has an effect on women’s sleeping patterns.

**Immigration and Violence**

Violence against women does not fall within the EU legal remit, while trafficking does. Peculiarly, trafficking is defined as violence against women by both the UN and by the EU. Trafficking is a matter of crossing borders and immigration,

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90 The British National Party, an extremist right wing nationalist party, dubbed the phenomenon of Polish women travelling to the UK for abortions “NHS Health Tourism” (BNP, 2008).

91 For example, the United Nations World Conference on Women in Mexico, 1975, Copenhagen 1980 and Nairobi 1985 identify trafficking as a form of violence against women; the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, address trafficking in women, although there is no explicit reference to violence against women; and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, adopted by the General Assembly in 1993, includes trafficking in the definition of violence against women. On EU level, a range of important documents that link trafficking to violence against women have been adopted: In October 2005, the Commission issued its Communication “Fighting trafficking in human beings – an integrated approach and
hence Trafficking falls within EU competence. The link between trafficking and prostitution enables intervention in the field of prostitution. What is further important to note is the sustained funding of EU level women’s organisations active in this policy domain. The European Women’s Lobby and Violence Against Women Europe both receive their core funding from Commission.

The revision of the 1976 Equal Treatment Directive in 2002 (Council Directive 2002/73/EC) includes definitions of sexual harassment, of indirect and direct discrimination and recognises sexual harassment as a form of discrimination. Governments of the member states will have to introduce legislation requiring employers to introduce measures to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace and to draft equality plans on a regular basis. Included in the concept of sexual harassment is stalking, and stalking is defined (both by the UN and the EU since the Beijing Platform for Action, 1995) as a form of violence against women. Though specifically targeting employment and workers’ rights, the directive stipulates a case for preventing violence against women, when this may lead to unequal treatment in the workplace.

In addition to the above mentioned directives the Gender Directive (Council Directive 2004/113/EC) implements the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services. It is the first directive explicitly on gender equality that explicitly goes beyond the policy area of employment.

The Critique

Critics argue that the procedure surrounding the negotiations of Article 119 and the restriction to employment and the economic domain of the three subsequent directives signify a, by the EU, constructed barrier between social policy and economic policy, between the private sphere and the political sphere (Mazey, 2000a; Rees, 1998). Equal pay was based on the same national economic interests as equal treatment in trade. The effect of negotiating, basing and applying equality Directive 2004/113/EC) to workers. The restrictive nature of the directives signifies a barrier between social policy and economic policy, between the private sphere and the political sphere (Mazey, 2000a; Rees, 1998). Equal pay was based on the same national economic interests as equal treatment in trade. The effect of negotiating, basing and applying equality for and in economics rather than the social and political is, it has been argued,
that the spheres of women’s lives remain separated. Women’s economic role is separated from the domestic role. Gender relations outside the work place were never examined and the constructed split between the public and the private, the economic and the social remain a corner stone in EU policy-making (Rees, 1998). Social policy is neglected and gender equality issues are related only to the labour market and women and men as workers. The concept of equal treatment was already in use when article 119 was invoked, but the equal treatment principle applied only to that of barriers of trade between member states. The limitations of an equal treatment framing restricted to the economic domain are highlighted by Rees who argues that however essential a legal framework providing for equal treatment between women and men:

Such approach focuses on the establishment of rights and procedures rather than outcomes. One of the main criticisms of European law on EU [equal opportunities] is that it focuses on issues of equal treatment for men and women as workers; hence it leaves the inequalities rooted in the gender contract largely untouched. In other words, it addresses the symptoms rather than the causes of inequality. As a consequence, it is clearly limited in its potential effectiveness (Rees, 1998: 32) (emphasis added).

Hence, the argument that EU policy on gender equality cannot challenge the existing gender regime consists of two components: EU policy is limited to, on the one hand, an equal treatment focus on procedures rather than outcomes, and to women and men as workers in the economic domain on the other (Rees, 1998). EU policy cannot challenge the gender regime as it is based on the male, full time worker and it lacks remit in areas outside of employment and goods and services (Ostner and Lewis, 1995). Firstly, Rees makes her argument as if the gender contract, or the sexual contract to speak with Pateman (1988), to which Rees is referring, does not include men and women as workers. Secondly, the argument can be challenged by making the interconnectedness between various domains of the gender regime visible (Walby, 2004) and by looking at the spill over effects from one policy field to another and by investigating the way in which EU policy enables women’s collective organising. The effects of the equal pay, equal treatment and social security directives are not limited to the economic domain. They can only be seen as limited to being exclusively or purely economic when a rigid boundary between the different spheres of women’s lives is already part of the theoretical perspective used to analyse the directives. The equal pay directive ensures, in theory, that working women can support themselves, which surely has an effect on women’s lives outside that of the labour market. The directives are
not limited to women and men as workers as they have an effect outside the realm of work. Such effects reach beyond procedures and beyond ‘pure’ economic affairs. There has been substantial progress in legislation and policy on equal opportunities and gender equality in the EU (Mazey, 2000b; Roth, 2003) from the inclusion of equal pay to the incorporation of gender mainstreaming in 1990 (European Commission, 1990; 1996). EU legislation in the area of gender equality enforces equal pay for women and men for same work and work of equal value; equal treatment in employment and vocational training, promotion and working conditions; and equal treatment in social security. It protects workers in cases of pregnancy and maternity and includes specific rights for parental leave for both mothers and fathers. Protection is ensured against direct and indirect discrimination based on sex, sexual harassment, and harassment based on sex.

The inequality grounds on which the EU has legislated against discrimination is not limited to sex. Following the entry into force of the Amsterdam Treaty, the EU is empowered to take action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation (Council, 2001; EC Treaty, article 13; EC, 2001b). Yet, the criticism remains. The EU is, through its legal remit and the principle of subsidiarity, limited to anti-discrimination in employment policy. As stated initially in this chapter, it is important to distinguish between those domains where the EU has a legal remit and political authority, and those in which it has not. To the former category belongs regulation of the markets for labour, goods and services. To the latter category belongs welfare policy including childcare policy, reproductive policy, and policy on violence against women. The EU is criticised for not being capable of enforcing policy in those areas. This is part of the view of the EU non-women friendly comes from. The EU is seen as toothless in the domains generally concerning women’s interests, specifically reproduction/family and violence. It has been argued that without a remit in those domains, the EU will be incapable of transforming gender relations. Such reasoning is based on the idea that formal remit excludes interventions in other domains. I argue that the separation of domains and policy areas is not rigid. The early EU equal treatment directives were based on a sameness model (that is equality between women and men through sameness – women are to become like or behave like men) and as such suffered from the norm of the male, full time worker and breadwinner model. Recent directives challenge this norm and challenge the boundary between the economic domain, the family domain, and the intimate/reproductive domain.

For women to be part of, to have a say in, the process where these directives and policies are initiated, shaped and decided on is imperative. One of the ques-
tions posed in the first chapter was: why have women organised to engage with 
the EU polity when the EU is seen as incapable of engaging in policy that con-
cerns women’s interest, interests conventionally understood as for example re-
production and violence against women? This analysis points towards the possi-
bility of that very question builds on false premises and is thus incorrectly framed: 
the EU does in fact engage in regulation of those areas.

5.2.3 Impacts on the national level

The EU has had a considerable impact on the development of gender equality in 
its member states. The more significant this impact is, the more significant the 
existence of an organisation such as the EWL can be assumed to become. When 
decisions over national level gender equality legislation are made at European 
level, women wanting to be among those making the decisions, wanting an im-
 pact on the development of gender equality and the representation of women’s 
interests must seek presence at the EU level. What then, concretely, has happened 
at national level? When the Equal Pay and Equal Treatment Directives were 
adopted on European Community level, member states (six of them at the time) 
transposing the directives either transformed their national legislation or intro-
duced gender equality legislation for the first time.92 In Belgium, women’s status 
on the labour market became a specific legal issue for the first time (Martens, 
2007a). In France, the 1970s marked the beginning of the diversification of state 
intervention. Equal treatment in employment was progressively adopted after the 
EU equal treatment directives (Jarty, 2007). In Germany, or at the time West 
Germany, the drafting of the German National Equal Treatment Act (Compliance 
Law 1980) arose from the obligation to transpose European Directives into na-
tional law (MacRae, 2006; Urbanek, 2007). The first explicit gender equality pol-
icy, framed within the policy field of employment, was also due to compliance 
with EU law (Urbanek, 2007). German gender equality is still, although to a 
lesser degree, predominantly employment focused. The Netherlands saw its first 
equal treatment institution in 1974 when an advisory group of experts was set up 
to explore the possibilities of developing, what in Netherlands was called, eman-
cipation policy (Lauwers, 2007). Member states not transposing the directives 
were taken to court by the European Commission. In Falkner and Trieb’s Worlds 
of Compliance, Luxembourg is placed in the ‘world of neglect’ category and cate-

92 At that time the member states of the Community included Belgium, France, Germany, 
Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands.
The equal treatment directives of the 1970s had an impact on states not yet members of the European Community as well. Shortly after the drafting of the two equal treatment directives, the UK, not yet a member of the Community, drafted similar legislation. Despite the fact that such legislation met fierce opposition from employers and employers’ organisations the two acts to make sex discrimination in pay and employment illegal were voted through in the House of Commons (EOC, 2005). The UK Equal Pay Act was passed in Parliament the same year as the Equal Pay Directive and the UK Sex Discrimination Act came into force in 1975. The two anti-discrimination acts were passed as it was a prerequisite for joining the European Community (Strid, Armstrong and Walby, 2007). Sweden, which was not to join the EU until 1994, passed its first equal opportunities act four years after the EU Equal pay directive. The 1979 Equal Opportunities Act (Act 1979:1118) prohibits sex discrimination in the labour market and requires employers to actively work towards equal opportunities for men and women in the working environment (Björklund, 2007). Indirect dis-
crimination was included in the revised Equal Opportunities Act of 1992 (Pincus, 1998). In Sweden, as in the UK, equal treatment legislation was passed and implemented despite opposition from employers’ organisations. It has been argued that despite, or rather because of Sweden’s position as the leading gender equality EU member state, a certain kind of pressure to maintain this position has lead to Sweden continually adopting more progressive gender equality measure. The EU membership is thus perceived of as pushing Sweden to go further towards gender equality (Proposition 2005/06:155).

5.3 The Single European act

The 1986 Single European Act marks an important step in the integration and development of the European Community.93 It also marks a shift in the organising of women’s interests, despite the fact that equal opportunities were left out of the negotiations (Cichowski, 2003). Until the signing and realisation of the Single European Act, the Community’s policy area coverage was limited by a lack of remit and by the decision-making procedures of the EU.94 The principle of supremacy of Community law over national law had been established early on, but the 1966 Luxembourg Compromise reversed the integration process by issuing national governments’ veto right over the European Commission’s proposals. The impact of the veto right and the limitations of the EU remit could be understood as shaping relatively weak incitements for national interest organisations and groups to turn directly to the EU institutions, and thereby, at least partly, explaining why the larger part of European level lobbying by national interest organisations was directed towards political and administrative institutions at national level. It also reflects the fact that the real decision-making power at EU level prior to the Single European Act was predominantly concentrated to the Council of Ministers, representing national economic and political interests (Mazey and Richardson, 1993b).

93 The Single European Act was the first modification of the foundational treaties of the European Community, the Treaty of Paris and the Treaty of Rome (SEA, 1987). Jacques Delors, President of the European Commission 1985-1995, summarised the main objectives of the Single European Act as “the commitment of implementing simultaneously the great market without frontiers, more economic and social cohesion, an European research and technology policy, the strengthening of the European Monetary System, the beginning of an European social area and significant actions in environment.” (Delors, 1995: see also Ocaña, 2003).

94 By the time of the signing of the Single European Act, Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, West Germany, Denmark, Ireland and Greece were members of the European Community.
The Single European Act drove the European integration process further by both widening and deepening the integration (Laurent and Maresceau, 1998; cf. den Boer, 1997). It strengthened the legal basis of the Community and expanded the policy areas covered by the Community institutions to include policies relating to political co-operation, economic and social cohesion, research and technological development, the environment, and social policy. In order to achieve the goals of the internal market, the decision-making procedures within the Council of Ministers were streamlined by a more frequent use of the procedure of qualified majority voting which replaced procedure of unanimity in four of the Community’s existing responsibilities. Under qualified majority voting no one single member state can veto a decision. The introduction of qualified majority voting in social policy matters facilitated package deals between member states. Women’s issues have frequently been pushed through as elements of such deals (Hoskyns, 1996; Ostner, 1995, 2000). The powers of the European Parliament were strengthened by giving it a say in the conclusion of enlargement and association agreements of the Community (SEA, 1987; cf. Hull, 1993; Kohler-Koch, 1997).

The impact on national governments by the Single European Market is dual. First, policy areas previously under the decision-making responsibility and authority of national governments alone were shifted to the level of the European Union. Second, the adoption of qualified majority voting weakened the weight of national governments’ policy-making influence at European level (Mazey and Richardson, 1993b). The 1991 Maastricht Summit drove the integration process even further by shifting power from the individual national governments to the EC institutions, and shifting the balance of decision-making power within the EU institutions by providing the European Parliament with the power of veto in certain areas (TEU, 1992). The introduction of co-decision-making procedure between the European Parliament and the Council in areas where the Council apply qualified majority voting can be understood in terms of further efforts to combat the ‘democratic deficit’ of the Union (see chapter two). The increased authority and competence of the European Parliament are important not only in terms of EU democracy, but also in terms of women’s organisations gaining access to the decision-making process. Since the early 1960, with the mobilisation of women surrounding the Defrenne case, close links had been developed between women members of the European Parliament and European women’s groups, and with the increased power of the European Parliament, women groups gained increas-

\[95\] See chapter two for the different EU decision-making procedures.
ing opportunities to place women’s rights on the EU policy agenda (Mazey 2000a; Vallance and Davies, 1986).

### 5.3.1 Women’s organisations in light of the SEA

The Single European Act had little to say of women, equal opportunities or women’s rights issues. In fact, the entire area of social policy under which equal opportunities and gender equality are negotiated still remained in the dark. The Directorate General V, and the Women’s Bureau within it, were both left out in the margins during the negotiations over the Single European Act. That women’s rights issues and equal opportunities were left out of the Single European Act to the extent they were can be considered remarkable for several reasons. First, the principle of equal treatment was established early on in the Treaty, and equal treatment of women and men had clearly been part of the EU agenda for a long time. Second, by the time of the Single European Act, the European integration process had been moving towards social integration in addition to economic integration. Third, the European Commission had already drafted the Social Programme with equal treatment policy. Forth, the equal treatment directives of the 1970s were already in place. As Cichowski puts it: “social policy was clearly a back burner” (Cichowski, 2003: 23).

The importance of the Single European Act in terms of interest organisation mobilisation and lobbying was, in contrast, all but minimal: it incited a considerable increase in the formation of European women’s organisations (Stone-Sweet and Fligstein, 2001). Since the implementation of the Single European Act to the end of 1996, twenty-one women’s interests groups were set up in Brussels, an increase with over 100 percent compared to any one of the four previous decades of European integration. The European Women’s Lobby was one of the first EU level women’s organisations set up in this decade. Not only did the adoption of the Single European Act mark an expansion in the number of interest groups lobbying the EU, it also changed the way lobbying was conducted: the lobbying process has become highly professionalised since 1990 (Hull, 1993: 82; cf. Andersen and Eliassen, 1993; Mitchell and Mazey, 1993). It is fully possible that this form of interest organisations that channels needs and wants to the political authorities would not have occurred without the influence of the Single European Act (Andersen and Eliassen, 1993; Hoskyns, 1996; Hull, 1993; Mazey and Richardson, 1993; Mazey and Richardson, 1993b; Sousa, 1996). This is to say, as the decision-making power shifted from national to supranational level, and as
the policy area coverage of the supranational level increased, interest organisations, national as well as transnational, turned their heads toward the supranational level. This institutional change, where competence and power were redistributed, can be understood as a way of creating new political opportunity structures but also as a catalyst for the mobilisation of women’s EU level interest groups.

There is no clear-cut commonly agreed definition of what constitutes the women’s movement or a women’s organisation. Therefore, it is not possible to say exactly how many organisations and networks that existed at EU level in Brussels by the time of the founding of the European Women’s Lobby. The women’s movement can be defined as “a number of women’s groups and associations in one country or region which have arisen spontaneously, organised by women for women. It is important to differentiate between ‘feminisms’ and ‘women’s movements’ since the latter are not necessarily ‘feminist’” (Bull, Diamond and March 2000:1f). An alternative definition is offered by Ferree and Martin, who define it in minimalist terms and as a platform, ‘feminist organisation’ is defined “as the place in which and the means through which the work of the women’s movement is done” (Ferree and Martin, 1996: 13). This definition implies that feminist organisations exist for the greater good of the entire movement, for the institutionalised resources feminist organisations will provide for the future and as platform from which women can act. Following this later definition, twenty-one new transnational feminist organisations were founded and set up permanent offices in Brussels in the years around the realisation of the internal market (Philip and Gray, 1996).96 This number alone can be considered remarkable, but far more remarkable is the formal and collective character of women’s mobilisation in the 1990s. Throughout history, the mobilisation of women and feminist activists has, more often than not, had the character of informal organising in non-hierarchal, caucuses and non-membership networks and individual activism from within institutions (see Katzenstein, 1987: 3; Katzenstein and McClurg-Mueller, 1987).

The organisations growing out of the implementation of the Single European Act were increasingly professionalised and hierarchal. The tensions between those two quite different forms of organising serves as part of the explanation of the disagreement surrounding the formation of a unified European women’s lobby in the late 1980s: a formal lobbying women’s organisation would in some regards represent a structure incompatible with the traditionally informal organising of

96 See Cichowski (2003) for the record growth in the number of annual social provisions and legislative outputs following the 1992 realisation of the internal market.
feminist activists (Cichowski, 2003). However, as institutions providing opportunity structures for action become increasingly formalised (binding, extending and institutionalised part of the political system) social action tend to shift from individual action to formalised group action.

5.4 Contemporary European wide women’s organisations

5.4.1 Attempts towards a unified EU level women’s organisation

The Women’s Organisation for Equality was originally formed as a feminist consciousness raising group in the early 1970s. The organisation is one example of informal European level women’s organisations that, through the course of the 80s and 90s became more formalised and institutionalised.97 Other examples of such groups forming in the late 1980s and 1990s are the European Women’s Management Development and the Forum for European Women. Both the Forum and the Network were run by and for professional women based in Brussels. As the EU policy competence increased, the Women’s Organisation for Equality created the sub-group Women’s European Action Group to closer examine how the European institutions work and what they did (or did not) do for women (Hoskyns, 1996). The Women’s European Action Group later became the Centre for Research on European Women, a non-profit research institute employing eleven full time staff with an annual income of over one million euro.

The Centre for Research on European Women was regularly consulted by the European Commission in the 1980s when the latter developed Green and White Papers on social policy (CREW, 1993). The Centre was vital for at least three reasons: firstly, in the years 1985 to 1995 it published a monthly report providing information to feminist activists and informal grassroots organisations on the EU and women’s conditions; secondly, the Centre for Research on European Women provided the physical space for women, feminist activists and grassroots to further transnational gatherings and information exchange (Hoskyns, 1996; Cichowski, 2003); and thirdly, the efforts of the Centre eventually led to the creation of the European Network of Women, a loose co-ordination of women’s grassroots associations.

The discussions and events leading up to the formation of the European Network of Women were characterised by a lack in consensus over what issues and policies a single, unified European women’s lobby should pursue and how. The

97 Forum for European Women: http://www.fewbrussels.com/
main disagreement was that between two different feminist groups: the autonomous feminists of the Centre for Research on European Women and the Women’s Committee of the European Trade Union Confederation on the one side and the more established women’s organisations on the other. The latter organisations maintained that a unified European women’s lobby attempting to represent all women’s interests was a possibility whereas the former claimed that the diversity of women’s interests would be neglected should one single lobby representing all European women be formed (Hoskyns, 1996). In addition to the above problems, it has been suggested that a formal lobbying women’s organisation would represent a structure incompatible with the traditionally informal organising of feminist activists (Cichowski, 2003; cf. Katzenstein and McClurg-Mueller, 1987). The disagreement ended with the formation of a new women’s network with loosely associated grassroots rather than a formalised women’s lobby. The formation of the European Network of Women was supported by the Centre for Research on European Women and by a grant from the Women’s Bureau in Directorate General V. The Network successfully aimed at informing women’s and feminist groups of EU developments, strategies and policy. This was however all it managed to do. Even though the European Network of Women, in conjunction with other women’s groups at EU level, resembled a women’s EU policy network, the scarcity of financial resources, the lack of close links to the EU power centre and the lack of close contacts with feminist grassroots groups combined with the limited number of policy issues they could cover clearly encumbered the European Network of Women to develop a formal and functioning structure. Thereby it also failed in mobilising women’s organisations on specific policy issues (Hoskyns, 1996). The political shortcomings of the European Network of Women, including the lack of formal institutionalised relations with EU decision makers alongside with the inability to represent women’s interests, eventually facilitated the formation of the European Women’s Lobby.

5.4.2 EU support for organising beyond the economic domain

As of today, there is a wide range of different women’s organisations active on EU level. The European Women’s Lobby is by no means the only European level women’s organisation, but it is the main one (Survey, 2004: Vega de Miguel and Lombardo, 2008). These organisations are important to EU politics since they contribute to policy development by providing knowledge and expertise, and by implementing European Commission programmes on national level. Through the
civil society consultations, opened by the Commission, they contribute to the framing of gender equality in EU policy. Conversely, the longevity of the institution of consultations and the consistency of the programmes initiated and sustained by the European Commission, offer a platform for these organisations to have a sustained presence in the EU polity. As will be developed further in chapter seven, there are of course certain regulations and constraints surrounding this presence. It is, moreover, important to highlight that not all these women’s organisations have the same opportunities to act and influence EU politics. It is, generally, the largest, the most institutionalised, the most representative, the most organised civil society organisations, such as European Women’s Lobby and Women Against Violence Europe which are mostly immersed with EU politics and political authorities (Vega and Lombardo, 2008).

The following sections offer a mapping of such contemporary EU level women’s organisations, showing how the Commission funds organisations active in fields outside of the EU legal remit. It maps their activities and priorities, traces their funding and asks to what extent they are building their own, autonomous institutions. The organisations are then categorised according to the domains they in which they are active.98

The European Federation of Unpaid Parents and Carers at Home (FEFAF) was founded in 1983 and has members in fifteen current or future EU member states, and Switzerland. There are nineteen member associations. The aims, or requests, of the federation include the recognition of the “human, social and economic value of unremunerated caring and educational work carried out in the home for the benefit of the family” (FEFAF, 2004). The organisation’s priorities include representing women active in the home, informing women active in the home of their rights and contributing to increasing the status of women working in the home. It engages in several different forms of activities, predominantly information, lobbying, campaigning, and research. FEFA does not engage in service provision, other than providing information on economic, social, juridical and political rights of at-home parents and carers. It participates in EU governance indirectly through its membership in the European Platform of Social NGOs and the

98 The organisations identified here draws on the work carried out within the QUING project 2006-2011. One of the activities within QUING is WHY which has the ambition “to explain two types of variations in gender equality policies, one being the variations in the inclusion of civil society voices, and the other the variations in the content of these policies.” As part of this ambition, a series of country context studies identifying the main civil society organisations were carried out. The country context study was conducted for each of the EU member states, and Croatia, Turkey and the EU (QUING, 2009).
European Women’s Lobby. The FEFAF is a controversial member of the EWL in that the FEFAF does not promote full paid employment for women as a vision and is based on a difference model of gender equality, that is, gender equality as an equal valuation of women’s and men’s different contributions. The FEFAF can be regarded as an autonomous organisation: it is funded by membership fees. It has no remunerated employee but relies on volunteers (FEFAF, 2009).

The European Feminist Forum (EFF) was founded in 2004 with the aim to set a new feminist agenda for Europe. Prioritised areas include the labour market, women and the family, EU finances, sexual and reproductive rights, peace and security, masculinity, violence and feminism. It engages in several different forms of activities, predominantly public protest, demonstrations, campaigning, research, networking, lobbying the EU institutions, and building alliances with feminists and feminist organisations throughout the EU. The organisation is funded by donations by the Global Fund for Women, the Open Society Institute, Oxfam, Mama Cash, the International Humanist Institute for Cooperation with Developing Countries, and by the United Nations Development Fund For Women (EFF, 2009). In many respects, the Feminist Forum is the opposite of the European Women’s Lobby. It is based on a loose network of affinity groups with an underlying ideology of feminist organisations as non-hierarchal. The ideals are open agendas, non-structured dialogue and the necessity to avoid concept such as sisterhood and solidarity are stressed as they are seen as being grounded in a white bourgeois feminism and therefore disregard issues of race and class (Semeniuk and Dütting, 2008; Mohanty, 2003). The Network Women in Development Europe (WIDE), a member of the EWL, was one of the founding organisations.

The European Institute of Women’s Health (EIWH) was set up in 1996 to ensure that women’s health issues were placed on the European agenda. It highlights the need to increase the number of women in leadership positions in health and other professions, including science and research. It engages in different forms of activities, including campaigning, lobbying the EU, research and building networks with other organisations involved in the violence domain. It provides support and information on women’s health issues. The key priorities of the EIWH are: to promote gender equity in health treatment and care; to disseminate results and research regarding the health of European women; to inform politicians, policymakers, medical/health professionals and NGOs; to make recommendations to members of the European Parliament; to raise women’s awareness of their own
health; to encourage women to become more involved in deciding health policies; to promote the teaching of gender health issues; and to liaise at international, European and national levels. The EIWH does not engage in building autonomous institutions (EIWH, 2009). One of the ten members of the steering group is Barbara Helfferich, former Secretary General of the EWL. The organisation is funded by the EU through different programmes and projects, most recently through VALUE+ and ENABLE.

The European Women’s Lawyers Association (EWLA) was founded as a non-profit making international non-governmental organisation with the aim to achieve equality of rights and opportunities. The founding congress was held in Berlin in 2000 and was sponsored by the European Commission and the German Federal Ministry for Family, Seniors, Women and Youth. The opening address was delivered by the commissioner for employment and social affairs (1999-2004) Anna Diamantopoulou. The EWLA aims to improve the understanding of European legislation in relation to equality and to bring together women lawyers across the European Union. Prioritised policy areas, areas where the EWLA has set up specific expert working groups, include trafficking, asylum, migration and refuge law, violence, health and reproductive rights and the family. The organisation’s activities include organising conferences and seminars, campaigning, research and lobbying the EU. It provides information on various topics related to women’s rights and legal issues concerning women. It is funded by its membership fees, public subsidies, grants and donations and through the European Commission’s DAPHNE programme (EWLA, 2009).

The European Women’s Lobby (EWL) was founded in 1990 to advance equality between women and men. Gender mainstreaming and the monitoring of a feminist gender equality perspective in all areas of European Union policy is a specifically highlighted area. Policy areas that the European Women’s Lobby engages in include women in decision-making and parity democracy, social policy and employment, EU gender equality legislation and policies, women’s diversity and anti-discrimination, migration and asylum and the revision of the European Treaties. Through its Policy Action Centre on Violence Against Women, violence against women is a prioritised policy area. The European Women’s Lobby engages in

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99 Helfferich left her position as the EWL Secretary General (1992-1999) to join the Cabinet of the European Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs, headed by commissioner Anna Diamantopoulou. Since 2004 Helfferich is the spokesperson for Davros Stimas, Commissioner for Environment at the European Commission.
several different forms of activities, predominantly lobbying, campaigning, research, publications and the dissemination of information. The EWL is not involved in service provision. It provides information to its national level member organisations, which engage in service provision in the form of rape crisis centres, refugees etcetera (EWL, 2009a). The EWL is involved in building autonomous institutions although the EWL in itself is more or less an institutionalised part of the EU. Its relation to the European Commission is especially distinguishable as a cooperation strategy with established politics. The EWL is funded directly by the European Commission; the Policy Action Centre on Violence against Women is funded through the Commission’s DAPHNE programme (EPAC-VAW, 2009).

The International Committee on the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe (ICRAW-Europe) was founded in 2002 after a group of Dutch sex workers organised a conference on Sex Work with the aim to “challenge the current neo conservative political debate on sex work and trafficking” (ICRSE, 2009a). The organisation’s priorities include to legalise the buying and selling of sexual services and the rights of sex workers (ICRSE, 2005). It engages in several different activities, predominantly public protests in the form of demonstrations, lobbying, campaigning and research. The organisation provides information on sex work and sex worker’s rights in different European countries with the aim of increasing the status of sex work. It is predominantly funded by membership fees and private donations. However the 2005 European Conference on Sex Work, Human Rights, Labour and Migration was funded by several international and European institutions, including the Greens and the European Free Alliance in the European Parliament, Mama Cash and the Global Fund for Women (ICRSE, 2009b).

The International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA-Europe) was established in 1996 as a European branch of ILGA International. ILGA Europe then took over the regional/European responsibility to support the Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transsexual movement in Europe and to develop the relations with the EU, the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe. The main aim of the organisation is to promote human rights and equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and intersexual people in Europe. The organisation’s prioritised policy areas include asylum and migration, education, employment, hate crime and violence, health and family. It engages in several different activities, predominantly lobbying, campaigning, research and public protest, publications and advocacy. The network is not a service provider in the traditional sense, but it provides information on LGBT issues and discrimination.
There are 222 full member organisations, 156 individual members and 11 associate members. Since 2001 ILGA is financed by the European Commission. Further financial support comes from the Sigrid Rausing Trust (ILGA, 2009) which previously financed the EWL’s Policy Action Centre on Violence against Women.

The Network Women in Development Europe (WIDE) is a European feminist network of women’s organisations, development NGOs, gender specialists and women’s rights activists. WIDE was founded in 1985. With a clear international focus, the organisation’s priorities include to monitor international trade and macro-economic processes, advocating women’s economic, social and political empowerment and building capacity on gender and trade/macro-economic issues. It engages in several different activities, predominantly lobbying the EU and the World Trade Organisation institutions, campaigning, research, and networking. The network is not a service provider but, just as in the case of FEFAF and the EWL, there is a focus on providing information to articulate alternatives to what WIDE regards as the negative impacts of globalisation. The network is funded by several European organisations and institutions, including the European Commission and Oxfam (WIDE, 2009).

Rape Crisis Network Europe (RCNE) was founded in 2003 with the aim to coordinate an EU level voice for the many already existing national level Rape Crisis Centres. It was originally started by the Rape Crisis Network Ireland but the coordination of the RCNE is currently taking place from Rape Crisis Scotland. The Network works through campaigning, education, research and with development work to eliminate sexual violence against women. This support is predominantly offered in the form of counselling, legal advice and support services. The Network also engages in Europe-wide data collection and research, provides training for volunteers, workers and professionals, and aims at influencing curriculum development through educators and policy-makers. RCNE lobbies for changes in legal provisions, service standards, funding and resources for women victims of sexual abuse. There are Rape Crisis Centres spread throughout Europe and these are the organisations that provide the majority of the services to victims of rape and sexual abuse. The European level is a loosely co-ordinated network of those already existing centres. The Rape Crisis Network Europe is funded by the European Commission’s DAPHNE Programme.

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100 E-mail correspondence with Mary d’Arcy, financial network administrator of the Rape Crisis Network Ireland. October 27, 2009.
Women Against Violence Europe! (WAVE) was set up with the sole aim to combat violence against women and children. The Network comprises approximately 4000 women’s organisations in 47 European countries combating violence against women and children in Europe. It does not engage in building completely autonomous institutions, but it does engage in the setting up and running of women’s refuges, counselling centres and SOS help-lines. WAVE provides training and engages in various forms of preventive measures on violence against women. It is an active advocate of perpetrator programmes. Women Against Violence Europe engages in a range of different forms of activities, including public protest, campaigning, lobbying the EU, research and publications, building networks with other organisation involved in the violence domain and it runs a range of different projects to combat violence against women. It provides support and information on data on organisations working in the field of violence against women and children. WAVE is based in Vienna and chaired by Rosa Logar – previously a country expert representative in the EWL Observatory on violence against women. WAVE is a non-profit initiative. International and national public authorities and private donators mainly fund the WAVE network. Over the past ten years, WAVE has received consecutive funding from the European Commission’s DAPHNE programme (1998-2002, 2004, 2005, 2007, 2008); various Austrian state institutions (including the Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, and the Department of Women’s Affairs); and the Body Shop Foundation (WAVE, 2009).

Three domains where the European level women’s organisations are predominantly active in have been distinguished: violence, sexuality and economy.

Table 2: Policy domains of women’s organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation/ domain</th>
<th>Economy</th>
<th>Violence</th>
<th>Sexuality</th>
<th>EWL member</th>
<th>EU funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FEFAF</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFF</td>
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<tr>
<td>EIWHS</td>
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<tr>
<td>EWLA</td>
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<tr>
<td>EWL ECPAC-VAW</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICRSW-Europe</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILGA-Europe</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>WIDE</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>RCNE</td>
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<tr>
<td>WAVE</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

101 Member either in the EWL or in the EWL Observatory on Violence Against Women.
Violence: Organisations in this domain are predominantly, but not exclusively, concerned with violence against women. The main EU level civil society women’s organisations active in the violence domain include the European Feminist Forum, the European Institute for Women’s Health, the European Women’s Lawyers Association, European Women’s Lobby-Policy Action Centre on Violence against women, the International Lesbian and Gay Association, the Network Women in Development Europe, Rape Crisis Network Europe and Women Against Violence Europe.

Sexuality: The main EU level civil society women’s organisations active in the domain of sexuality include the International Lesbian and Gay Association, the European Women’s Lawyers Association, the European Women’s Lobby, the European Institute of Women’s Health, the International Committee on the Right of Sex Workers in Europe, and the European Feminist Forum.

Economy: Organisations in this domain are predominantly, but not exclusively, concerned with women’s employment and labour. The main EU level civil society women’s organisations active in the economic domain are the European Women’s Lobby, the European Federation of Unpaid Parents and Carers at Home, the Network Women in Development, the International Committee on the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe, and the European Feminist Forum.

The identified main EU level women’s organisations are active in multiple domains, this analysis shows how the domains overlap and the interconnectedness between these domains become visible. Several of the organisations are members of the EWL and have some form of other connection to the EWL. Most of them are somehow funded via the EU, either directly by the Commission or via Commission programmes. The main EU level women’s organisations rarely engage in service provision. This is a function traditionally carried out by women’s organisations in civil society, that is, the setting up and managing of refugees for victims of domestic violence or rape crisis centres and telephone hotlines. A majority of the main EU level women’s organisations are involved in the violence domain. Having funding from the Commission does not exclude the engagement in policy areas outside of the EU legal remit. On the contrary, for example WAVE was set up solely to eliminate violence against women and the organisation has been continually funded via Commission programmes. The major distinctions between the organisations are to the extent which they specialise in one policy area or not and whether or not they support each other through membership of the EWL.
5.5 Summary and discussion

The chapter shows how EU internal institutional (institutions understood as both formal decision-making institutions and policy) developments have offered opportunities for women in civil society to organise to pursue their interests. The chapter analyses these developments with a view of EU institutional changes, and the growth of women’s civil society organisations at EU level. The analysis shows how the establishment of women’s organisations on EU level parallels the development of EU institutional arrangements. These arrangements include a shift in decision-making power from national to European level; a change of decision-making procedures within the EU; a growth of EU formal and legal competence; and a widening of policy areas and domains in which the EU lacks legal remit but still has an impact. The analysis also shows how some women are organised on the EU level to pursue policy areas which fall outside of the legal remit and how these organisations are funded by the Commission, either directly (for example ILGA), or through programmes (for example WAVE).

Since the creation of the European cooperation in the 1950s, women have organised to pursue their social and political interests and to sustain their presence in the EU policy. In particular, the European Commission has actively helped sustain that presence by funding various women’s organisations. Those organisations include organisations predominantly active in policy fields where the EU lacks a legal remit. The EU has offered an opportunity structure and alternative policy-making arena for women to organise and pursue their social and political interests. The policy on equal treatment in the workplace in the 1970s and 1980s was gained through women’s collective organising at EU level, and by using the EU and the European Court of Justice as an alternative policy arena to side-step national level courts and governments. Women have organised their interests to exploit the EU as an alternative venue to the state in order to bring about and enforce policy change. In this respect, EU policy has in itself offered an opportunity for women to organise to formulate and pursue their interests.

It is, most certainly, important to differentiate between policy domains where the EU has a legal remit, and those policy domains where it does not. Recognising the importance of the legal remit does not necessarily exclude the possibility that the EU has an impact on policy areas outside of its legal remit. The process of Europeanization does not require a legal remit. A separation between domains of competence and remit, and domains without competence and remit does not necessarily mean that there is not impact of EU policy in domains outside its legal remit. Even though EU policy is predominantly occupied with the economic do-
main there is a spill over into other domains, such as the family and violence. This impact can, in turn, be seen when making the interconnectedness between policy domains visible, and when analysing the scope of policy, the funding and the activities of EU level women’s organisations. The main EU level women’s organisations are in fact engaged in policy domains outside the area of employments, but they are nonetheless funded by the European Commission. The very organising of women and women’s interests on the EU level is sustained by the EU itself. The majority of the main EU level women’s organisations described in this chapter share more characteristics: they are, in one way or the other, connected to the EWL.

By focusing on institutions and policy as arenas that create platforms for women from which to organise and pursue their social and political interests, and by mapping the main EU level women’s organisations (including funding, activities and relation to EU institutions) I argue that the EU has in fact provided women with an opportunity to intervene in gender equality policy to pursue their interests and to sustain their presence in politics. This contributes and offers a nuance to the one-dimensional ‘no’ answer initially referred to in this chapter.

There are, at least, two ways of developing this further. Firstly by addressing the shortcomings of how feminist criticism of the EU and EU policy, predominantly focusing on the content side of politics, leaves out the way the EU has provided, alternatively can be used as, a platform from which women can organise and act as women regardless of the content of policy (for example Elman, 1996; Lewis, 2006; Ostner, 2000; Stratigaki 2004, 2005). This, the very creation of a platform from which to organise, is also to be understood as women’s interests (Jónasdóttir, 1991). The fact that the policies and institutions are there is the starting point.102

Secondly, by addressing the interconnectedness between policy domains. This carries the potential to challenge the order of the gender regime. The potential is made visible by analysing the interconnections between different dimensions of the gender regime (Walby, 2004, 2009a). This potential is also made visible by analysing the overlapping of policy areas in the organising of women’s interests by civil society organisations. Further, the boundaries between the EU policy fields with legal remit and those without legal remit are in fact getting more and more blurred. There is indeed a process of both widening and deepening integration, meaning that there is both an extension of policy areas where the EU has a

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102 I understand “policy” broadly. Gender equality policy includes, but is not limited to, legislation, programmes, mechanisms, actions to address specific interests, research and training.
formal legal remit and an extension of the policy areas where the EU has an impact on gender relations without necessarily having a formal legal remit. The potential for transformation is more extensive than previously argued. The EU policy should not be regarded as incapable of transforming gender relations outside of the policy field of employment and outside the domain of the economy.

By examining the formation of EU women’s organisations in civil society in parallel with the developments of gender equality policy and institutional changes in the EU, two arguments have been developed in this chapter. Firstly, the mobilisation of women’s interests through organisations and lobbies up until and in the 1990s can be explained and understood in terms of political opportunity structures provided by the European Union, and in terms of the interaction between institutions and interests. Secondly, this chapter makes an argument for the potential of the EU to challenge and transform gender relations. It does so by showing how there is a spill over between policy domains in a way so that the critique of the EU as limited to the economic domain needs to be revised. This forms part of the answer to the question: why have women organised at the EU level? This second argument concerns the nature of EU gender equality policy and the concept of interests. I argue that the EU has been a progressive force in advancing gender equality beyond the economic domain and by offering a platform for the pursuit of women’s social and political interests. The argument is not necessarily that the EU promotes or sustains the pursuit of specific substantive feminist or women’s interests, or needs or preferences, but that the EU promotes the generation of platforms and policy from which women on multiple levels of Europe can aggregate and articulate their needs, wants, preferences and the specific content of their political interests and from which women can put demand on the political authorities.

The chapter comes to the conclusion that the constructed boundaries between different domains of EU policy (economic, family, violence, sexuality) are interrelated and that there is a spill over effect from one domain to the other. By mapping the main EU level women’s organisations and by asking how they are funded, what activities they pursue, and what their priorities are, it is shown that the main recognised and regularly consulted women’s organisations on EU level are in fact engaged in domains outside of the EU legal remit. Some of them are funded with this precise purpose. When making the interconnectedness between the different dimensions of the gender regime visible, the spill over effect from one domain to the other becomes detectable. There has been a wide variety of women’s organisations and women’s groups active on the European level, grassroots associations and feminist activists have been gathering and spreading in-
formation on the EU and men and women in Europe. After fifty years of women’s EU level organising, there is now a fairly institutionalised and formal women’s network organised to represent women’s political and social interest in the EU policy process. The question for the next chapter then is: what kind of organisation is this?
The European Women's Lobby was formally set up at a meeting in Brussels in September 1990. Since then, the European Women's Lobby has become the women's organisation at EU level (de Vega, Bustelo and Lombardo, 2007; Survey, 2004). The European Women's Lobby (EWL) is a non-governmental women's organisation funded by the European Commission. With the backing and financial support of the European Commission the EWL represents over 4000 women's associations throughout Europe (EWL, 2006j, 2003a, 2001b). The explicit aims of the EWL are "to achieve equality between women and men, to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women, to ensure that women's human rights are respected, to eradicate violence against women and to make sure that gender equality is taken into consideration in all European Union policies" (EWL, 2006a).

I argue that there are two additional sets of aims to the setting up of, and the continued existence of the EWL. Firstly that of providing a platform from which women can generate and sustain their presence in EU politics and secondly to respond to the preferences of the political authorities of the EU polity. The EWL was founded with the purpose of establishing a permanent platform for the representation of women at EU level through fostering the co-ordinating of women's organisations. In establishing a platform to gain access to decision-making institutions, it will be argued that organised interests have to be structured in certain ways. The granting of consultative and representative status comes with a price. The leaders of the organised interests may have to control the members and moderate demands (Öberg, 1998). Organising through a logic of influence may lead to alienation of members (Hyman, 2005; Schmitter and Streeck, 1981, 1999; Benz and Burkard, 1998; Dölvik, 1997). In this chapter, this is developed by discussing the theory of moderation of demands in terms what I have called 'self-moderation' and by examining how the EWL balances the logic of influence and the logic of membership.

103 When nothing else stated, the chapter is based on three different sources of information: e-mail correspondence with EWL secretariat staff and member organisations; interviews with EWL secretariat staff and member organisations and field study/observations at the EWL secretariat (September 2006 to January 2007).
6 THE EWL: FOUNDING AND ORGANISING

The European Women’s Lobby was formally set up at a meeting in Brussels in September 1990. Since then, the European Women’s Lobby has become the women’s organisation at EU level (de Vega, Bustelo and Lombardo, 2007; Survey, 2004). The European Women’s Lobby (EWL) is a non-governmental women’s organisation funded by the European Commission. With the backing and financial support of the European Commission the EWL represents over 4000 women’s associations throughout Europe (EWL, 2006j, 2003a, 2001b). The explicit aims of the EWL are “to achieve equality between women and men, to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women, to ensure that women’s human rights are respected, to eradicate violence against women and to make sure that gender equality is taken into consideration in all European Union policies” (EWL, 2006a).

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6.1 Aim of chapter

The aim of this chapter is to analyse the establishment of a single, unified, European level women’s organisation representing women’s interests. Firstly this will be carried out by describing and analysing the founding process leading up to the EWL. Here, the main questions asked are: when, how and why was the EWL established? What forces underpinned the establishment of the EWL? Secondly, I will describe and analyse what kind of organisation the EWL is. The main questions to examine this are: how is the EWL formally organised and why is the EWL organised as it is? How does the EWL balance the tension between the logic of membership and the logic of influence? If, and if yes, then how, has the EWL adapted its means, methods and structure to the policy-initiating and shaping process of the EU, that is in what ways can the EWL be understood as governed by the logic of influence? If governed by the logic of influence, what are the implications in terms of costs, such as for example losing the capacity to sufficiently aggregate, articulate and represent the preferences and needs, the demands, of its member organisations? How does the EWL deliver its grassroots and their demands to the Commission – can the EWL be understood as functioning as a gatekeeper of women’s demands at the EU level? What mechanisms are there to moderate those demands, or to mainstream them through the process by which they are delivered? Is there, within the EWL, an organisational and decision-making structure through which member organisations and their demands are both moderated and disciplined? Alternatively, is there, within the EWL, a structure and process that allows for the aggregation, articulation and delivery of all member organisations’ preferences and demands?

6.2 The founding

The EWL was formally established at a meeting in Brussels on 21-22 September 1990. The organisation was set up as an EU level non-governmental organisation to permanently represent women and women’s interests to and in the EU. The EWL is, and always has been, based in Brussels. In fact, the EWL statutes prohibit the organisation from leaving the Brussels region (EWL, 2007a: article 2). In the years prior the establishment of the EWL, the EU debate was dominated by the negotiations surrounding the Maastricht Treaty (signed 1992) and the implementation of the Single European Act (1992). This was a time period characterised by an expansion of the EU formal competences, a shift in decision-making power from the national to the European level and an expansion in the scope of
the EU’s activities and policy. The direct effects of the EU’s policy on women’s lives were becoming more and more apparent with the creation of the internal market (DeGroot, 1992). Institutional changes within the EU had made it necessary to co-ordinate European women’s demands and interests through an EU level women’s organisation. However, the setting up of a professional lobby at the EU level was contested. There had been serious attempts and opposition to the forming of a unified women’s lobby for almost a decade prior to the actual establishment of the EWL. The idea to set up a unified co-ordination of women’s organisations was discussed at a women’s organisations conference held in Bonn in May 1982. The conference was sponsored and initiated by the Women’s Information Service of the European Commission. Fausta Deshormes, who had created and managed the Department of Information for Women at the European Commission since 1977, initially made contact with Jacqueline Nonon who at the time was the director of the Commission’s Office for Employment and Equality of Women, and with Janine Lansier, the President of the French Advisory Committee for Women’s Labour in the Department of Labour (Comité Français du Travail Féminin). Deshormes wanted to discuss her vision of a European Women’s Forum. Shortly thereafter, Deshormes was approached by Helga Thieme, President of the German Women’s Council (Deutscher Frauenrat) who proposed to organise the first EU connected European conference of women’s associations (Deshormes, 2000). This conference, the first European colloquium of women’s organisations, coincided with the first EU Action Programme on Equal Opportunity for Women for 1982-1985 (European Commission, 1981a).

The Bonn conference was sponsored by the Women’s Information Service of the European Commission and by the German Women’s Council. The women invited came from both traditional women’s organisations and, to a lesser extent, feminist groups. Women from both the Centre for Research on European Women and from the Women’s Committee of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) participated. The proposal to set up one unified Europe wide women’s lobby focusing on EU policy was opposed by the Centre for Research on European Women (CREW)104, women from various trade unions and by the feminist groups attending the meeting. The groups’ objections were mainly based on grounds of diversity and difference. They argued that it would not be possible for a single European women’s co-ordination or lobby to represent all women

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104 CREW is an independent women’s cooperative that provides information on women and employment issues and develops links with groups, projects and organisations operating in this field throughout the EU. During the last seven years, CREW has strongly focused on the problems faced by women wanting to set up their own businesses...
(Hoskyns, 1996). Women, it was argued, is not a homogenous category and cannot be represented as such. Further, it was reported that the commissioner of Social Affairs, British Labour Party politician and former UK Permanent Representative to the UN Ivor Richard, was sceptic about the ability of a single organisation to represent the “various and sometimes conflicting interests of women” (quoted in Hoskyns, 1996: 131).

Shortly after the Bonn conference, the Centre for Research on European Women received a grant from the Women’s Bureau in Directorate General V to engage in the setting up of a co-ordination of women’s organisations (Fuchs, 2007). Hoskyns argues that the reason for the grant being given to the Centre for Research on European Women was “presumably to strengthen the feminist hand in any future negotiations” over the establishing of a European wide women’s organisation (Hoskyns, 1996: 131). This in turn led to a conference of women’s organisations in Brussels in 1983 and to the setting up of the European Network of Women (ENOW), a non-structured loosely organised network of women’s organisations. ENOW worked to co-ordinate and initiate action around issues affecting women in the EU with the aim of effecting and influencing EU policy on women. It quickly became the main women’s lobby group in Brussels. However, the European Network of Women did not co-ordinate women’s organisations across Europe; neither was it aiming to do so (ENOW Newsletter).

The idea of a unified single women’s lobby, more organised and with a greater capacity to co-ordinate women’s organisations across Europe than the European Network of Women and the Centre for Research on European Women, was however not abandoned. The needs perceived by women and women’s organisations to participate in EU programs, as well as gaining more knowledge about the European Union legislation and policy effecting women were not fully met by the loosely organised European Network of Women: it lacked the necessary structure to facilitate information and could not coordinate women’s responses to EU legislation.

There was also the pressure, albeit implicit, from the EU institutions to form a single unified lobby that could coordinate women’s organisations from across Europe. A former member of the European Network of Women confirms that the Directorate General V within the Commission wanted a different kind EU level women’s organisations than the European Network of Women (this is in the late 1980s):
A second European colloquium of women’s organisations took place in Turin in 1984 and a third in The Hague in 1985 gathered sixty women’s associations. The number of participating women’s organisations steadily increased, although the core groups remained the same (Deshormes, 2000). In November 1987, a fourth colloquium was organised by Deshormes (still working at the Information for Women at the European Commission) and the British civil society organisation Fawcett Society. It was held in London and 120 women members of 85 civil society organisations were invited. A decision was taken to form a unified European women’s lobby. The actual decision thus marks a relatively divergent step away from the routes taken earlier in the 1980s. Several attempts to formalise a European women’s lobby had been stopped by various associations and on various grounds, most notably due to disagreements between women’s councils and more radical feminist organisations over the form of the future organisation. At the London seminar in 1987, when the decision to form a unified lobby was taken, the radical feminist organisations were outnumbered by the more traditional women’s organisations and the former had become less radical (Hoskyns, 1991). The participants in the London colloquium chose representatives from forty European women’s organisations who were entrusted with the mission to carry out the preparatory work for forming an organisation with the capacity to co-ordinate women’s organisations in Europe. Hoskyns states that the delegates who were choosing the 40 representatives consisted of two women from the women’s bureau in the Commission and those “in the know” at the London colloquium. At the conclusion of discussions, two resolutions were adopted. The first called on the Commission to create a media observatory. The second proposed:

105 In 1998, a representative of EWL stated that “they [ENOW] are no more... the existence of the Lobby may be responsible for the demise of the ENOW” (Withers, 1998: 20).

106 Fawcett Society is one of the leading British women’s organisations campaigning for equality between women and men. Its roots traces back to Millicent Fawcett who was leading the peaceful campaign for women’s vote in the 1860s.

107 Hoskyns also finds that no black or minority ethnic women were among those 40 representatives, arguing that the reason was not that black and ethnic minority women were not organised, but that their organisations were not known in the milieu of the London seminar delegates (Hoskyns, 1996: 186). See also Williams (2003).
The creation of a structure for influence open to all interested women’s organisations, to exert pressure on European and national institutions to ensure better defence and representation of women’s interests” (Deshormes, 2000: 8).

The second resolution also called upon the European Commission to “lend its support for the organisation in early 1988 of a meeting with a view to the implementation of such a structure” (Deshormes, 2000: 8). The European Commission agreed to grant financial support and the EWL was formally established two years later. Deshormes contacted Jacqueline de Groote in 1998 to

[...] prepare the first General Assembly of this ‘influencing structure’ as requested in London by the representatives of the women’s associations (de Groote, 2000: 9; cf. EWL, 2001b).

According to de Groote, the first main task was to convince women’s associations to work together. De Groote drew up a first draft of the statutes of which outlined the objectives and working methods. The draft was submitted to a group of women “representing women’s associative life in Europe.” Forty women from different countries and sectors of activity formed a working group which met three times up until September 1990 when the EWL held its first General Assembly (de Groote, 2000).

The original members included organisations from Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, as well as seventeen already existing European women’s organisations (EWL, 2009f). With the formation of the EWL, the Centre for Research on European Women and the European Network of Women eventually merged into one organisation (Hoskyns, 1996).

6.2.1 Logic of influence: first form, then content

The decision to establish the EWL was taken in 1987. It took three years to “rally the majority of women’s organisations in the twelve member states of the European community” (de Groote, 1992: 49). The membership base has always been an important, perhaps the most important issue. Immediately after the formal establishment, the member organisations started a discussion on how to expand and gather more member organisations under the unified lobby. The expansion, to increase the size of an EU level platform for women’s organisations, took priority over other issues; including policy oriented ones and the co-ordination of
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be informed regularly of action plans and of activities in progress; to submit action plans to the Bureau of the Lobby; to subscribe in its own right to any initiatives that it deems appropriate, or to refrain from participating in activities decided upon by the General Assembly, without thereby losing its status as a corresponding member; and to appeal to the General Assembly against decisions taken by the Bureau concerning the acceptance or rejection of membership… there is no limit to the number involved (de Groote, 1992: 50) (my italics).

The highlighted section of the above quote implies the very low demands placed on corresponding members. In contrast to other members, corresponding members were not expected to act on or subscribe to motions and positions adopted by the General Assembly of the EWL, again supporting the assumption that the category of corresponding members was establish to enable a rapid growth of the EWL. The rush to expand the membership base was grounded in a firm belief in the institutional reasoning of path dependency and in the logic of influence. The EWL needed to find a way to deliver its constituent, the national level women’s organisations and their interests, to the EU. The more women’s organisations and the wider the variety of women’s organisations that were members, the stronger the lobby would be and the more legitimacy it could claim to have in this delivery. The content of what was going to be delivered by the grassroots came second. This reasoning is still prevalent in the EWL. According to the policy director the membership comes first:

Oh yes, there is no question about it. Being a membership organisation is the strength. We wouldn’t be..., there wouldn’t be any legitimacy otherwise. There are other women’s organisations active on European level, but I think the lobby is specific for two reasons: the first is the membership. Some other organisations have members but they are individual members or it’s not in all countries. So for us, we having members in all.., is the thing (Gréboval, interview, December 10, 2004).108

108 The quote continues “And the second is the way we work; we are not limited in terms of policies. We will basically..., I’m not saying that we know everything, but, some or-
There is an understanding that a large number of members contributes towards increasing the possibility of exerting influence over EU decision-making as it gives weight to the EWL. Size matters. The membership is thus not only about aggregating demands from national to European level; it is a matter of having a political presence and gaining influence. The EWL is thus dependent on gathering women not only as members of member organisations, but to ensure members’ presence at seminars, meetings, conferences etcetera, that is, to create and enable the actual space for women to meet. The statutes of the EWL require that the national co-ordinations meet the travel and subsistence costs of their General Assembly delegates. Members of the Board, the Executive and the President have their travel and accommodation expenses covered by the EWL. In terms of being a representative organisation of women’s interests in the EU, it is an outspoken objective of the EWL to consult as many women’s organisations as possible when deciding on policy issues and lobbying campaigns and to be able to show that a large number of women’s organisations has been consulted (Gréboval, interview December 10, 2004). Firstly, then, the important thing is to find an organisational structure that enables both the aggregation and articulation of member organisations’ preferences and demands. Secondly, the large membership matters because it makes the EWL more representative of women’s interests; it makes the EWL a legitimate representative of women’s interests. These convictions must be seen in the light of the European Commission’s agenda to better manage EU lobbying and interest group activities in response to the proliferation of EU lobbying, especially since the introduction of the Single European Act in 1986 – only one year prior to the London decision to set up the EWL. It should also be seen in the light of the organisational form of the women’s organisations acting in Europe in the 1980s. Here, what becomes increasingly visible is the importance of having a European level presence.

What pushed the women’s organisations and made them agree to form the EWL, when it had previously been opposed? In addition to the de-radicalisation of women’s groups during the 1980s, several changes were made in the construction of the EU. The internal institutional changes of the EU had made it increasingly necessary for women to organise full scale, in large coherent formalised networks or co-ordinations and at all levels throughout the EU and its member states. In between the years 1982 and 1987 plans involving a European single market were initiated, shaped and turned into a decision. This fundamentally
transformed the ways decisions were taken at EU level by extending the principle of qualified majority voting as a decision-making rule. The shift from a decision-making procedure predominantly based on unanimity in the European Council to one more extensively based on the use of qualified majority voting ended many years of EU decision-making gridlock (Keohane and Hoffman, 1991: 8). Through the Maastricht Treaty, the European Community was transformed into the European Union; the European Economic and Social Committee, representing organised interests in civil society, was reinforced and made a mandatory consultative partner to the European Commission. Simultaneously, the support or pressure and the financial backing of the European Commission and by women actors within the Commission and the European Parliament for a European wide women’s lobby increased and intensified (Gréboval, interview December 10, 2004). Further, for many national level women’s organisation, there was a fear to be left outside, to miss the train, so to speak, were women not organised on EU level (EWL, 2006a; interviews with SKL, 2004 and NWCI, 2006). Women from the Irish member organisation, the National Women’s Council of Ireland, expressed a fear that the increasingly technical and administrative expertise needed to understand EU gender equality policy, and its impact on women in the member states, were not possible to acquire within their own national level organisation. A European level women’s organisation lobbying at the European level would thus help the advancement of gender equality and women’s interests at national level. Some of the national and European level groups pushing for the founding of the EWL still exist and still exert pressure on national level governments (Helfferich and Kolb, 2001). Again, thinking in terms of a logic of influence helps understanding the establishment of the EWL. European women and women’s organisations needed to organise in such a way that enabled direct engagement with the EU institutions.

109 The Maastricht Treaty, or the Treaty of the European Union, introduced new forms of co-operation between the EU member state governments. It created a new structure with three pillars, which are political as well economic. The Maastricht Treaty recognised the social partners’ right to negotiate binding Europe-wide framework agreements, which are either formalised into EU legislation as Directives, or implemented ‘autonomously’ by the partners at European and national levels.

110 SKL: Sveriges Kvinnolobby (the Swedish national coordination); NWCI: National Council of Women Ireland (the Irish national co-ordination).

111 Question-answers during a meeting with the EWL and the Irish EWL co-ordination in the European Parliament which I attended in November 2006.

112 Contacts with the women’s non-governmental organisation in Brussels (the European Communities) were established in May 1982, when the Brussels Women’s Bureau organised their first conference. UWE was present at the following conferences and participated in the group forming the EWL which started in 1990 (University Women of Europe website, accessed April 28, 2006).
This meant not only being a passive receiver or an active disseminator of information, neither does it solely mean to have the capacity to aggregate women’s interests. It means to organise in such a way as to be able to articulate and deliver those interests and to be heard while doing so. Ultimately, it means to organise in a specific form of structure to be able to exert influence over EU policy-making. Exactly what to demand and how to integrate the various, and sometimes conflicting, demands of the member organisations seem secondary.
6.3 Decision-making and power structures

How then, does the organisational structure look and how are decisions made? The following figure is derived from the EWL Statutes and observations.

Figure 1: Organisational and decision-making structure

EWL member organisations in Europe
National co-ordinations
European member organisations
Associate members
Supporting members

EWL General Assembly
Full members of the EWL
Observers

EWL Board of Administration
30 representatives of each national co-ordination
10 representatives of European organisations
Elected every 2 years by the General Assembly

EWL Executive Committee
President
Vice Presidents
Treasurer
Elected every two years by the Board of Administration

EWL Secretariat
Secretary General
Policy Coordinator
Policy Officers
Project Managers
Administrators
Interns
6.3.1 The General Assembly

The General Assembly is the highest authority of the EWL (EWL, 2007a: article 12:5). The General Assembly is where the EWL complete programme of activities is decided and where the Board of Administration is elected. The formal powers of the General Assembly include the setting of EWL policies and priorities; the adoption of the budget; the adoption of the work program; the election and dismissal of the Board and members of the Board; the admission and exclusion of full members; the determination of membership fees; the granting of discharging the Executive, the Board and the Auditor; the modification of the statutes; the modification of the internal rules; and the dissolution of the EWL. The General Assembly meets once every year and is composed by the EWL full membership (national co-ordinations and European members). Other members may, by invitation only, attend as observers. Observers are prohibited to speak at the General Assembly (EWL, 2007a: article 12), something which turned into a hot issue at the 2006 General Assembly when one observer ignored the prohibition and decided to speak on behalf of migrant women but was silenced by the chairwoman of the General Assembly. Each national co-ordination has the right to nominate three delegates, including a Board member, to the General Assembly. The European members have the right to nominate one delegate each. The delegates have one vote each.

The statutes are designed to give the authority to the General Assembly, but in reality most of the EWL activities, policies and general mission are set and carried out by the staff at the secretariat and the General Secretary. The work program for the following year, defining what to do, even if based on the motions, is set by the secretariat then voted on at the General Assembly. The work program for the following year is the basis for the contract with the Commission. The work programme, financial matters and budget are presented by the Secretary General and then voted on at the General Assembly.

6.3.2 The Board of Administration

The Board approves the draft annual work programme and the draft annual budget. It approves new member organisations other than full members which are approved by the General Assembly. The Board makes recommendations to the

111 I attended the 2006 General Assembly in Prague.
General Assembly regarding the exclusions of member organisation. It takes decisions that concerns EWL political priorities, actions and is consulted on the adoption of position papers. It is also consulted on the more regular day-to-day activities of the EWL. The formal powers of the Board, as set out in the EWL statutes, further include: the adoption of policy statements and position papers; the election of the President and the Executive; the preparations of recommendations in relation to the requests for full membership of the association to the General Assembly; and the appointment and dismissal of the Secretary General (EWL, 2007a: article 19). The Board meets quarterly and is composed of one member from each national co-ordination, whereas the European wide organisations share a fixed number of seats. The 2008-2010 board consists of 40 elected members: 30 from the national co-ordinations and ten from the European member organisations (EWL, 2009a). The Board of Administration is elected every second year by the full membership at the General Assembly. The Board, in turn, elects the Executive Committee every two years. The Board decides on the coming actions and priorities of the EWL, as presented in writing by the policy officers of the secretariat. Once again, what is imperative to understand here is the working process prior to the actual approval, appointment and setting of priorities. All of these are prepared, written and formulated by the staff, by the policy officers at the secretariat in Brussels. They carry out any research necessary, any gathering of material and identifying of key issues and the actual submission of papers and document to the Board.

6.3.3 The Executive Committee

The Executive is the management of the EWL. It represents the EWL at conferences, meetings, seminars etcetera. Its formal powers include the preparation of

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114 Poland created a national coordination which joined the EWL as a full member in 2004 when Poland became a member of the EU. The Polish coordination remained a member of the EWL during 2004 and 2005 (EWL, 2004d, EWL, 2005a). However, in 2006 and 2007 Poland no longer had a national coordination (EWL, 2006f; EWL, 2007d). The EWL policy officer responsible for monitoring the membership told me that the EWL no longer had a Polish national coordination as the Polish could not meet the membership criteria. The framing of the issue as made by the policy officer was not in terms of exclusion, but I see no other way of understanding the report.

115 In addition to having national co-ordinations in the 27 EU member states, the EWL has national co-ordinations in Croatia, Macedonia and Turkey.

116 The monthly Newsflash produced by the EWL secretariat includes a section that lists the official consultations and meetings where the EWL has been represented by the executive, board or by the staff at the secretariat. The four most frequently occurring
the draft annual work plan; the preparation of the draft annual budget; the effective management of the EWL; the ongoing and effective supervision of the finances and the budget; the cooperation between the EWL and outside/third parties; the management of external relations; decision-making and representation on behalf of the EWL at external meetings and events; making recommendations to the Board in relation to membership applications; and the appointment of senior staff at the secretariat. The Executive meets regularly and is composed by the President of the EWL, the Vice-Presidents, a Treasurer and representatives from three full member organisations. They are elected by the Board and from among the members of the Board. The Executive has, as has the Board, a two year mandate.

6.3.4 The Presidency

The EWL President chairs the General Assembly, the Board and the Executive. She is formally accountable to all EWL members. The President has the casting vote when there are an equal number of votes. The President has the formal responsibility to represent the EWL externally and to, on behalf of the Board, supervise the activities of the secretariat. The Vice Presidents are to assist and substitute the President whenever necessary (EWL, 2007a: article 23).

6.3.5 The Secretariat and General Secretary

The activities of the EWL are co-ordinated by a Brussels based secretariat headed by the Secretary General. It monitors the day-to-day activities of the EU. The staff consists of ten paid employees, including two interns, and other unpaid interns (2009). Each policy officer is responsible for one or several policy areas. A policy director, organisationally a middle manager sitting between the General Secretary and the policy officers, has the overall coordinating responsibility of EWL policy. The formal function of the secretariat is to carry out the EWL annual work programme, as decided by the General Assembly. The work program is produced by the secretariat. The member organisations’ motions, which constitute the basis of the work programme, are collected, categorised and turned into the work programme by the secretariat. The policy officers at the secretariat work names (2005-2006) are those of the policy co-ordinator at the secretariat, the violence against women policy officer at the secretariat, the secretary general at the secretariat, and the president.
closely together. Though the policy areas and responsibilities are divided between them, there is a process of cooperation and sharing of responsibilities. In addition to the fact that they all work in the same office, share the same kitchen, the same lunch room etcetera, there is a weekly morning meeting where each policy officer reports on ongoing developments in their respective area. The morning meeting is also the time when it is decided who is going to what meetings to represent the EWL. The policy officers at the secretariat write the EWL policy documents, position papers and the EWL official statements. They are responsible for monitoring gender equality initiatives and developments in the EU and for providing the member organisations with briefings about these developments and information about what the EU developments mean for women in Europe and for gender equality. In addition to providing information to members, one of the main functions of the secretariat is to provide information to government departments, members of the European parliament, staff at the European Commission and a wide range of other actors (EWL, 2003b; EWL, 2009a). The secretariat prepares presentations and speeches for the Board and the Executive to be given externally. It organises the statutory meetings, including the Board meetings and the General Assembly. The policy officers attend the meetings with the Social Platform of European Non-Governmental Organisations, of which the EWL is a founding member, the EU Civil Society Contact Group and liaise with other EU actors.

One of the main functions of the secretariat is to organise, co-ordinate and conduct the actual lobbying of the EU institutions. This includes lobbying individuals within the EU institutions as well as other institutions and organisations, liaising with other non-governmental organisations and so on. It includes writing letters, producing research reports and linking with decision-makers (Collins, interview December 13, 2004). It includes organising conferences and workshops, presentations of the EWL and initiating projects with other organisations. There is a regular process of amendments of European Parliament reports, Commission reports and of other EU official documents. Draft directives are also being sent to the secretariat for input. The policy officer suggests amendments to the documents. The day to day work at the secretariat is setting the real agenda of the EWL – as long as there, at some point in the history of the EWL, has been a motion opening up a political space for the secretariat to act. The secretariat is where the decisions on actions are made; this is where policy papers are written; this is where EU gender equality legislation and implementation is monitored, evaluated and amended etcetera. In addition to the Presidency, the Board and the Executive, the professionalization of women’s organisations on EU level is most clearly ex-
pressed by the full time Brussels based secretariat, including the policy officers, the secretary general and the administrators, and its competence.

### 6.4 Budgetary constraints and opportunities

The European Commission spends approximately 1000 million euro a year on funding interest organisations within the EU (European Commission, 2000c; Greenwood, 2003a, 2003b; Geyer, 2008). The EU provides three different types of funding for social non-governmental organisations: A-budget line funding, B-budget line funding and Project funding. A-budget line funding is the most stable and secure source of funding and is designed to fund EU administrative activities. A-budget line funding generally includes a funding commitment made over five to six years. One of the main powers of the Parliament is its control of the EU budget of which it approves or disapproves. However, A-budget line funding is relatively immune from budgetary challenges in the Parliament. Understandably, A-budget line funding is extremely rare and only a few social non-governmental organisations are funded through the A-budget lines. The key examples are the EWL and the European Youth Forum.

This is important for at least two reasons. Firstly, to be granted A-budget line funding means a certain sense of security and the possibility of long term planning. An organisation receiving A-budget funding is not necessarily guaranteed sustained funding, but in practice the security is there. Secondly, it means that the organisation is considered to be carrying out administrative tasks of the EU. It implements EU policy, and ‘sets it’ on national level through the grassroots. The EWL hence delivers the grassroots to the EU, or rather brings, the EU and national level closer. The EWL is thus not regarded as any other women’s organisation, but as an organisation vital to the European Union in carrying out specific administrative tasks. Other civil society organisations, other than the EWL, which

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117 The total budget of the EU for 2004 amounts to 109 billion euro, out of which less than one percent is spent on the funding of interest organisations (DG Budget, 2004).

118 B-budget line funding is linked to particular policy areas and proposals based on two to three year programs and is fully reviewed at the end of each program. Currently, most of the funding for social non-governmental organisation organisations comes through B-budget lines. These budget lines are much more unstable, politically weaker and must be constantly defended and justified by the social non-governmental organisation. Lastly, project funding is utilised by most social non-governmental organisations as well. However, project funding is generally short term (under one to two years); takes a significant amount of resources to obtain (particularly following the creation of detailed EU application, implementation and evaluation procedures); and carries no guarantee of further funding once the project is complete.
are funded by the Commission, include for instance the European Network Against Racism (ENAR) and the European Disability Forum. In addition, some organisations receive Commission funding through various programs. The International Lesbian and Gay Association – the main EU level organisation dealing with homosexuals’ rights – and the European Older People’s Platform were both funded through the Community Action Programme 2001-2006 and are currently funded through PROGRESS (2007-2013).

Most EU social non-governmental organisations rely on EU funding, albeit to varying degrees. Of the 30 members of the Platform of European Social Non-Governmental Organisations, nearly all are heavily funded (60-90 per cent of total funding) by the EU (Geyer, 2001). Generally, European social non-governmental organisations have small financial resources (less than 500,000 euro on average) and rely on and compete for similar financial resources.

The EWL is primarily funded by the European Commission. The budget is approximately 1.4 million euro. The Commission funds 80 percent of this budget. The remaining 20 percent comes from membership fees, individual contributions and various foundations and institutes from which the secretariat applies for funding. The funding from the Commission requires that 20 percent is raised from elsewhere, meaning that if the EWL cannot raise the remaining 20 percent of the budget it loses the same percent of its Commission funding. Should the draft budget be 100 units and the EWL only raises 10 units from outside of the Commission, the Commission will decrease its funding with 10 units. The Commission funding is based on a contract which in turn is based on the EWL annual work programme (EWL, 2005a; EWL 2005e).

The budgetary restrictions are most certainly an opportunity and source of support, but there are dilemmas to be raised as well. The EWL has to gather members to live up to the EU criteria of representativeness of organised interests (see chapter eight) and since the more members the stronger the EWL gets. Hence, the membership fee must be low enough so that women’s organisations across Europe can actually afford to pay it, while simultaneously, the membership fee is increasingly important to cover the remaining twenty percent of the budget which the EWL must raise from outside the Commission to avoid losing the Commission funding.

The budget of the EWL has slowly but steadily increased, owing partly to the increasing number of member organisation, which in turn is partly due to the increasing number of EU member states. A major increase of national coordinations took place in 2004 when Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia joined the EU. National
women’s co-ordinations from the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Estonia and Turkey joined the EWL. The majority of the EWL budget is spent on the staff. Next to the salaries, the majority of the budget is spent on the General Assembly.

### Table 3: EWL budget and funding 1999-2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Budget (euro)</th>
<th>CEC funding</th>
<th>Budget monopoly</th>
<th>Member orgs.</th>
<th>Staff salaries (euro)</th>
<th>GA cost (euro)</th>
<th>Membership fees (euro)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>1,383,190</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>Progress</td>
<td>4000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>1,368,986</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>4000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1,270,894</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>4000</td>
<td>557,000</td>
<td>117,000</td>
<td>60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>937,500</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>4000</td>
<td>537,000</td>
<td>110,000</td>
<td>60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>937,500</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>4000</td>
<td>527,362</td>
<td>103,443</td>
<td>43,211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>812,500</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>3000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>812,500</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>3000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>3000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>812,000</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-1999</td>
<td>650,000</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1000-3000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other sources of funding, in addition to the EU funding and the membership fee (the latter only makes up approximately five percent of the EWL budget), are various trusts, project money and individual sponsors. The EWL Observatory on Violence Against Women has up until recently been funded separately. It has partly received funding under the Commission’s Daphne program set up to combat violence against women. In 2005 additional funds raised by the EWL came from the Sigrid Rausing Trust which financed the EWL European Observatory on Violence Against Women and various organisational work. In addition, the Swedish government (Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications/Division for Gender Equality) and the Nordic-Baltic Taskforce Against Trafficking in Human Beings funded a Nordic-Baltic pilot project managed by the EWL policy officers (EWL, 2005a).

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119 The numbers are derived from the EWL Annual Reports 2000-2008 and from information received directly from the staff at the EWL secretariat.

120 Daphne is yet another example of how the policy domains of the EU are interconnected and lack rigidity. Under the Daphne programme, the EU, in this case the Commission, funds civil society organisations active in the field of violence against women despite the fact that the EU lacks legal remit in the policy area.

121 In 2006, the Rausing Trust withdrew their financial support. It was stated, in a letter, that the trust was not ‘comfortable’ with the EWL’s position on prostitution (DeTroy, personal communication, 2006).
6.4.1 Monopoly contestations

From 1995, the fifth year of the EWL existence, the EWL started to enjoy something of a financial monopoly by being ascribed an own budget line of the Community funds. Budget line A-3037 in the Community funding of non-governmental organisations was called “EWL” and the budget was reserved for the EWL, meaning that no other women’s organisation could apply for funding from that specific budget line.

There have been attempts to break the EWL monopoly. In 1999, a group of women’s organisations issued a statement that the funding situation was unfair. Some of the women’s organisations had the support of Christian Democratic and right-wing democrat parliamentarians. The issue over the budget line included an amendment tabled to the European Commission’s budget proposal for the EWL (650,000 euro) which sought to change the name and content of the budget line from “EWL” to “EWL and other non-governmental organisations representatives of women’s rights at European level”, thereby opening up for other applicants besides members of the EWL. The proposal would not only increase the number of potential applicants, it would also include an increase of the budget from 650,000 euro to 800,000 euro. 150,000 euro would thereby cover the rest of women’s organisations in Europe. The amendment implied that all European women’s group would share the budget of 850,000 euro.

One of the stronger supporters of the amendment was the Irish member of the European Parliament Dana Rosemary Scallon. In the end, most of the Irish members of the European Parliament voted against the amendment. The Irish umbrella organisation lobbied the Irish members of the European Parliament heavily to not accept the amendment during this period. After the vote in the Parliament, the members of the European Parliament were contacted directly by the Irish EWL member and thanked – and the Irish umbrella organisation argued that those who supported Scallon should be questioned regarding their mandate for adopting a position of support for such an amendment (communication with Women’s National Council Ireland, 2007).

After the amendment was turned down by the Parliament, those in favour of cutting the EWL budget held a press conference in Strasbourg. During the press conference the EWL was proclaimed as an ultra-feminist and pro-abortion organisation, un-representative of women and women’s interest. One of the claimants was the EURO-FAM, a lobby organisation opposing women’s rights to their own bodies (EURO-FAM, 2005, 2009). Officially, the EWL had no consensus on abortion; neither did/does the organisation call itself feminist. In addition, when
Poland joined the EU and the Polish national co-ordination to join the EWL was created, the right to free abortion disappeared as a prioritised demand from the EWL website. This does however not mean that the EWL is not a feminist organisation, or that the women working at the EWL secretariat do not consider themselves to be feminists:

Of course we are feminist... no question about it... Everyone who works here is a feminist. It's just that, eh, it is a word hard to use to be listened to and... and heard (Gréboval, interview December 10, 2004).

However, the point here is not whether the EWL is ultra feminist or pro-abortion, but rather that the attempts to open up the budget line had less to do with opening up for and including other women’s organisations than with cutting the financial opportunities of the EWL.

A second point to be made here is the way in which the circumstances around the budget contestation seen in the light of the above quote makes visible the tension between the logic of influence and the logic of membership. To act explicitly feminist may be possible to combine with having the possibility to influence, but to state that the organisation is feminist is not. This indicates that explicitly stating to be a feminist organisation remains something of a forbidden act (Eduards, 2002). It would seem that the EWL compromises in this particular case, when the demand for the right to free abortion for all women in the EU was downplayed and when the EWL avoids using the term feminist, included a trade off where influence was more important than membership.

As the result of the budgetary contestation lead to the EWL keeping its A-budget line funding, the EWL continued to enjoy a representative monopoly as far as women’s interest at EU level were concerned. It also means that the EWL

122 Prior to Poland joining in 2004, the right to free abortion was visible on the EWL website. When I was searching for it after 2004, I could not find any explicit reference to abortion. The first reference to abortion to turn up again was a sentence on the back of the 2004 Annual Report, published in the spring of 2005 saying “Abortion: At least 70,000 deaths occur each year from the 20 million or so unsafe abortions. Many victims are adolescent girls and young women” (EWL, 2005a). The second reference I have found was in a lobbying letter which had been sent to all members of the European Parliament in 2006 regarding the “European Parliament’s written declaration on women’s right to self-determination and adequate sex education and family planning in the European Union” (EP, 2006). The declaration called on the Commission and the member states to ensure women’s access to safe and legal abortion throughout the EU and the EWL letter called on all members of the European Parliament to sign the declaration (EWL, 2006f). To endorse an EP written declaration, 50% of the MEPs have to sign it.
was the civil society implementer of Commission programs on gender equality and women’s interests that are to be implemented by interest organisations, thus supporting the Commission in exchange for a monopoly to represent.

In 2001, after three years of the issue was brought to the agenda, the European Parliament decided to break the monopoly accorded to the EWL since 1995. The issue had been considered for three years before a decision was finally made. In addition to the A3037 line that still attributes funds solely to the EWL, the European Parliament created a new line, A3037N, giving funds to other feminist organisations that are not part of the EWL federation. Members of the European Parliament agreed that the EWL does not necessarily reflect all points of view inside the feminist movement.

During the vote on the EU Budget 2006 on October 27th 2005, the European Parliament rejected an amendment that sought to increase allocations to women’s organisations and to enlarge the budgetary attributions. The EWL remains the only women’s group to have the leverage in the implementation of the Beijing Platform (Beijing +10), while the other women groups will see their activities narrowed to the promotion of the role of women in society. The responsibility to implement and to monitor the Beijing process is part of the work contract between the Commission and the EWL. By implementing the Commission’s programmes, the EWL is thus also involved in the output of authoritative decisions (Lehmbruch, 1979b).
6.5 Membership structure

The EWL is an umbrella organisation. As an umbrella organisation, the EWL represents European women’s interests by coordinating national level umbrella organisations (the Bulgarian Women’s Lobby, the French Women’s Lobby, the Hungarian Women’s Lobby, and so on).

The national umbrella organisations, or national co-ordinations as they are referred to, coordinate and represent locally, regionally and nationally based women’s organisations. Regional member organisations of the national co-ordination can have their own member organisations. To give an example: an individual woman is a member of Business and Professional Women Stockholm (BPW Stockholm); BPW Stockholm is a member organisation of Business and Professional Women Sweden (BPW Sweden); BPW Sweden is a member organisation of the Swedish Women’s Lobby (SWL); the SWL is a member organisation of the EWL. (In addition, in this particular case, the BPW Sweden is also a member organisation of Business and Professional Women Europe (BPWE); and BPWE is a European member organisation of the EWL). Interests are thus aggregated from national level to the EU level through several different channels.

The national co-ordinations are seen as the bulk and a basis of strength of the EWL (EWL, 2009a; Gréboval, interview December 10, 2004). They organise activities and lobby political authorities and institutions at the local and national
levels. They are a vital channel to both the vertical and horizontal mediation of information, knowledge and preferences: vertically between the EU level EWL and the national level; and horizontally between the national level member organisations. Having national level member organisations that can lobby their national level governments and parliaments is vital due to the decision-making structure of the EU (see chapter two). In that the Council is notoriously known for being the most difficult EU institution to lobby, lobbying national level ministers is a way in to the Council without actually lobbying the Council as an institution.

The council is the strongest opponent. Especially because it’s closed... and the Commission is difficult to work with, its heavy it’s very bureaucratic, but it’s still much more transparent than the Council. Because in the council you can’t really know who’s saying what. So it’s very easy for member states to say they support something, but then within the Council..., because it’s not public, it’s not transparent. You don’t have, you don’t always have like a rapport about who’s saying what so it’s easy to say ‘oh the council decided’ while its practical for member states either not to say anything, or to go against some things... and then, because we are friends and members on national level, we have sometimes people who help us and they say ‘no no, this country didn’t do what they said to do’ either they are not very vocal or they oppose something they [promised not to]. It can be very surprising, politically as well (Gréboval, interview December 10, 2004).

The EWL currently has national co-ordinations in 30 countries: the 27 member states of the EU and the three candidate countries Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey (EWL, 2009a).

### 6.5.1 Membership categories

There are four membership categories: national co-ordinations; European and international organisations; associate member organisations; and supporting organisations and individuals (see Appendix C). The national co-ordinations and the European and international organisations are so called full members. Associate members and supporting members are not full members of the EWL, their rights and responsibilities are limited as compared to the national co-ordinations and the European member organisations.
The national co-ordinations are the main constituting body of the EWL. They are full members. They are the national co-coordinators of women’s organisations from respective member state of the EU, the European Economic Area, and from the countries in formal accession procedures of the EU (EWL statutes: article 5). There can only be one full member organisation per country. Being a full member includes the right to vote and to participate in the EWL General Assembly; the right to put forward candidates to the various posts within the organisational structures of the EWL; to set policies, guidelines and priorities; receive all information, for example, the Annual Reports, Work Programme, motions from other full members, the Newsflashes, the Newsletters etcetera. They have the right to be informed of any/every EWL ongoing activity (EWL, 2007a: article 12). In return, full member organisations must have legal status recognised by national or international law and be a nationwide umbrella organisation (EWL, 2003c). Full members must act independently of any religious authority or political party.\footnote{There is nothing in the EWL statutes (EWL, 2007a) that prevents a national co-ordination to have member organisations based on religion, e.g. Women in the Church of Sweden and the Swedish Ecumenical Women’s Council are both members of the Swedish national co-ordination (SKL, 2009).} Full members must i) demonstrate a clear commitment to gender equality in their past, present and future activities and plans; ii) demonstrate support for Convention of the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), its Optional Protocol and the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA); iii) demonstrate that they have taken into account “in the policies and structures of the organisation, the needs and perspectives of the many women that face multiple discrimination, including women of different ages, races or ethnic origins, religions, beliefs, abilities, and sexual orientation”; vi) and be representative of a wide range of women’s organisations across the entire member state/country which they represent (EWL, 2007a: article 5). Any national co-ordination of women’s organisations which is currently in membership or is applying for full membership and which does not conform to the criteria set out by the EWL is expected to make the necessary changes so that they fulfil these criteria (EWL, 2003c: 3). The membership fee for 2010 is 1000 euro.

European and international member organisations are European or international level non-governmental women’s organisations or women’s sections within organisations supporting gender equality and women’s rights.\footnote{At the moment (2009) there are two European member organisations that actively support gender equality or women’s rights, but they cannot be labelled as women’s or-} They are active in...
either specific policy fields, for example employment or trade, or they are organised around an inequality/anti-discrimination ground, for example sexual orientation. European and international members of the EWL include, for example, the European Disability Forum, University Women of Europe, the European Trade Union Confederation and Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom. European and international member organisations have to be present in at least 50 percent plus one of the EU member states, the European Economic Area or countries that are in the formal process of EU accession. European and international organisations have the right to send one delegate to the EWL General Assembly, plus a Board member if one has been elected (EWL, 2007a). The member organisation should cover its delegates’ expenditure in relation to attending the General Assembly. There is however a EWL solidarity fund from which full members can apply for funding to cover part of the cost. There are currently 21 European member organisations (EWL, 2009c). The statutes state that the membership fee must not exceed 5000 euro, for 2010 the fee is set to 400 euro.

The European and international organisations are, just as the national co-ordinations, full members of the EWL. The terms and conditions are similar to those of the national co-ordinations, but there are some differences. The main difference is that not all European member organisations are represented by a Board member; there are 21 European and international member organisations and only ten seats at the Board set aside for European and international organisations. A second difference is a quantitative restriction: European organisations must have members in at least 50 percent plus one of the member states of the EU, the European Economic Community or in countries in EU accession processes. They would, it seems, have to have the same kind of umbrella structure as the EWL. As concerns the voting rights at the General Assembly, putting forward candidates to the Board, commitment to gender equality, and a commitment to EWL policy, statements and activities, the conditions are the same as those applying to national co-ordinations (EWL, 2007a: article 5).

Associate members are non-governmental women’s organisations; a women’s section of a non-governmental organisation; or other non-governmental organisations active in the field of gender equality or women’s rights. They do not have to be European based and they can be women’s or gender mixed organisations. They cannot be men’s organisations. Members include, for example, the Amazon (Belgium), the Danish Centre for Information on Women and Gender, Terre

ganisation. These two are the European Trade Union Confederation and the European Confederation of Independent Trade Unions.
Supporting members include organisations and individuals that simply accept the purposes and aims of the EWL (EWL statutes: Article 7 and 8). Individual supporting members receive the Newsflash and the Newsletter of the EWL and information about the activities of the EWL. Supporting organisations and individual members lack voting rights and may not present candidates or stand for election to the EWL. They may attend EWL seminars and conferences on invitation. There is an annual membership fee in the form of a donation to the EWL; this donation must be at least 30 euro. There is no information about how many supporting members there are.

6.5.2 Membership approval and monitoring

Whether or not an organisation is approved as full member of the EWL is decided by an open vote by the General Assembly. Two thirds of the delegates have to vote in favour of the membership. There is a permanent committee which monitors the activities of the full members and processes applications from new members. The membership committee, confirmed in its mandate at the General Assembly in October 2005, monitors the activities of existing full member organisations as well as processes membership applications. In addition to the committee, a policy officer at the EWL secretariat is responsible for reviewing the membership applications and to monitor those already members. When applying for membership as a national co-ordination, a questionnaire is sent to the applicant. The applicant is required to answer a set of questions and describe the aims and objectives of the applicant organisation; its plan of activities; its internal struc-
The applicant is required to answer a set of questions and describe the aims and membership as a national co-ordination. A questionnaire is sent to the applicant. When applying for membership, applications and to monitor those already members. When applying for a policy officer at the EWL secretariat is responsible for reviewing the member applications and processes membership applications. In addition to the committee, the membership committee, confirmed in its mandate at the General Assembly in October 2005, monitors the activities of existing full member organisations. The membership committee, confirmed in its mandate at the General Assembly, monitors the activities of the full members and processes applications from new members. The committee also supports part of the payment of the General Assembly registration fees. The committee also supports part of the payment of the General Assembly registration fees. The setting up the fund was agreed upon by the General Assembly 2005 (EWL, 2006e).

To sum up, using the statutes (EWL, 2007a) and the template membership application form (EWL, 2005c), the national co-ordinations must follow the following criteria in order to become and remain the national level co-ordinations of the EWL:

- be a legally recognised organisation
- demonstrate a clear commitment to gender equality on the basis of past and current activities and future plans
- demonstrate a support for the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol and the Beijing Platform for Action
- demonstrate that they have taken into account, in the policies and structures of their organisation, the needs and perspective of women that face multiple discrimination, including women of different ages, races or ethnic origins, religions or beliefs, abilities, and sexual orientation.
- be representative of a broad range of women’s organisations across the whole of the member state/country
- act independently of any political party or religious authority
- be organised in an open, democratic and transparent manner
- list their member organisations
- describe their mission and objectives
- prove their commitment to promoting equality between women and men
- provide a plan of activities...
• describe their agreed internal structures and functioning
• describe how the national member is representative of a broad range of women’s organisations across the whole of the member state/country
• describe how the needs and perspectives of women that face multiple discrimination, including women of different ages, races or ethnic origins, religions or beliefs, abilities, and sexual orientation are integrated in their organisation (compare the slightly different formulation in the statutes, see above)
• describe the procedure for how they deal with applications from women’s associations that wish to join
• describe their procedures for electing representatives to the EWL General Assembly and EWL Board of Administration
• describe how they ensure democratic consultation procedures involving all their members in relation to EWL policy positions
• describe how they ensure information dissemination among all members
• describe the tasks of the organisation in acting as a lead agency/secretariat for the “new” national co-ordination

These very extensive rules and regulations somehow seem to contradict the way in which the EWL have prioritised becoming a large women’s umbrella organisations. For example, it was earlier argued that expanding the membership took precedence over what political issues to pursue, that is, the form of the EWL was prioritised over its content (see also the quote from Gréboval in chapter 5.2). This should most probably be seen in the light of the shifting consultation agenda of the European Commission where transparency and accountability of those consulted have, for various reasons, become pertinent (European Commission, 2001a, 2202, 2006b, 2006d). (This is discussed further in chapter eight.) What may be even more important, is that the shift towards a more regulated membership signifies how women and women’s organisations have continuously must kept on fighting to retain access to those making the decisions, they have must continue to fight for a controlling political presence from within the system (Jonasdottir, 1991).

**6.6 Streamlining organisational structure: logic of influence**

Some of the national co-ordinations were already existing national level women’s organisations prior to joining the EWL; others had to be created specifically or change their internal organisation in order to meet the EWL membership criteria to guarantee representation at EU level via the EWL (Collins, interview, December 10, 2004). One example of the latter is the Swedish Women’s Lobby which was initiated from above and created with the purpose of becoming a member of
The Swedish Women’s Lobby was formed by the initiative of the Gender Equality Unit in the Ministry of Labour. Undersecretary of State, Ingegerd Sahlström at the Gender Equality Unit, sent a letter of invitation, dated 4 September 1996, to various Swedish women’s organisations asking them to attend a meeting at Rosenbad, the Government Chancellery in Sweden. Twenty two women’s organisations, each with two representatives, attended the meeting. At the meeting, Sahlström stated that the purpose of the meeting was “to prepare the organisations an opportunity to discuss, among themselves, the representation in the European Women’s Lobby and other similar missions, the possible forming of an umbrella organisation etcetera.”

At the end of the meeting, it was agreed to form some kind of organisation for cooperation and to do it as quickly as possible. A working group was appointed to investigate further and to apply for funding for the setting up of the new organisation. Later the same month, on 23 September, the Swedish Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom and the United Nations Association Sweden sent a joint letter inviting the women’s organisations to a working seminar. The Women’s League had prepared an application for funding (approximately 2.500 euro) to start up a new co-ordination of Swedish women’s organisations; the application was to be sent to the Ministry of Labour. At the end of this second meeting, held on 30 October 1996, it was decided to form a national level umbrella organisation for women’s organisations in Sweden. The first step was to form four working groups: organisations, structure, finances and planning, none of which targeted what issues to pursue. An interim board and interim statutes were adopted. The statutes were revised at the first official meeting in November 1997, and a new board was elected. The umbrella organisation was officially formed on 1 February 1997 as the Forum for Co-operation of Women in Sweden. The name was later changed to the Swedish Women’s Lobby. The first General Assembly of the Swedish Women’s Lobby was held on 21 March 1998 and gathered 27 delegates from 19 women’s organisations (SKL and Alfredsson, 2008). The first issue that the Swedish women’s lobby brought to the EWL was about criminalising the demand side of prostitution (SKL, 2001).

125 Other examples of member states that created a national level co-ordination to join the EWL include Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, France, Macedonia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Turkey.
126 The original quote in Swedish is “att bereda organisationerna tillfälle att sinsemellan diskutera representationen i European Women’s Lobby och andra liknande uppdrag, eventuellt bildande av en paraplyorganisation mm.”
127 Kvinnoförbundet för Fred och Frihet
128 Samverkansforum för kvinnor i Sverige.
A different example to the Swedish case is the formation of a British national co-ordination. Here, there was already an UK wide co-ordination of women’s organisations in place. The National Alliance of Women’s Organisations had, in 1991, over one hundred member organisations and more than five million individual members spread out over the UK (Szondi, 1991). Yet, it was decided to form an ‘umbrella of umbrellas’ in the UK to explicitly include regional level representative organisations of women from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The umbrella of umbrellas is called the UK Joint Committee on Women (UKJCW). In the case of Northern Ireland, there was no existing organisation that could become the Northern Irish member of the UK Joint Committee and one had to be created as a specific response to the creation of the EWL (NIWEP, 2009). The Northern Ireland Women’s European Platform now gathers 77 Northern Irish women’s organisations.

The national level co-ordinations have the same organisational structure as the EWL at large. The very shape, the organisational structure of the EWL somehow seems to trickle down to national level; national level women’s organisations change their structure or invent new ones to better fit the patterns of the EWL. Part of the explanation can be found in the explicit membership rules; other forms of organising would make it difficult to be accepted as a national level co-ordination of the EWL. The existence of the EWL has changed the form of organising of women’s interests in civil society not only at European level, but at national level and in the case of the UK at regional level as well.

6.7 The process of motions: self moderation of demands

Full members have the right to put forward two motions to the EWL General Assembly. The same rule applies to all national co-ordination irrespective of size. The number of motions is not based on the number of national member organisations, nor is it based on the size of the population. The possibility to influence EWL policies and campaigns by numbers is set per state. Prior to the formulation of national level motions, member organisations at national, regional and local levels send their own suggestions of motions to the national umbrella organisation and which motions to send to send to the EWL is decided at an annual assembly. For any motion to be eligible to be put forward to the General Assembly of the EWL, it must have the support of two other full member organisations. When the EWL secretariat has received the motions from all the national co-ordinations and the European organisations, the motions are summarised and...
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6.7.1 General and simultaneously controversial demands

The majority of the motions become accepted by the General Assembly (Gréboval, interview December 10, 2004). The motions contain requests made to the EWL to conduct research, support or lobby a specific issue, or to simply take a certain position on an issue. When the motions require that “the EWL to lobby”, “EWL” refers to the secretariat staff in Brussels. The “we” of the motions refers to the full member organisation putting forward the motion, or to the full member putting forward amendments. A closer reading of the motions put forward at the General Assembly reveals that many of them are rather mainstream and general in character, and they are more often than not process rather than outcome oriented (EWL motions, 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007). To give a few examples from the 2005 motions:129

129 See Table 6: EWL activities in motions 2005 and follow up to motions 2006 for a complete list of adopted motions at the 2005 General Assembly.
Table 4: EWL motions 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motions 2005</th>
<th>Suggested amendments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We call on the EWL and its members to support the proposal of the European</td>
<td>We call on the EWL and its members to support the proposal of the European Parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliament to declare 2006 European Year against Violence towards Women.</td>
<td>to declare (CLEF:) 2008 European Year against Violence towards Women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We ask EWL to elaborate a mapping and comparison of the institutional capacity</td>
<td>SKL:130 demand that the Commission elaborate a mapping and ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and support for gender equality at the national level of EU countries.</td>
<td>CLEF: require the integration in the work programme of the Gender Institute of the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EWL should lobby for an EU wide standard for gender institutions covering</td>
<td>assessment of the mapping and a comparison of the institutional capacity and support for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>equal opportunities policy and promoting gender mainstreaming at national</td>
<td>gender equality at the national level of EU countries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>level.</td>
<td>SKL: EWL should continue lobbying for an EU wide standard for...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The EWL should strive towards achieving some kind of legislation forcing</td>
<td>NWCI: The EWL should strive towards achieving legislation on childcare in all member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>member states Governments to take the issue of child-care and day-care</td>
<td>states ensuring that each child has the right to childcare irrespective of their parent's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>centres in a serious manner.</td>
<td>employment status.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EWL members should in their respective countries work to attain special</td>
<td>UKJCW:132 using the model provided by Norway’s Marketing Control Act.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>legislation, which would control marketing and advertising that is especially</td>
<td>CLEF:133 (to add:) In order to support this process, EWL could circulate information on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>harmful to gender equality or exploits the body of either sex.</td>
<td>existing good practices (legislations and/or policy).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As many migrant women are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, we ask EWL</td>
<td>WILPF134 (to add:) This should be done in a balanced and narrowly drawn way so as not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to urge the EU to recognise the contribution made by female migrants to the</td>
<td>impede freedom of speech unduly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gross domestic product of their host country and to ensure that they can</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exercise their full civil rights.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

130 SKL: Sveriges Kvinnolobby, the Swedish national co-ordination.
131 UKJCW: United Kingdom Joint Committee of Women.
132 NWCI: National Council of Women Ireland, the Irish national co-ordination.
133 CLEF: Co-ordination Française pour le Lobby Européen des Femmes, the French national co-ordination.
134 WILPF: Women’s International League for peace and Freedom, a European member organisation.
The impression of the general character of many of the motions, and the amendments, is confirmed by the EWL policy director, who sees the procedure of the motions not only as a way of making the EWL act, but as a possibility for the member organisations to be heard and to show what their priorities are:

Some of them are very general and some of them is things that we do already, so it’s a way for our members to be active and show what is a priority to them. And, eh, it’s rare that some motions are not adopted (Gréboval, interview December 10, 2004).

There are, however, examples of motions that are less general and that can be seen as provocative by some members.

So, some of them are completely infantile in a facile ... like what? [shrugs her shoulders]. But otherwise it can be quite... radical [raises her eye brows]. Some can be politically very discussed and very important. [...] For example our position on prostitution and trafficking is based on a motion which was adopted a few years ago and ... this is the motion where the women’s movement is very divided in Europe. So thanks to this motion we can have a position that you can’t sell or buy human bodies. And, so we’re following the Swedish model in relation to prostitution. So that’s... some motions are, you could say, not very revolutionary but some others are (Gréboval, interview December 10, 2004).

Even though many motions are general and uncontroversial, the opposite exists too. Some motions are more radical than others. Two examples of motions that were seen as more controversial include the 1998 motion on prostitution as a form of violence against women, and the 2001 motion on criminalising the demand side of prostitution, referred to by Gréboval (EWL, 2006; SKL, 2008) (See Appendix D and E). The latter motion also shows the multilevel character, that is, motions can be formulated to require other member organisations to act and carry out lobbying activities. Motions do not only target the EWL secretariat in Brussels, but the entire organisation throughout the EU. The acceptance of the latter motion on prostitution requires that:

[...] the member organisations of EWL shall lobby their respective governments to adopt a similar law [as the Swedish], one that will make it a crime for men to buy and use women in the

135 The adoption of the 1998 motion on prostitution as a form of violence against women has been included in the Confederal Group of the European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL) lists over “Key dates in the recent history of resistance against sexual exploitation and prostitution” (GUE/NGL, 2006).
context of prostitution. The law shall not in any ways criminalise the women, the victim. On the contrary, the law must be combined with efforts to help the women getting out of prostitution by providing them with financial assistance, education, job training, housing and health care. They should also work for strong policies against pimping. EWL should lobby the commissioners and members of the EU Parliament to put pressure on their respective governments to make it a crime to buy women in prostitution and to develop strong policies against pimping. EWL should provide its members with information and support them. (SKL, 2001; see Appendix E).

Having adopted motions on prostitution as a form of violence against women and on viewing the buying of bodies for sexual purposes as a crime gives the EWL secretariat the mandate to formulate, and make public, position papers and political statements on prostitution and to start acting within these areas. Both of these motions generated long debates at the General Assembly before being voted on. The position on prostitution differs immensely within the women’s movement, as it does within academia and among policy-makers (Outshoorn, 2008). For an umbrella organisation like the EWL to formulate a united position on prostitution, and an inherently radical one, is a comprehensive and somewhat tricky process. Yet, the radical demand included in the motion was adopted by the General Assembly.

Motions can be controversial for reasons other than their content: once a motion is voted on and adopted by the general Assembly, the EWL and the secretariat can take action.

And eh, this year for example it was something about pornography which was proposed by the SKL and this is the kind of thing that can be... eh, not everybody would agree even within the organisation that we work actively against pornography so it gives us a mandate and that’s important (Gréboval, interview December 10, 2004). 137

The motions are the basis of the EWL activities. Without a motion on a policy issue, the EWL cannot, or should not, have a position on the policy issue and if the motion is adopted, it becomes the official position of the EWL.

And because of motions we can say that this is the policy of the organisation and also do something. And, it’s because of a mo-

137 SKL’s motion on sexual harassment adopted at the GA 2004 includes pornography in the definition of sexual harassment (SKL, 2004).
According to the membership criteria as described earlier in the chapter, member organisations have to accept the official positions of the EWL, even if they do not have to participate in every activity or every campaign. Therefore, as the motions become official positions, some motions can be controversial and contested on grounds of both the very content of the motion, and the fact that if accepted, the motion forms the basis of the EWL official position on the issue.

Motions can also reverse, or try to reverse, actions and policy positions already agreed upon. The general position within the EWL on employment is that an increasing share of women in paid employment is good; gender equality increases when the gap between men’s and women’s employment patterns decreases (EWL, 2008f). Yet, within the EWL membership are organisations representing women working in their home, that is, women in unpaid reproductive work. Contrary to the model advocated by the EWL at large, these organisations advocate a difference model of gender equality, where women’s different contributions in the form of child care and care of the elderly outside of the labour market, should be equally valued as men’s contributions in the labour market. Such position does not require the transformation of gender relations, nor does it imply equal treatment (Rees, 1998). The motions put forward by for example European Federation of Unpaid Parents and Carers at Home (FEFAF) exemplifies this tension within the EWL. However, at the General Assembly, those in favour of the difference model are generally outnumbered by those in favour of a sameness or transformative model:

We have an organisation which always proposes motions ... it’s an organisation of women working in the home ... so they always have some motions that are not acceptable to most of the members, about social rights and ... how women working at home should be protected and things like this which are usually refused by the membership (Gréboval, interview December 10, 2004).

It seems that the members themselves stop some issues from reaching the public agenda; it is not the leaders or the staff but the member organisations within the General Assembly that act as gatekeepers of women’s interests. The procedure surrounding the motions, as described previously in this chapter, means that each motion has to be favoured by at least three full member organisations before making it to the General Assembly. The procedure also includes the process of amendments where every full member may suggest amendments to any motion.
All amendments are voted on one by one, as is the final motion in its whole. Once the motion in its whole is to be voted on at the General Assembly, the numerous amendments may have altered the main points, the demands, of the original motion and turned the motion into something different than originally intended:

 [...] motions are amended so sometimes, [...] because a motion is proposed and it’s so amended that it has nothing to do with the original anymore. It says completely the contrary (Gréboval, interview December 10, 2004).

What is being made visible here is how some demands from the member organisations become moderated. It is not, however, necessarily a question of the leaders of the organisation controlling its members but rather a question of how the member organisations themselves control each other’s demands. The leaders of organised interests may be capable of moderating radical demands put forward by its members and to discipline members into following decisions (Öberg, 1994) but in the case of the EWL’s procedure of adopting motions as analysed here, the theory of moderating demands needs to be nuanced as the moderation and control is actually exercised by the member organisations. The theory of self-moderation does not necessarily contrast or contradict the theory of moderating demands; the statutes of the EWL still exist as a parameter, a mechanism, which allows for the self moderation. For this to be possible there has to be an agreed process within the organisations which allows for it. There is, within the EWL, an internal structure that enables moderation of demands, a process encompassing mechanisms which allow for demands to be filtered. Still, there are examples of motions that would be seen as too radical in many member states that are adopted.

6.7.2 Motions as demands: aggregation and articulation of interests

The EWL work programme is the most important document in terms of what policies the EWL has to pursue to fulfil its contract with the Commission. The work programme is produced by the secretariat in consultation with the Board. It is the more specific issues and actions within each policy area that are voted on at the General Assembly:

The first thing is the work programme, and the work programme is the basis of our contract with the Commission.... And the other process is the motions and they are, it is members propos-
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While it seems as if the internal structure and the decision-making process within the General Assembly and the EWL at large function as mechanisms to filter certain demands and streamline the form of women’s organisations, what about the actual content and activities of the EWL? What happens with the motions, are they acted upon and if so, how? The motions form the basis of the EWL activities for the coming year and are included in the work programme. The work programme forms the basis for the contract with the Commission. What happens when the secretariat is to turn the adopted motions into a work programme, to what extent are the demands moderated at this stage?

Table 5: EWL themes of motions 2005 and work programme 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2005 motion themes (21 motions)</th>
<th>2006 Work programme themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>European politics and policies</td>
<td>Institutional mechanisms for gender equality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gender mainstreaming</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Enlargement of the European Union</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Women in decision-making</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Parity democracy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women’s human rights</td>
<td>Women’s human rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence against women</td>
<td>Violence against women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women in economic and social life</td>
<td>Economic and social justice for women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International politics</td>
<td>International commitments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s diversity</td>
<td>Mainstreamed in other themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>External liaison and representation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women’s NGOs and civil dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internal governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Financial management and fundraising</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A comparison between the motions adopted by the 2005 General Assembly and the EWL work programme of 2006 shows that the work programme includes the themes of the motions. The 2006 work programme does not exclude themes, it is however considerably more extensive and simultaneously more specialised than the motions. The comparison of the themes of the motions and the themes included in the work programme does not show that the theme of any motion has disappeared or become excluded; the work programme covers all the themes of the motions. For the work programme to be more extensive is expected; the work program does not only draw on the motions from the 2005 General Assembly, it draws on motions and adopted position papers from previous years as well. The
work programme must also contain the already established agreement with the Commission. It does however imply that the secretariat and the Board, which approves the draft work programme, can cut and paste from various motions to create a work programme they find desirable or potentially create a work programme which previous experiences and knowledge suggest will be approved by the Commission and politically possible to act on. Having said that the work programme covers all themes of the motions, the theme “women’s diversity” does actually not correspond to an identical or explicit theme in the work programme, that is; women’s diversity is not a specific theme in the work programme. Studying the content of the work programme does however show that women’s diversity is mainstreamed into the themes and activities of the work programme. To give a few examples, included in the work programme theme Economic and social justice for women is that the EWL will:

- monitor the EU’s Active Labour Market Policies to ensure support for the inclusion of different groups of women into the labour market;

- monitor EU social policies with a view to promote the integration of the diverse needs of various minority groups of women that experience multiple discrimination and who often face higher risks of social exclusion such as Roma women;

- promote gender mainstreaming and gender awareness in the developing framework of EU immigration policies, as well as in EU integration policies, as part of the implementation of The Hague Programme, in order to ensure that the rights and concerns of migrant women are fully integrated.

Under the theme Violence against women the EWL will:

- focus specifically on the rights of Roma women in the 25 member states of the EU is included.

Under the theme Internal governance, the EWL work programme contains the commitment to promote:

- the participation of women from minority groups in EWL membership and representative structures, as well as ensuring a high level of participation of delegates and representatives from the new member states in all the activities of EWL.
It is thus not the case that the work programme omits or filters the themes agreed on by the member organisations at the General Assembly. It is interesting to note, that while the EWL argues for a dual strategy as a means towards gender equality, that is, both mainstreaming and specific policy, a different, single focus, strategy is used when framing problems and suggesting solutions relating to other inequalities than gender. For women’s diversity, mainstreaming rather than both mainstreaming and specific policy is prioritised as a strategy (the gender first-approach is taken up again in chapter 7.2.1).

There are however two versions of the Work programme: one which is presented and voted on at the General Assembly, and another version which is sent to the Commission for negotiations and which constitutes the basis for the contract of funding and activities between the EWL and the Commission. Is the EWL so close to the Commission that it changes the work programme to fit the Commission agenda? As far as the EWL is enjoying a close collaboration with the Commission some scholars claim that the EWL has become so far enmeshed with the Commission Directorate General Employment Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities that the line between them is blurred (Greenwood, 2003a).

They [the Commission staff] make suggestions sometimes for our programme, which we can take up or not, because we try to, to... We are independent as, as a state funded political party can be, I guess, and a, it is true that they make suggestions sometimes and that we, eh, ehm.. we have to listen to them but we do not have to integrate everything they want us to, to integrate. (Gréboval, interview December 10, 2004)

The question is then, how much do the two versions of the work programme differ? If comparing the two work programmes, and finding the one sent to the Commission to be more mainstreamed would give an idea as to how much the EWL secretariat and Board have to control their members’ demands to have the work programme, the basis for the funding from the Commission, approved. A study of the 2006 work program voted on at the General Assembly 2005 (EWL, 2005d) and compared to the work programme sent to the Commission for approval (EWL, 2005e) shows insignificant differences. The two programmes are for the main part identical, with the one difference being an inclusion of an EWL external project in the General Assembly work program. The reason for this difference is likely to be that the external project is not financed by the Commission, but received external funding, and therefore does not need to be included in the contract with the Commission. The comparison suggests that the demands expressed as themes are not marginalised.
That the themes of the motions are included in the themes of the work programme is however no guarantee that the EWL has actually carried out the actions required by the motions, that is, the EWL secretariat should not only aggregate demands but articulate and deliver them to the EU as well. To follow up on motions and engage in concrete action in an accountable way requires more than simply including the themes of the motions in the work programme. According to the EWL policy-director, motions are systematically followed up and acted on:

Now we’ve developed a much more precise way of following it here because before we didn’t do it enough but in terms of our accountability with members, we are... We have now inside the secretariat a procedure where we look at motions because motions are a few lines, and then look at them and see concretely what can we do and who can do it and when. Sometime a motion can be very easy to implements, it’s writing a letter (Gréboval, interview December 10, 2004)

By comparing the adopted motions with the activities of the EWL in the year after the adoption, some minor differences appear. However, the main conclusion to be drawn is that the EWL actually does act on the motions and actions required by the motions accepted at the General Assembly 2005. There is no evidence that the secretariat or the leaders of the organisations exclude some preferences or demands.

Table 6: Motions 2005 and activities 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2005 activities required by adopted motion</th>
<th>2006 EWL activities: follow up to motions adopted in 2005</th>
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<td>EWL should do everything possible to put an end to the practice of promoting “the right to exercise objection of conscience” by health practitioners and other relevant personnel which can worsen access of women to the reproductive health services particularly abortion, contraception, artificial insemination and sterilization as well as sexual education for teenagers, and to remind physicians of their obligation to refer women to colleagues who support women’s right to choose.</td>
<td>Participated in the Hearing on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) organised by the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) and the Astra CEE /CIS Network on February 9, 2006 in the EP. Initiated joint lobbying action in support of an EP declaration on women’s right to self-determination, adequate sex education and family planning in the EU (by Lévai, Roure, Van Lancker, Svensson and Gröner). Lobbying action involved the ASTRA network, IPPF, and Catholics for a free choice. Lobbying letters calling on the EU institutions and member states to ensure that all women have access to high-quality women-centred care including safe and legal abortion, were sent to all MEPs and model lobbying letters circulated to all EWL members (EWL, 2006f).</td>
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<tr>
<td>EWL should lobby the EU, including in the context of the</td>
<td>In December 2005, the EU adopted a plan on best practices, standards, and procedures for combating and pre-</td>
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Hague programme “Strengthening freedom, security and justice in the EU”, for the development of mechanisms to combat trafficking in women. EWL should in particular lobby and work for the purpose of giving women victims of trafficking a residence and/or work permit in the country where they live, as well as medical and psychiatric help, the opportunity to work and study and the support they need for security and personal empowerment.

venturing trafficking in human beings. EWL tried to influence this plan, underlining the need to focus more on the human rights of victims, as well as support and assistance to victim, in particular at the occasion of the EU presidency conference on 25 October 2005 (Brussels) where the proposal for an EU action plan was being discussed by key stakeholders.

At the EU follow-up conference on 28-29 June 2006 in Brussels, EWL intervened on several occasions to stress the need for increased support to women victims of trafficking, including the right to residence for victims.

Since October 2005, EWL acts as the regional coordinator for the Nordic Baltic regional pilot project, which seeks to strengthen assistance and support to women victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation in the region. The project is a cooperation between political authorities, the policy, NGOs and service providers. The practical and policy-coordinating work to strengthen support and service provision in the eight participating countries includes addressing the legal status and residence rights for women victims in a view to strengthen these. The models and standards for victim support that are developed in this contexts will be shared with other countries and used as examples to press for change in the wider European region.

On the basis of the Security Council Resolution 1325 paragraph 10, EWL and its members should lobby to use the legal grounds offered by the ICC Statute to help combat the widespread and systematic crime of trafficking.138

No specific action explicitly on basis of resolution 1325. Separate actions and lobbying on trafficking has been conducted.

The issue of women in the media and in advertising was addressed in the EWL Roadmap adopted at the 2005 General Assembly. EWL also lobbied the legislative process and launched a lobbying action concerning the revision of the Television without Frontiers Directive (first adopted in 1989 and revised in 1997). The EWL considers the proposal from the Commission to be weak concerning human dignity and the protection of fundamental rights, especially the respect of women’s rights, anti-discrimination and violence against women. The EWL action therefore aims at reinforcing these aspects in the Directive. It was assumed that the EP would not finish its work until December 2006 (co-decision procedure applies).

EWL drafted a lobbying letter proposing amendments to the TV without Frontiers Directive. The letter was consulted and approved by the Board, and then sent to member organisations, which were asked to relay the action with their MEPs. EWL itself sent the letter to all rapporteurs within the EP and members of the relevant parliamentary committees. The letter was also sent to the relevant persons within the Finnish EU Presidency and Permanent Repre-

138 The UN Security Council Resolution 1325 was passed unanimously on 31 October 2000. Resolution (S/RES/1325) is the first resolution ever passed by the Security Council that specifically addresses the impact of war on women, and women’s contributions to conflict resolution and sustainable peace.
EWL and its members should support the proposal of the European Parliament to have a European Year against Violence towards Women.

EWL has been asking for an EU year on violence against women in all its declarations and public interventions for a long time. EWL reiterated its call in the EP Women’s Rights Committee when invited to present the EWL’s Observatory on VAW in the framework of the discussion of the report on DAPHNE III (Lissy Gröner report). The DAPHNE report was adopted by the EP plenary on 05.09.2006 and the report includes the suggestion of creating a year against violence against women.

EWL should demand that the Commission require the integration in the work programme of the Gender Institute of the assessment of the mapping and a comparison of the institutional capacity and support for gender equality at national level in EU countries. EWL should continue lobbying for EU wide standards for institutional mechanisms to promote gender equality and gender mainstreaming across institutions of government and civil society.

The work programme of the future Gender Institute will be drafted when the Institute starts working, action on this was therefore delayed until the end of the year 2006. The lobbying for strong institutional mechanisms on gender equality is part of the ongoing work of EWL, including in relation to monitoring the implementation of the EC Roadmap, which foresees the creation of a network of national gender equality bodies. EWL is gathering information about the work done by the Council of Europe in relation to standards for national gender equality mechanisms. A specific item on this will be included in the 2007 Work Programme.

EWL and its members should put pressure on EU member states and social partners to promote the integration into the labour market of Black women, women of other ethnic minorities as well as migrant women from countries other than the EU, in accordance with the new step of the ‘Lisbon strategy’ and with the last recommendations of the EU to combat discriminations.

This motion was addressed through the EWL ongoing work with the Social Platform Working Party on Migrants. EWL also drafted and widely disseminated a report of the EWL/Solidar workshop on the empowerment of Migrant women in the EU (October 2005). On the 23rd of March, EWL sent a letter to Professor Rita Süssmuth, Chair of the High Level Advisory Group on Social Integration of Ethnic Minorities recommending and calling for a clear gender mainstreaming approach to the work of the High Level Group by addressing the gender discriminatory practices that affect immigrant women living in Europe. EWL requested a meeting.

In March, EWL adopted a paper “Empowering immigrant women living in Europe” as a contribution to the debate on integration of third-country nationals in the EU. EWL denounced the persistent discriminatory practices that they experience in their social and economic life. The paper includes recommendations to the EU.

In April 2006, EWL sent proposals of amendments on the draft EP report on strategies and means for the integration of third-country nationals in the European Union (006/2056(INI) (Rapporteur Stavros Lambrinidis) to the Civil Liberties Committee as well as the Women’s Rights Committee of the EP. These amendments were based on EWL paper on integration adopted in March.

EWL sent a lobbying letter to governments asking for mechanisms to evaluate programmes from a gender perspective.

In the context of the monitoring of the implementation of the European gender equality Roadmap, EWL wrote letters...
and social capital and to make recommendations to relevant EC/EU actors. EWL members should lobby governments to evaluate structural funds programmes from the perspective of gender equality and measure ex ante the expected impact of programmes 2007-2013 on opportunities for women and women’s organisations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EWL should take action with the European Institutions to demand a new framework strategy that takes a “dual” approach – i.e. while mainstreaming also to allocate resources to and carry out programmes specifically targeting women</th>
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<tr>
<td>It has been the EWL policy to underline the need for a dual approach combining gender mainstreaming and specific actions/ measures/ institutional mechanisms for gender equality in European policies for many years. This issue was strongly stressed by the EWL Roadmap and the European Commission Roadmap adopted in March 2006 takes the same approach. EWL has started monitoring the implementation of the EC Roadmap and will continue to highlight the need for a dual approach.</td>
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| EWL and its members should call on all governments, local and national, to pursue a EU social inclusion strategy based on a multi dimensional approach taking into account issues such as age, ethnicity, sexuality, disability and class, which implies the monitoring and implementation of the gender equality policy with economical independence of women as a priority |
| The monitoring of the EU social inclusion policy is part of the ongoing work of EWL, working in its own right, but also in the framework of the Social Platform, where EWL constantly highlights the gender equality perspective and the need to take into account the multiple discrimination that many women face. EWL also asked that a gender perspective and issues of multiple discrimination be taken into consideration during the preparations for the 2006 Roundtable on Poverty and Social Exclusion. EWL has a policy officer responsible for minority women. |

| EWL should propose to the Commission to integrate in the work programme of the Gender Institute the study of the implementation of the principle of equality in services and, in particular, the assessment of restrictive and discriminatory practices from monopolistic organisations and private insurance companies against women with gynaecological and other health problems negatively. |
| Remark: the work programme of the future Gender Institute will be drafted only when the Institute starts working so action on this is delayed until the end of the year 2006 at the earliest. EWL was working extensively during the adoption process of Directive 2004/113 concerning gender equality in the area of goods and services, in particular to lobby against the use of actuarial data based on sex for insurance premiums, this lobbying was only partly successful. The directive applies to insurance and related financial activities, however a number of exceptions are allowed: member states may “permit proportionate differences in individuals’ premiums and benefits where the use of sex is a determining factor in the assessment of risk based on actuarial and statistical data”, which the EWL means undermines the fundamental right to equality between women and men. EWL contacted the European Commission a number of times in cooperation with the AGE Platform, in order to make sure that women’s NGOs are included in the monitoring mechanisms that will be set up by the Commission in relation to insurance in the form of a working group. EWL is still following up on activities in relation to this Directive, but as the deadline for implementation at national level was December 2007, little information was found to be available from European institutions concern- |
As many migrant women are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, EWL should urge the EU to recognise the contribution made by female migrants to the gross domestic product of their host country and to ensure that they can exercise their full civil rights.

This motion was partly addressed through the EWL ongoing work with the Social Platform Working Party on Migrants. EWL also intervened at the UK Presidency Conference on economic migration on 29 November 2005. In March 2006 EWL adopted its position paper “Empowering immigrant women living in Europe” as a contribution to the current debate on integration of third-country nationals in the EU. EWL denounced the persistent discriminatory practices that migrant women experience in their social and economic life and asks for a recognition of immigrant women’s contribution to the host community.
EWL should make sure that the Commission undertakes an in-depth survey in all EU member states of the legal discrimination experienced by immigrant women who are subjected to the unequal laws in force in their country of origin.

The EWL paper “Empowering immigrant women living in Europe” adopted in March 2006 includes the following recommendations:

- The European Commission to undertake an in-depth survey in all EU member states of the legal discrimination experienced by immigrant women who are subjected to discriminatory laws in force in their country of origin regarding the personal status; to ensure that any provision in foreign legislation relating to immigrant women in EU member states, which is contrary to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, the European Convention on Human Rights and its protocol 7 is identified and not applied and/or that any sections of bilateral agreements and rules of international private law which violate the fundamental human rights, in particular with regard to personal status in the field of marriage, divorce or child custody, are renegotiated, rejected or denounced.
- These recommendations were included in the EWL Annual Report for 2005.

EWL should lobby the EU commissioners, the Council of the European Union and all member states for the full implementation of Resolution 1325 of the UN Security Council. EWL should ask in particular for the adoption of specific national and EU action plans for the implementation of the Resolution as a matter of priority and the translation of the related European Parliament Resolution into a legally binding directive.

EWL took part in a Panel discussion co-sponsored by International Alert and Search for a Common ground (November 2005). The event was attended by MEPs, officials of the Commission and representatives from NGOs. EWL spoke about its initiative to turn the EP Resolution into a directive, which would give it more weight and provide a legal framework to hold governments to account in their implementation of the resolution.

- EWL participated in the EP public hearing on “Women in armed conflicts and in post-conflict processes” and gave input to Véronique De Keyser’s report on the situation of women in armed conflicts and their role in the reconstruction and democratic process in post-conflict countries.
- EWL got involved in the European Peace Building Liaison Office (EPLO) Working Group on Gender, Peace and Security, which has included “a potential focus to be discussed is support for an EU directive which would link up the EP resolution with related work at the Commission” in its short-term priorities.

Together with the German organisation Medica Mondiale, EWL issued a press release “Zero tolerance for rape in Congo - EU mission has a duty to protect women against all forms of abuse” and send a letter to EU authorities. Following the letter, the EU Special representative for the African Great Lakes Region invited Medical Mondiale and the EWL to explain that sexual gender based violence and trafficking are on top of the EU mission agenda. EWL took note that the “Zero Tolerance policy” was clearly reaffirmed and will be implemented, and will make further contact with the gender expert of the ESDP mission to support her.

EWL should encourage member organisations to get involved in the World Social Forum, to follow the debates on the UN reform, the works of the UN World Commission on the social dimension of globalisation "Globalisation can and must change”

EWL participated in the 6th World Social Forum, held in January 2006 in Caracas (Venezuela), in Bamako (Mali), and in March 2006 in Karachi (Pakistan).

European Social Forum: the EWL was represented at the 4th European Social Forum, 4-7 May in Athens, participated in the Women’s Assembly and as a speaker in the seminar “women in struggle against gender violence – European campaign and European law”, which concluded.
Although the demands are acted on, there are two, possibly three depending on interpretation, motions which were not followed by concrete or explicit activities. The first one concerns helping elderly women to actively participate in social life. The motion asked the EWL to “develop a strategy on elderly women’s involvement into active social life and gather to this end the analysis and recommendations already drafted by the EU.” No such strategy was developed in 2006, but elderly women were specifically in focus in the 2006 EWL care campaign, where it was argued that care provisions for elderly is the responsibility of the state and should be publicly funded (EWL, 2006g, 2006h, 2006i).

The second motion, which was not followed by concrete action, was the motion requiring the EWL to promote gender and information and communication technologies (ICT) elements into EU development aid budgets and that the EU development priorities include women’s ICT rights, that is, access to and effective use of ICTs. This motion does not seem to have any concrete follow up, apart from an inclusion in the EWL Roadmap on Gender Equality where a strategic objective is to mainstream gender into all European policies on programmes related to the information society.
The third motion where I have been unable to find explicit and concrete actions to implement is the motion requiring the EWL and its member organisations to “on the basis of resolution 1325” lobby to use the “legal grounds offered by the ICC Statute to help combat the widespread and systematic crime of trafficking” (third motion in above table). Previously initiated lobbying actions to prevent trafficking were continued in 2006 (EWL, 2006j). A project to prevent trafficking in women and to safeguard the safe return of women victims of trafficking was also carried out in 2006 (EWL, 2006j; EWL, 2008g). There is however no specific mention of resolution 1325 in these actions or in the project.

With these two, or possibly three, exceptions, the EWL secretariat (and member organisations) do follow up and act on motions in a systematic way.

6.8 Summary and discussion

Founding

The EWL can be distinguished from many previously formed women’s groups, networks and organisations by being a formally organised, supranational, institutionalised and a comparatively hierarchically ordered women’s organisation. Hoskyns refers to the EWL as a ‘peak organisation’ (Hoskyns, 1996: 187). The establishment and the form of the EWL were contested; it was established despite difficulties in uniting women’s organisations with various political agendas and interests into a formal lobby network. There was a burgeoning mobilisation of women’s organisations active at the EU level prior to the establishment of the EWL, but there was a push to create a larger, more co-ordinated, single and unified women’s lobby at the EU level, eventually leading to the forming of the EWL.

The EWL was founded with the direct encouragement from and financial support of political actors within both the European Commission and the European Parliament (Hoskyns, 1991; Pudrovská and Ferree, 2004). The structuring of a more professional and organised women’s lobby was supported by informal women’s coalitions within the Commission bureaucracy and the European Parliament (Segelström, interview December 10, 2004; Hoskyns, 1991) as well as by

139 In 2006, the EWL set up the Nordic Baltic Network comprising non-governmental organisations, service providers and government agencies to work together to strengthen support and assistance to women victims of trafficking. The network is an integral part of the EWL three year long programme (launched in 2005) to strengthen the cooperation between countries and to develop concrete activities to support and assist women victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation in the Nordic Baltic region. The EWL was appointed to lead the project by the Nordic-Baltic Taskforce against trafficking in human beings (EWL, 2008g).
individual EU level femocrats and feminist politicians (Women of Europe, Hoskyns, 1996; Rossilli, 1997, 2000; Gréboval, interview December 10, 2004). The initiatives from the women within the Commission were in turn supported by women’s organisations, notably the German Women’s Council and the British Fawcett Society who co-organised the colloquiums. The EWL was hence not solely formed as a top-down organisation; there was the influence from national women’s organisations and actors in civil society. The national organisations promoting the forming of a unified European women’s interest organisation were convinced that policy input at the European level was necessary for policy change at the national level (informal talk with former EWL President; SKL, interview September 2004). Since the early 1980s, women activists had been attempting to develop some form of participatory platform from which to lobby for women’s interests in Brussels, from which to coordinate the challenging of male dominated interest representation and lobbying and from which to develop popular support for gender equality policies. The EWL provided such platform.

It can be argued that the EWL was created as a direct response to the developments of the EU and its increasing importance. There was a growing awareness regarding the need for an organisation that could, on the one hand, collect and disseminate information about gender equality developments in the EU, and spread this information across the women’s organisations in Europe. On the other hand, there was a growing awareness that this kind of work required an EU level organisation that would provide a platform for women’s interest organisations across Europe to make their interests heard in the EU. The project of forming a new unified European women’s lobby had, at least, two purposes: the first was to unite a wide variety of various women’s groups and associations active on European and national levels to gain access to European decision-making institutions on the one hand, and to provide women’s organisations throughout Europe with information about EU developments in gender equality related policy. The second purpose was to organise in such a way as to respond to preferences expressed by the European Commission. Though there were no direct, outspoken or explicit demand from the Commission forcing women’s organisations to unite and professionalise the interests of women, the initial steps to co-ordinate women’s organisations in civil society across Europe came from the Department of Information for Women at the European Commission Women’s Information Service and the Office for Employment and Equality of Women within the European Commission. The former had time and again helped and financially supported colloquiums of European women’s organisations to discuss the potential forming of a unified lobby. Initially, it was representatives from these two institu-
tions who contacted the President of the French Advisory Committee for Women’s Labour within the Department of Labour. Only after these initial discussions, between what institutionally only can be regarded as political authorities, was the women’s civil society organisation formally contacted. The European women’s groups wanted a political presence, interest representation and ultimately influence, and the institutional conditions were such that a collectively organised women’s interests organisation, membership-based and co-ordinated as one unified representative umbrella organisation were needed to respond to the development of the EU. The path was set out by the institutions.

The Commission and Parliament actors were not only political allies in the setting up of the EWL; the Commission was and remains a financial ally. As such, the EWL has enjoyed a favourable position compared to other EU level social non-governmental organisations in general and other women’s organisations in particular. The EWL is not the only organisation set up in this way, but it is the only women’s organisation on the EU level founded and funded with the initiative from women within the Commission. The EWL remains one out of two EU funded social non-governmental organisations with A-budget line funding. The other one is the European Youth Forum. Although such arrangements, being funded by the very institution you are set up to influence and criticise inevitably leads to certain constraints (Walby, 2006) there is a firm belief within the EWL that the economic arrangement has never restrained the organisation in terms of issuing policy or raising opinions (Gréboval, interview December 10, 2004).

**Organisation**

The EWL is organised as a membership based umbrella organisation. As an umbrella organisation, the EWL represents European women’s interests by coordinating national women’s organisations on the EU level. The membership is based on clearly specified rights and responsibilities; these are defined by the EWL statutes. They are heavily weighted towards transparency, accountability, representativeness and inclusiveness. The membership structure and the way information is disseminated mean that there is a two-way information flow: from the members at national level to the European level, and from the European level to the national level. The EWL thus functions as an intermediary of interests between the EU level and the national level. The form of the EWL corresponds to the decision-making procedures within the EU, ensuring the capacity to lobby simultaneously at multiple levels. The logic of influence can partly explain the form of the organisation. The EWL is organised in such a way that influence is
made possible. It is not implausible to understand the logic of membership as a means to the end goal, influence. Such understanding would suggest that the two logics are not constructed as an either or dilemma, but as an means-goal, or strategy-vision couple. The EWL structure with multiple level organising and close cooperation between the EU level, national level and local level legitimises the EWL as a an interest organisation facilitating and articulating aggregated interests, preferences and demands of women throughout the community’s member states. The EWL represents a wide variety of member organisations and a wide variety of interests and has come to be accepted as representing the political and social interests of European women.

The member organisations’ formal rights to decide the direction and content of EWL policy are exercised via motions and voting rights at the General Assembly. The General Assembly is the highest authority of the EWL. The relation with the member organisations can be understood through the logic of membership; members’ demands are incorporated into the work programme and into the EWL activities. Hence, there seems to be two logics operating at the same time: the organisational form is there to make institutional influence possibly, but the General Assembly represents a process where the member organisations preferences and demands are aggregated to be delivered to the political authorities in the EU. The work programme shows how those interests are articulated and delivered to the European Commission and the analysis of the follow up to motions show that the EWL secretariat and Board do in fact act on the motions adopted by the membership. It is hence not the case, as corporatist theory suggests, that the leaders of the EWL control its members or moderate their demands by not acting on or omitting to incorporate the adopted motions into the work program or the contract with the Commission.

**Mechanisms for self moderation and discipline**

The process by which motions are put forward requires that at least three full member organisations are in favour of (the content of) a motion. The rule of supporting organisations and the discussions over amendments show that there is a form of self-moderation of demands among the membership. There are many filtering stages before the demands of a national level, not to mention a local level, women’s organisation reach the General Assembly. If it ever does. Thus, although demands and preferences are not de-radicalised or moderated by the EWL leaders or staff, the very form of the EWL decision-making process has an inbuilt mechanism through which demands are moderated. As such, the General Assembly
could be used as a mechanism to de-radicalise specific demands that would be likely to come from member organisations. Those organisations are still welcome as members even though they continuously put forward motions that are either amended beyond recognition, or refuted. They are welcome as members because the EWL needs a wide and large membership base to be able to claim being representative although their demands will be filtered. The extent to which the membership is paramount is signified by the setting up a solidarity fund in 2005 to help member organisations pay the membership fee and to contribute towards the costs of attending the General Assembly. FEFAF constitute an example of such member organisation. This procedure also constitutes a means by which to avoid the opposite, that is, a means to mainstream demands that are understood as too conservative. The formal decision-making process enables the self-moderation. It could thus be argued that the very organisational form of the EWL, as financially supported by the Commission, assists in the moderation of demands and works as a constraint in this particular regard.

Other potential de-radicalisation mechanisms and methods of disciplining members include the two versions of the work programme, the demands of third party funders, the EWL statutes, the membership committee and the process of assisting new applicants to become EWL members. Implicit disciplining of member organisations becomes visible when studying the membership application process. To become a member, certain rules have to be followed. This is in itself not an extraordinary demand to place on a member organisation; all organisations have rules. But what are those rules and demands? The rules and demands set out mainly relate to the structure of the organisation and the process of decision-making within the membership. The national level co-ordinations that apply for full membership do not only have to commit to follow the EWL policy or promote gender equality. There is a lengthy set of rules dictating the internal structure of the national level co-ordinations and the European member organisations. They have to have certain geographical and membership coverage and have some form of structure to aggregate demands and preferences from their members. They have to make clear how the applications from those women’s associations wishing to join the co-ordination are processed and how the EWL board member is elected. Transparency in decision-making, albeit not named as such, is paramount. They have to show how democratic consultation procedures with their national level members are carried out, and how the interests of specific groups of women are represented within the organisation. Further, they have to prove that they are representative of women’s interests in their country. If the criteria are not fulfilled, organisations applying for membership can either be de-
nied membership, or already existing members can be excluded from the EWL—this did in fact happen with the Polish women’s lobby which could not gather enough member organisations within Poland (Collins, interview December 13, 2004; Fuchs, 2007). This thus constitutes a formal and officially accepted way of disciplining member organisations and grassroots (Öberg, 1994). Means and methods of discipline are inherent in the EWL statutes. It is thus not necessarily the content, the preferences or demands, of the member organisations that are mostly affected by the way the EWL functions and is structured, but the form in which women organise to pursue those demands. As has been shown in the case of the UK and Sweden, the very structure of the EWL has been adopted by national level co-ordinations: the existence of the EWL has changed the way women organise on both European and national levels.

Finally, the EWL is managed by its secretariat and by the Secretary General. All policy, position papers, the work programme, contacts with other European organisations, contacts with the EU institutions, lobbying letters, statements, and etcetera are prepared, produced and disseminated by the staff. The EWL is thus more than an umbrella; it is an organisation of organisations where what is usually referred to as the umbrella of umbrellas has become an organisation in its own right.

7.1 Aim of chapter

The first aim of this chapter is to investigate what the EWL actually does, how the EWL does it, and why the EWL does it. What strategies are used to create and maintain a presence in EU politics? What strategies are used to articulate the demands of the member organisations?
7 THE EWL: POLICY AND THE PURSUIT OF INTERESTS

The previous chapter showed that the EWL follows up on motions adopted at the General Assembly and it addressed how the EWL have created a platform from which to represent and lobby for women’s interests based on the very structure of the organisation. It was argued that the very form of the EWL was in part an effect of institutional changes between the EU level and the national level, and an effect of internal institutional change within the EU. It was also argued that the very form of organising trickles down from EU level to national level, and that the decision-making procedures and the organisational form of the EWL enables a kind of self-moderation of demands. This chapter moves beyond the form of and the follow up by the EWL and asks about the content, the actual activities and concrete polices of the EWL. What is it that the EWL lobbies for, and how? What strategies are used? How can potential influence or impact by the EWL be understood? The first argument here is that the EWL does in fact have an impact on EU policy. The explanations are found in that the EWL has developed strategies to involve and co-operate with high level EU politicians and bureaucrats, and in that the EWL has sustained and expanded its position as a platform for women to act on the EU level. There are, in turn, different explanations for this. One is the capacity of the EWL to develop contacts with the political authorities. Another is the resources of the EWL. The resources come in the form of knowledge, expertise and the EWL membership base. The EWL has the capacity to provide EU decision-making institutions with resources. The way the EWL functions is not just a matter of passively feeding into the system of the EU; there is a conscious lobbying strategy for putting women’s interests on the EU policy-making agenda. The impact of the EWL can be traced through the policy areas and issues that are being prioritised by the Commission. In part, the EWL has successfully managed to frame problems and objectives in a way that can be, and have been, picked up by the Commission.

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The first aim of this chapter is to investigate what the EWL actually does, how the EWL does it, and why the EWL does it. What strategies are used to create and maintain a presence in EU politics? What strategies are used to articulate the demands of the member organisations?
To answer the questions, a closer study focusing on different strategies developed within three of the EWL prioritised policy areas (gender equality policies and legislation; women in decision-making; and violence against women) is presented and discussed. The study of the strategies used in first policy area shows the professionalization and expertise of the EWL and its impact on EU policy. The study of the strategies in the second areas shows the multi-level coordination and timing of lobbying campaigns, and the capacity of the EWL to involve high profile politicians in its campaigns. The study of the third area shows the EWL strategy and capacity to develop platforms and networks from which to act and expand the policy issues of the EU beyond its legal remit.

7.2 Methods and strategies

The EWL covers a substantial range of policy areas and policy issues. As the legal remit of the EU has expended, so have the policy areas covered by the EWL. At the first General Assembly held in September 1990, the EWL policy areas, or areas of action as they were called, were decided. The areas of action were to be: 1) women in decision-making, 2) the fight against poverty and social exclusion, 3) violence against women, 4) problems specific to black and ethnic minority women, 5) relations with women in central and Eastern Europe, 6) women and the media, 7) women in development, 8) women and the environment, and 9) women in consumer affairs. In 2009, the defined policy areas the EWL engages in include 1) EU gender equality policies and legislation, 2) women in decision-making, 3) revision of European treaties and the Convention on the future of Europe, 4) economic and social justice for women, 5) women’s diversity, 6) women and the enlargement of the EU, 7) violence against women, 8) international action for women’s rights/Beijing follow up and 9) immigration (de Groote, 1992).
There has not been a numerical increase in policy areas to which the various policy issues belong, some areas have been abandoned and others have been added. Immigration has become a specific policy area while women in the media, women and the environment and women in consumer affairs are no longer named as specific policy areas. There has been an expansion within each policy area and a shift in focus. Women in decision-making is still a main priority area, as is violence against women and women’s employment. There has been a shift towards a more legal focus, reflecting the increased legal remit of the EU. In 1990, EU gender equality legislation and policy was not included in the nine action areas. There has also been a shift in the framing of areas. What in 1990 was referred to as ‘problems specific to black and ethnic minority women’ is in 2009 referred to more generally as women’s diversity. Similarly, the fight against poverty is now framed in the more general terms of justice. Another shift reflects the increased competence and professionalization of the EWL. The 2009 policy areas are more in tune with, mapped onto, the specific content of European and international political developments. They reflect international commitments and the developments within the EU institutions.

7.2.1 Knowledge and timing: the case of the gender equality roadmaps

The main focus of the EWL in the policy area ‘Gender equality policies and legislation’ is to monitor and evaluate the adoption of new, or amendments of existing, EU gender equality policy and directives. The policy area includes three main issues within the EWL: the implementation of gender mainstreaming in European
policies; the reconciliation of work and family life (includes possible adoption of new European legislation on maternity, paternity and other types of care leaves); and gender budgeting (EWL, 2008a, 2008b). The EWL has paid specific attention to two EU developments in the past years: the anti-discrimination directives and the Commission’s Roadmap for Gender Equality (EWL, 2007c).

The problem, as perceived by the EWL, is the lack of effective implementation of gender equality legislation and policy, gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting. Gender discrimination should both be legislated against in separate directives, and mainstreamed into all other directives and policy. There is a ‘gap focus’, that is, the problem is often framed in terms of a gap. The gender pay gap, the pension gap, the time gap, the care gap and the implementation gap (EWL, 2007b; EWL, 2004c; EWL, 2001a). The EWL has been active campaigning for both new policy and directives and the implementation of already existing ones. It is also active in producing its own material, research and publications.

A new single anti-discrimination directive covering age, disability, religion and sexual orientation was proposed by the Commission in July 2008. Currently, anti-discrimination on grounds of age, disability, religion and sexual orientation is specified in the Racial Equality Directive and in the Employment Equality Directive (Council Directive 2000/43/EC; Council Directive 2000/78/EC). In this context, the EWL has lobbied the European Commission to close the gap created by the proposed directive in terms of discrimination on the grounds of sex, an inequality ground currently missing in both the existing Employment Equality Directive and in the proposed new anti-discrimination directive. Equal treatment between men and women is specified in the Equal Treatment Directives (Directives 2002/73/EC; Council Directive 2004/113/EC; Council Directive 2006/54/EC). The EWL argues for a dual approach to gender equality. Discrimination on grounds of gender should not only be a specific, single, inequality ground as specified in the existing Equal Treatment Directives; it should also be included as a multiple inequality ground in the new anti-discrimination directive. The argument is, then, that gender should be treated simultaneously as a single and multiple inequality ground. Gender and gender inequalities should simultaneously be specifically targeted and mainstreamed. The EWL has earlier opposed the integra-

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140 Directive 2002/73/EC amended the 1976 Equal Treatment Directive by adding definitions of indirect discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment and requires member states to set up equality bodies to promote, analyse, monitor and support equal treatment between women and men. Directive 2004/113/EC applies the principle of equal treatment between women and men to access to goods and services available to the public; it extends gender equality legislation outside the employment field for the first time. Directive 2006/54/EC is a recast directive putting the existing provisions on equal pay, occupational schemes and burden of proof into one single text.
tion of policies and institutions for equality between women and men with anti-discrimination policies and institutions. As a response to the European Commission Green Paper “Equality and non-discrimination in an enlarged EU” (European Commission, 2004a) the EWL argued that, rather than merging policy areas, a Commission idea which the EWL saw as based on “an insufficient analysis of the issues at stake”, the EU institutions should focus on “how to preserve and develop EU legislation and institutional mechanisms for equality between women and men, and at the same time develop and strengthen EU’s anti-discrimination actions and institutional mechanisms.” (EWL, 2004a; see also EWL, 2004b: EWL, 2001c). Gender comes first, would summarise the EWL position here.

The second main target for EWL lobbying in this area over recent years has been the activities surrounding the European Commission Roadmap for Equality Between Men and Women (European Commission, 2006a). The Roadmap is the European Commission’s programme for promoting gender equality. It reinforces already existing EU activities and it proposes new activities to “drive the gender equality agenda forward” (European Commission, 2006a). The Roadmap builds on the Framework Strategy for Equality Between Women and Men 2001-2005 (European Commission, 2000). The Roadmap was presented on 8 March 2006. A year prior to the publication of the Commission’s Roadmap, the EWL published its own Roadmap for Gender Equality (EWL, 2005b). The process leading up to the EWL Roadmap started in 2004 when the General Assembly agreed to lobby for a new EU Framework strategy on gender equality. The idea to produce a roadmap was presented by the EWL to the Group of Commissioners on Fundamental Rights, Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunities in March 2005. A draft Roadmap was produced by the EWL policy officer in charge of the policy area. Member organisations were consulted in April and May 2005 and the first text inviting amendments was sent to member organisations in June. The amendments were discussed at the General Assembly 2005 and a final text was adopted.

The EWL presented the final text as a model strategy for the official text to the Commission in October 2005. The Commission’s strategy, also named Roadmap, was presented in the 2006 – the following year. In early 2005, the Equality unit in the Directorate of Employment and Social Affairs initiated the drafting of the Commission Roadmap. The draft was sent out for consultation to all other Directorate generals and there was a consultation with the College of Commissioners. In March 2006 the Commission issued a Communication announcing the Roadmap and the actual Roadmap was presented one week later, on 8 March 2006. The Commission presented the Roadmap as the “Commission’s commitment to
driving the gender agenda forward, reinforcing partnership with member states and other actors” (European Commission, 2006a).

Table 8: The processes of producing roadmaps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>EWL</th>
<th>Commission</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initiation</td>
<td>2004 Decision taken at General Assembly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation of idea</td>
<td>March 2005 Presented idea to the Commission</td>
<td>Early 2005 Commission initiated draft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drafts</td>
<td>April 2005 Produced draft roadmap</td>
<td>2005-2006 Draft roadmap produced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>May 2005 Consultation within the EWL</td>
<td>2005-2006 Consultation within the Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amendments</td>
<td>June 2005 Incorporated member’s amendments</td>
<td>Amendments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoption</td>
<td>2005 Final text adopted at the GA</td>
<td>March 2006 Commission Communication announcing the Roadmap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Announcement</td>
<td>October 2005 Roadmap presented to the Commission</td>
<td>March 2006 Roadmap officially presented</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Commission did not only give the new five-year strategy for equality between women and men the same name as the EWL’s strategy; the production of the Commission’s Roadmap appears to have followed on from that of the EWL. The Commission initiated the drafting of its Roadmap only after the EWL had presented their idea (EWL President Kolthoff, 2009) and the policy officers at the EWL agree that the Commission’s Roadmap would not have been produced were it not for the extensive lobbying carried out by the secretariat at the time. It is not only the timing of the two roadmaps that overlap. The EWL have had an impact on the content of the Commission Roadmap as well. There is a significant of overlap between the two Roadmaps.
Table 9: EWL and Commission Roadmaps: priority areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EWL Priority areas</th>
<th>Commission priority areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institutional mechanisms (Governance)</td>
<td>Governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic and social justice for women</td>
<td>Economic independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parity democracy</td>
<td>Reconciliation of private and professional life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence against women – women's human rights</td>
<td>Gender based violence – trafficking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advancing women’s rights in international context</td>
<td>Promoting gender equality outside the EU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliminate patriarchal gender roles and stereotypes</td>
<td>Eliminate gender stereotypes in society</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10: EWL and Commission Roadmaps: proposed actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EWL proposed actions</th>
<th>Commission proposed actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop Action Plan: EU macro-economic policies use to increase investment in public services (care)</td>
<td>Use of structural funds to support achievements of Barcelona targets on child care and other care facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific gender equality targets to eliminate pay gap</td>
<td>Communication on the gender pay gap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic gender equality objectives to combat poverty: social exclusion</td>
<td>Monitor gender mainstreaming 2010 European Year of Combating Exclusion: Poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revise directive on parental leave to ensure longer and paid leave shared between both parents</td>
<td>Communication on demography addressing reconciliation of family-professional life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU gender equality objectives in health</td>
<td>Update in health policies the gender dimension in health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a Directorate on equality within Commission</td>
<td>Define a new composite gender equality index</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The two Roadmaps are strikingly similar. The prioritised policy areas are identical, only framed slightly different. What is further notable is that the actions in both Roadmaps encompass the dual approach to gender equality, the overall argument utilised from these two Roadmaps is the visibility of the dual approach to gender equality. A dual approach encompasses both mainstreaming and specific programmes. It is also worth noting how violence is conceptualised. Given that violence does not fall within the legal remit of the EU, combating violence against women as such cannot be an objective of the Commission Roadmap. Therefore, violence against women has been reconceptualised. In the case of the EWL, the framing is women’s human rights, whereas the Commission uses trafficking to address violence against women. Trafficking connects to prostitution.
main observations here however, is not the way in which violence against women is framed. Rather, the fact that combating violence against women formulated as a strategic objective by the Commission in the first place is. Actually, the Roadmap goes beyond the legal remit of the EU. This reconnects to and strengthens the arguments made in chapter five regarding the spill over effects between policy areas and regarding how institutions designed to function in one way can be changed or altered to also function in other ways. Despite the many similarities, there are differences between the two Roadmaps. The main differences do not lie in which policy areas the EWL and the Commission prioritise, but in the framing and articulation of policy areas and thus, the methods, the actions, to get there. The EWL uses woman-focused gender terms; the Commission consequently uses sex-neutral gender terms. When the EWL wants to prioritise the elimination of “patriarchal gender roles and stereotypes” the Commission wants to eliminate “gender stereotypes in society.” The EWL framing of “violence against women” is turned into the sex neutral “gender based violence” in the Commission’s Roadmap. The EWL proposes concrete measures and actions; the Commission is vague and more abstract: the EWL proposes a revised directive on parental leave to ensure shared paid leave between parents; the Commission proposes a communication on demography to address the reconciliation of family and professional life. An additional concrete difference is that the EWL is proposing action to create a Directorate on equality within the Commission, whereas the Commission suggests a more abstract tool to work in this policy area, namely a gender index.

These differences are significant, and so are the similarities. A number of the strategic objectives in the EWL Roadmap have been taken up by the Commission and built into the Commission’s Roadmap. Following on from this, then, it would appear that the interests expressed and framed by the EWL, that is, women’s interests are being heard and acknowledged by the Commission. The EWL has an impact on framing and prioritising women’s social and political interests at the EU level.

The Commission Roadmap aims to accelerate progress towards gender equality in six priority fields for 2006-2010: 1) equal economic independence for men and

141 The extent to which gender based violence is substantially different from violence against women is a topic for academic debate. It can be noted, however, that while the United Nations refers to violence against women, the EU refers to gender based violence. In the particular case of the EWL Roadmap, the EWL have chosen to use UN speak. The World Health Organization conflates gender-based violence with violence against women on its website (see http://www.who.int/gender/violence/en/. Accessed November 5, 2009). A third possible framing is "gender based violence against women" (Carpenter, 2006).
women; 2) reconciliation between professional life and private life; 3) equal representation in decision-making; 3) the eradication of all forms of violence and trafficking in human beings based on gender; 4) elimination of gender stereotypes within society; 5) the promotion of equality between the sexes outside the EU. Throughout the Roadmap, one of the more notable features is the utilisation of, and argument for, a dual strategy to gender equality. The Roadmap clearly expresses a dual approach to gender equality based on both gender mainstreaming and special measures. It suggests a combined strategy towards gender equality simultaneously based on transformation of gender relations through mainstreaming and by targeting women as a specific group in need of different measures and programmes than men.

The EWL evaluated the implementation of the Commission Roadmap in 2007 (EWL, 2007c). The main criticisms of the implementation were related to the Barcelona targets, where the EWL was critical regarding the lack of concrete timelines and what was perceived of as the Commission’s inability to exercise pressure on member states to speed up the process of implementing the Barcelona targets. One of the contributors to the EWL evaluation report of the European

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142 The European Commission’s evaluation of the implementation of the Roadmap highlights that progress has been uneven. In particular, the Commission writes, implementing equality policy is particularly difficult since there is a lack of a clear idea of the challenges implementation raises. The evaluation recommends awareness-raising and that “adherence to the social and political challenges of the equality objectives should be strengthened, which requires a strong political will” (European Commission 2008b).

143 The Barcelona targets are an integral part of the EU’s strategy for growth and jobs and aim to help young parents, and in particular women, into work. Most EU countries have missed the 2002 Barcelona targets for childcare provision. The targets are accessible childcare for 90 percent of children between the age of three and school age and for 33 percent of children under three. Regarding the lower age group (0 to 3 years) five member states (Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden, Belgium and Spain) have surpassed the Barcelona objective of a 33 percent coverage rate, while five others (Portugal, United Kingdom, France, Luxembourg and Slovenia) are approaching this target. Seven member states (Finland, Italy, Cyprus, Estonia, Denmark, Ireland and Latvia) have reached an intermediate level of coverage (between 16 and 26 percent), eight member states (Greece, Hungary, Malta, Slovakia, Lithuania, Austria, Czech Republic and Poland) show a coverage rate of 10 percent or less. The coverage rates relate to all children, irrespective of how many hours per week they attend a childcare facility. Attendance hours vary widely from one country to another, and in numerous countries a particularly high proportion of childcare facilities operate on a part-time basis only. The Netherlands and the United Kingdom are prime examples, with under-3s attending childcare centres almost exclusively on a part-time basis. Regarding children between 3 years old and the mandatory school age, eight member states (Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Sweden, Spain and Italy) have surpassed the Barcelona objective of a 90 percent coverage rate, while three others (United Kingdom, Netherlands, and Cyprus) are approaching this target. Seven member states (Estonia, Slovenia, Hungary, Finland, Portugal, Slovakia and Austria) have a coverage rate between 70 percent and 85 percent. Moreover, in many
Commission’s Roadmap was the Unit on Equality between Women and Men at the European Commission.

### 7.2.2 Multi-level activity: the case of women in decision-making

This policy area includes women in decision-making at all social, political and economical levels. The primary focus is the European Institutions (Commission, Parliament and Council) but focus is not limited to those three. There is a broad focus on the low levels of women in all decision-making institutions. There have, for example been campaigns for appointing a female UN general secretary (EWL, 2006b; EWL, 2006c).

The problem is the under-representation of women per se. Women are under-represented at all political levels within the EU and European decision-making processes: in the European parliament, in the national parliaments, in the European Commission, in the Council of Ministers, the Intergovernmental Conference, in the Social Partners, in the Economic and Social Committee and so on. The EWL views the underrepresentation of women in decision-making as a democratic deficit. It is framed as a form of discrimination against women (EWL, 2005b). A particular concern is expressed regarding multiple discrimination (EWL, 2009b). The EWL argues for parity democracy. According to the EWL, parity democracy is not only a matter of political representation but also a matter of parity on all decision-making levels in all social, economical and political spheres: Parity democracy implies the equal representation of women and men in all decision-making positions (EWL, 2005b). Parity democracy is seen as expressing something more than what quotas express. It goes a step further than quotas as it is “based on the idea that women are not a minority: they represent more than half of the humanity” (EWL, 2008d). The main critical point raised by the EWL in this area, is the problem of the lack of a binding measure for the equal representation of women and men in the EU institutions.

The EWL has campaigned for both legally binding measures, for the Commission to put more pressure on member states to implement already existing measures, and for increased awareness of the under-representation of women. The is-countries a high proportion of childcare facilities for children in this age-group operate on a part-time basis only. For example, the coverage rate for full-time attendance is below 50% in more than half of the member states and not even 30 percent in a third of Member States. Any interpretation of these figures must take into account, however, different countries’ particular ways of organising nursery-school education and the availability or not of after-school childcare services (European Commission, 2008a).
issue of women in decision-making has been on the EWL agenda since the beginning. At the first General Assembly held in September 1990 it was decided to “launch a campaign for the promotion of women into decision-making positions. The first task is to assess strategies already used in the field: quotas, women’s committees, position action in business, etc.” (de Groote, 1992). Now, quotas are not seen as enough. At the same Assembly, it was also stated that the EWL should not only lobby the EU institutions, it should also support and encourage them. In particular, the Women’s Information’s Service at the Commission and the Women’s Rights Committee in the European parliament were mentioned as they “have done so much to promote women’s rights and have supported the EWL from the outset” (de Groote, 1992: 50).

At times surrounding the elections, campaigning for an increased share of women in the European Parliament has been the predominant issue (EWL, Annual reports 2000-2008). In 1999, the EWL organised public events and seminars, wrote letters to members of parliament and arranged a public campaign to raise awareness of the gender imbalance of the European Parliament. The EWL undertook an analysis of European Parliament members’ commitment to equal opportunities. In order to measure their commitments towards equal opportunities, their opinions, past activities and planned measures the EWL sent a questionnaire to all members of the European Parliament. The analysis showed two things: women were more devoted to actually answering the questionnaire (70 percent of the respondents were women, despite the fact that only 20 percent of the parliamentarians were). Secondly, the analysis showed a gender difference in the assessment of important actions to promote equal opportunities. Both male and female parliamentarians named actions to stop violence against women. Female parliamentarians, however, added “increase the number of women in decision-making” as a priority action for gender equality and equal opportunities between women and men. Male parliamentarians did not (EWL Newsflashes; EWL, 2000a).

Two years prior to the next election, to be held in 2004, the EWL started a new European level campaign “Have we got the balance right? Put your weight behind equality in Europe” to achieve a numerically equal representation of women and men in the European Parliament. The campaign continued throughout 2003 with a lobbying tool kit “European elections: do we have the balance right?” provided for EWL members to use on national and European levels (EWL, 2003d). The kit comprised facts and figures of the representation in the European Parliament, an analysis of parity democracy, a set of arguments in favour of parity democracy, a model lobbying letter and questionnaire (EWL,
In September 2008, the year prior to the next election to the European Parliament in 2009, the EWL launched another campaign on the same theme: 50/50 Campaign for Democracy (EWL, 2008c; EWL, 2008e). The campaign aims at putting pressure on political parties, national level governments and the Commission. The campaign was targeting the European elections, but it was also aimed at highlighting the fact that there had never been a woman President of the European Commission. The aim was to “make sure that women are equally represented in political parties’ lists for the 2009 European Parliament elections, in the next European Commission and in all European top political posts” (EWL, 2008c). The EWL have gathered a wide range of high-level politicians, and representatives from trade unions and academia have officially expressed their support for the campaign by participating in various events organised throughout Europe and by appearing on the campaign’s website as supporters. From the Commis-
sion, the supporters include both President Barroso and Vice-President. On the website and in the campaign material, the EWL publishes key politico-ideological statements made by the commissioners, in the case of Wallström “A representative democracy without gender equality is a contradiction in terms” (EWL 50/50 website). In the campaign, the EWL did not only set up a new website, it also used already available social networking sites. Facebook was used to raise awareness and to recruit members and supporters of the campaign. A Facebook group was created and the group 50/50 Campaign For Democracy has more than 2000 members, one of which is the vice president of the European Commission, Margot Wallström. The entire campaign has officially been supported by Wallström, who, after the elections to the European parliament but prior to the result of the gender composition of the elected, stated: “another lesson for all institutions and political parties: Elections are about representation and if voters don’t see themselves reflected in who represents them, then they will be seen as distant. I’m interested to see how many seats have been won by candidates who are not middle class white males…” (Wallström, 2009a). Wallström was also a keynote

144 Other official supporters include, for example Mariann Fischer Boel, Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, László Kovács, Commissioner for Taxation and Customs Union, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, Vladimir Spidla, Commissioner for Employment, Social affairs and Equal opportunities, Andris Piebalgs, Commissioner for Energy, Neelie Kroes, Commissioner for Competition, Danuta Hübner, Commissioner for Regional policy, Meglena Kuneva, Commissioner for Consumer Affairs, Androulla Vassiliou, Commissioner for Health, and Stavros Dimas, European Commissioner for Environment. National high level politics supporters include, for example, Danilo Turk, President of the Republic of Slovenia, former Irish president Mary Robinson; Baroness Royall, Chief Whip of the House of Lords, UK Michel Barnier, Minister for Agriculture, France, and Cecilia Malmström, Minister for European Affairs, Sweden. Trade unionists at both European and national level are official supporters of the campaign, for example Michael Sommer, the President of the German Confederation of Trade Unions, Germany and Sharan Burrow, President of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). Academics are also officially supporting the campaign, both Yvonne Hirdman, Professor at University of Stockholm and Drude Dahlerup, Professor of political science at Stockholm University, Sweden. In addition, a long list of national level ministers, members of the European parliament and other EU institutions such as the Committee of the regions and the Economic and Social Committee are officially supporting the campaign (www.5050democracy.eu).

145 Facebook has over 300 million active users worldwide and is the second most used website in the world (ALEXA). As of January 2009, Facebook is the most used network by worldwide monthly active users (compete.com). In one single month, Facebook has 132.1 million unique visits (com.Score).

146 Margot Wallström, vice president of the European Commission and commissioner for institutional relations and communication strategy, presented a list of ‘proposed positive actions’ to be taken towards gender equality at a EWL conference prior to the EU elections in 2009. The list is: “1) introduce gender equality as one of the fundamental principles in European elections. Today, there is no mention of it in the Act of 1976, which
speaker at one of the many national level events organised in relation to the EWL campaign. The national co-ordinations simultaneously carried out national level campaigns and conferences; for example in Sweden, Cyprus and Germany.147 The events, seminars and conferences organised around the 50/50 campaign constitute an indicative example of how the EWL lobbies. The lobbying is multi-level and simultaneous, that is, events are launched all over the EU during a limited space of time; it uses high level profiles and publicly known politicians and a combination of politicians, bureaucrats, academics, trade unionists and non-governmental organisations to raise awareness and attract attention.

sets out the rules for election of MEPs by direct universal suffrage; 2) Introduce gender quotas for the nomination process of EP Vice-Presidents, Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the different Committees; 3) Respect principles of gender equality when appointing top EU jobs: the Presidents of the Commission and Parliament; the High Representative for foreign and security policy, and – if the Lisbon Treaty comes into force – the President of the European Council; 4) Each government to present two candidates for the new Commission: one man, one woman; 5) Include female names at an early stage in the speculations and debate preceding appointment of top posts in the EU. If we don’t put forward names of women now, we run a serious risk of ending up with four men at the top!” (Wallström, 2009b).

147 In March 2008 the Swedish Women’s Lobby and the National Council of Women in Sweden co-organised a two-day seminar on the European Union and gender equality entitled “Women’s Power and Influence in Europe.” The explicit aims of the seminar were to “increase women’s interest in the EU and in the EU elections, to provide thorough information on important EU issues that are of concern for women and to strengthen women’s networks” (SweQ, 2009). Speakers included not only commissioner Wallström; there were candidates to the European Parliament from different Swedish political parties; the President of the Swedish Women’s Lobby (Eva Fager); Pernilla Baralt from the EU Commission; and representatives from the Swedish Confederation for Professional Employees (TCO). In Cyprus another event was co-organised by the Cyprus Women’s Lobby, the European Parliament and the EC Representation in Cyprus. “Women in Decision-Making: Overcoming Barriers, Creating Change” took place in February 2009. The event was opened by Androulla Vassiliou, EU Commissioner for Health. Other speakers included the present EWL Secretary General Myria Vassiliadou and the Secretary General for the Cypriot National Machinery for Women’s Rights, Maro Varnavidou. The event had, according to the Cyprus Women’s Lobby, media coverage by all major television channels and by all major newspapers and marked the first time in Cyprus that all relevant stakeholders, including political party representatives, came together and organised to discuss women’s representation in political life. The eighty participants that attended the event included members of parliament, representatives from all the main political parties of Cyprus, non-governmental organisations including women’s organisations, trade unions and the media (EWL, 2009g). In Brussels, the EWL organised the conference “50/50-No Modern European Democracy without Gender Equality” in June 2009. Vice-President Wallström was, once again, a panel speaker. Other panel speakers were the Vice-President of the European Parliament (Rodi Kratza), the Belgian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Employment and Equal Opportunities (Joelle Milquet), the Spanish director of the International Relations Office of the Equality Minister (Fernando Fernandez Arias) and women from the EWL national co-ordinations.
The European elections, held on national level, are a public matter where lobbying takes the form of spreading information on women candidates and assuring women candidates media coverage. The campaigns surrounding the elections illustrate the strategy of EWL’s lobbying: multi-level, multi-sourced and the involvement of activists, academia and politicians. Further, a multiple strategy in these campaigns was used: 1) seminars that gather a combination of actors, including EWL members, participants from the EU institutions and academia 2) campaigning on issues that are shared priorities by all member organisations 3) providing expertise, material and information to all member organisations, 4) functioning as a mediator or platform for dialogue among the national level organisations and between the national level and the EU level, 5) using different sources of communications 6) using high level profiles from within the EU institutions to publicly support the campaigns and 7) timing a multitude of simultaneous events at multiple levels of the EU. These elections campaigns are further indicative of EWL campaigns in general in that it gathers the support of high level personalities from all European countries and political parties.

7.2.3 Creating platforms: the case of violence against women

The EWL conceptualises violence against women as a violation against women’s human rights. Further, it is argued violence against women is both a cause of gender inequality, a consequence of gender inequality and a barrier to gender equality (EWL, 2008d). Violence against women is seen as an obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of equality, development and peace. It is a breach of women’s human rights. Further, the EWL links violence against women to the historically unequal power relations between men and women and to the low economic and social status of women, arguing that the low status is both a cause and a consequence of violence against women (EWL, 2009e; Healy, 2003). According to the EWL, the problem in this policy field is, apart from the very existence of violence, that there is no legal basis in the treaties and hence no directive on violence against women. However, the way the EWL argues or frames the issue, there is in fact a legal basis. Violence is seen as a barrier to gender equality, as a breach of human rights and as a cause and consequence of women’s position in the labour market. All three areas are covered in the treaty and in directives. The area of violence against women is defined by the EWL in accordance with the Beijing Platform for Action, and thus covers: any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or
suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life (UN, 1995: Article 113; EWL, 2009e). The policy area violence against women include the full range of forms of violence as, again, defined by the Beijing Platform for Action: Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation; physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution; Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs (UN, 1995: article 113abc).148 Translated to concrete areas, this means domestic violence, sexual offences including rape, trafficking, prostitution, stalking, sexual harassment and so called honour crimes.149 The EWL is active in all of these areas.

The EWL coordinates its lobbying and research activities on violence against women through the Policy Action Centre on Violence against Women which in turn coordinates the EWL observatory on violence against women.150 The Policy Centre monitors developments in policy, actions and legislation on violence against women and has worked to establish a set of general indicators to monitor progress in combating violence against women (DeTroy and Collins, 2001; EWL, 2008d). It is also exerting political pressure to improve legislation and lobbies for a higher prioritisation of violence against women. Since violence against women is not part of EU competence, the setting up of the Observatory can be seen as a turning point in the EWL history. It signifies a strong commitment to take action not only in relation to formulate policy in the area of violence against women,

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148 The Beijing Platform for Action, signed at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing 1995, has more radical content than perhaps been noted. In addition to the previously cited and commonly used definition of violence against women, the Platform’s article 114 and 115 actually defines forced pregnancy and pre-natal sex selection as violence against women (UN, 1995).

149 Since the 1998 EWL motion on prostitution and trafficking, the EWL does not make a distinction between prostitution and forced prostitution; all forms of prostitutions are regarded as forced (see appendix c).

150 In 2007 the Policy Action Centre was transformed into the European Policy Action Centre on Violence Against Women (EPAC-VAW) and re-launched as becoming an official branch of the EWL. However correct, it is also slightly misleading as it gives the impression that prior to the Centre becoming an official branch of the EWL, there was no Centre working on violence within the EWL. Up until 2007 the Policy Action Centre on Violence Against women was an integral part of the EWL, that is, it was not a branch.
but also to lobby for EU level action on violence against women. The EU level lobbying has two, somewhat internally paradoxical targets: a legal base in the treaties so that the Commission can take legal action in the policy field and to argue for the fact the violence against women is in fact covered by the treaties and the EU Charter of fundamental human rights (EU). Here, the EWL argues, violence against women falls under human rights.

**A case of how the EWL forms new platforms**

The EWL formed a EWL Observatory on Violence against Women in 1997. This is a group of experts (service providers, activists and academics) on violence against women, one from each current member state of the EU. The purpose of the EWL Observatory is to identify emerging trends in violence at the national, European and global level and to support the examination and comparison of data across the EU.

The EWL Observatory is both a resource centre in terms of comparative research across the EU member states, and in terms of offering a platform for women active in the field to exchange ideas, good practice and to mobilise organisations across the EU. The EWL Observatory has published a range of reports on violence, both national stock-tacking studies and mappings of violence, and EU comparative reports. One of the more influential of the EWL Observatory’s publications is *Towards a common European Framework to monitor progress in combating Violence against Women* containing a list of proposed indicators for measuring progress on violence against women. The proposal covers indicators for measuring progress in the areas of budgets, legal developments, service provision, training of professionals, civil society, data collection and prevention measures (EWL, 2001a). A year after the EWL indicators were published, the EU published their own set of indicators (Council, 2004). Indicators and data collection have been on the EWL agenda for around a decade. The EWL has, alongside the EU, the Council of Europe, the UN and academics, argued for the development of comparative indicators to measure progress on combating violence against women (Council of Europe, 2006; UN, 2006b; DeTroy and Collins, 2001). The EWL indicators are used and cited by academia, activists, the EU and by the UN (Walby, 2006; UN, 2006a; EU, 2004).

The Observatory provides a link between policy-makers and activists. In 2002, the Observatory formed an EU think-tank on violence against women. This think-tank is an interesting mix of senior EU policy-makers, programme managers and members of the European parliament, researchers and the members of the
EWL Observatory. The outspoken purpose of this think-tank is to figure out how to make it possible to either find or create a legal base so that the EU can address violence against women (Healy, 2003). A further attempt to develop platforms are the national observatories. The EWL has initiated and financially supported the development of national observatories on violence against women (Healy, 2003). The EWL cannot fund the Observatories from its Commission budget; it can however use the funding it receives through the Commission’s Daphne program (DeTroy, 2004), a program which is open for any organisation to apply for funding from. The purpose of the national observatories is for them to collect data on agreed indicators as to enable comparative evaluation and monitoring across the EU, and to publish the results in a series of reports (see for example Danish Observatory, 1997; DeTroy and Collins, 2001; Greek Observatory, 2009, 2004; Irish Observatory, 2004; O’Connor, 2006). Since 2007 the Observatory is placed under the European Policy Action Centre on Violence against Women (EPAC-VAW) which is and EWL branch working to achieve equality between women and men through the elimination of all forms of male violence against women. The EPAC-VAW has since developed into a new platform for women to organise specifically around gender based violence. In fact, the EPAC-VAW has its own member organisations in the EU member states in the form of the national observatories. The national observatories have, in turn, member organisations on national level. For example, the Finnish national observatory, which was launched in 2004 at a seminar held in the Finnish parliament, is a network of non-governmental organisations and individual members. By the end of 2008, twelve women’s non-governmental organisations had joined the Finnish observatory as member organisations. The observatory is coordinated by the Coalition of Finnish Women’s Associations (NYTKIS), which is the Finnish national coordination of the EWL.151

7.3 Resources to influence

It has been suggested that the resources of the EWL, in terms of information, expertise and interest mobilisation, constitute part of its capacity to function as a feedback pipeline and intermediary between interests and institutions. This question relates to how the European Commission from the early 1990s and onwards repeatedly has expressed concerns that European interest organisations show little

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151 The member organisations of the Finnish observatory include the Coalition of Finnish Women’s Associations (EPAC-VAW, 2008), the EWL national coordination.
or no interest in educating national members and citizens about EU issues, and hence undermine a potential feedback channel between the EU and its citizens. In the Commission’s White Paper on Communication (European Commission, 2006b) it is argued that the EU funded social non-governmental organisations should take responsibility for informing members, grass roots, and civil society in general on EU policy. This should be seen in the wider context of the Commission’s communication strategy, where one of the purposes is, put crudely, to popularise the EU. The strategy is partly establishing a process for supports, and partly about political socialisation. A second argument in the White Paper is that the European interest organisations were crucial as intermediaries of member state level organisations’ interests and wants in regards to the EU. It seems as if what the Commission is calling for, in this particular regard, are EU level interest organisations with the capacity to function as a feedback pipeline between EU institutions and national level civil society. The dilemma is; does the EWL have the capacity to function as a feedback pipeline between the formal EU institutions and EU population? The form of the funding the EWL receives from the European Commission and the EWL participation in the Commission’s networks and in the Advisory Committee imply that the Commission thinks it does.

7.3 Resource one: information

Information to keep EU citizens update on EU developments, to bring the citizens closer to the EU and educating the citizens (to speak the Commission’s language) or political socialisation (to speak with Easton’s terminology) is a main resource of the EWL. A first form of information between the levels is provided through the Newsflash produced by the EWL every month. The Newsflash sums up recent EU developments and EU initiatives in the gender equality field and provides links to further information. The publication gives an overview over EWL’s activities, co-operation and meeting with other European interest organisations and where and how the EWL has represented the interests of its members. There is a section on calls for tender and funding opportunities for interest organisation in the EU, and one section on upcoming events and conferences. Another section reports recent publications from interest organisations, the UN, the Council of Europe and the EU institutions. A further section provides an update events organised by member organisations. The Newsflash is published in both English and in French, available online and through e-mail subscription lists. A second form of information sharing to keep EU citizens updated on EU activities is the regularly issued
press releases on issues the EWL secretariat deems important and related to gender equality, or about EWL actions. A third form of information is the call for action and lobbying kits. They are regularly sent to members and any individual who chooses to subscribe to this information. A lobbying kit usually consists of a briefing on the relevant issue and a model lobbying letter which can be sent to the relevant decision-makers. In addition to the three forms of information sources described above, there are a number of specialised e-mail list that can be subscribed to. Depending on the status of the subscriber (member, non-member, board member) the information sent out is slightly different. Such information is used by a wide variety of members for a variety of reasons.

Not all EWL members are active members; neither are they all aiming to influence EWL to pursue a particular issue at European level. Some members simply want access to information about ongoing activities in Brussels in regard to gender equality and view the EWL as a valuable resource for that purpose. An example of this type of member is the Swedish Crime Victim Compensation and Support Agency (BrOM). The information executive at the BrOm describes their interests in the EWL as a one way channel: “[…] we simply want updated information from them [the EWL]. So far, we haven’t tried to get the EWL to pursue any particular issue … we think that the membership is valuable, but so far we haven’t seriously tried to influence the EWL” (Nordborg, May 2004).152 Instead, the member organisation views the EWL as a source of valid information. This corresponds to the Commissions expressed wish of the European social NGOs to ‘educate’ the EU citizens on EU developments.

The sharing of information is not confined to move in a single direction. The member organisations of the EWL play a crucial role in facilitating information both from and to the European level and as such provide the decision-making institution with resources in the form of preferences, information and legitimacy. For an interest organisation to form a means of contact between the central institutions of the EC and member state population, national level member organisations are obviously crucial intermediaries. Just having members are however not enough; there needs to be a specific kind of structured organisation with resources to enable the regular contacts and the sharing of information between the two levels.

152 E-mail correspondence with Gudrun Nordborg, information executive at the BrOM, 2004-05-10.
7.3.2 Resource two: secretariat, expertise and personal relations

The first resource highlighted in this chapter was information. It was argued that the information the EWL produces is at the heart of its capacity to remain a platform for women from which to mobilise. That information would not be there without someone with the knowledge to produce it. The EWL staff has a considerable knowledge about the EU system and EU policy. Most of the staff has been at the EWL since it started, worked on various EU gender equality issues and they participate in an environment that is saturated with EU developments with a focus on gender equality.

The persistence of the EWL, the fact that the same people have worked there for many years means that they are personally known by people in the Commission and in the Parliament. There is a personal relation between the political authorities of the EU and the EWL staff. The EWL has a reputation of being knowledgeable and approachable within the institutions of the EU. One Parliamentarian I interviewed said that if she wanted to know what women's position on an issue was, she phoned someone at the secretariat (Svensson, interview December 8, 2004).

The staff does not just produce information based on their knowledge; there is also a constant inflow of information. The position of the EWL in the EU system, and the permanent presence of the staff makes the EWL an organisation other organisations and actors send information to. A brief look at my own e-mail inbox in the morning revealed a considerable amount of e-mails from other interest organisations, networks, parliamentarians, committee members, UN subscriber lists, national politicians, activists, service providers, academics and so on sharing information and asking question about EU policy or the EWL position on a certain issue. It is unlikely that anything in the gender equality field could happen in Brussels without the EWL staff lobbied for it, initiated it, or having been informed about it before it happened.

7.3.3 Resource three: structure, General Assembly and aggregation

The General Assembly of the EWL is a resource as both a platform from which to coordinate positions, mobilise organisations and as a method to aggregate interests from grassroots level to European level. Here, representatives for women’s organisations from all over the EU meet to discuss, negotiate and vote on what issues should be put forward as European women’s concerns during the following
year. Women from all EU countries and beyond meet to share and compare information, good-practice and to exchange experiences and methods.

In studying, evaluating and voting on the yearly motions, national level co-ordinations and European organisations not only take an active part in the decision-making process of the EWL, they are also updated on EU member state level policy and provided with information on new developments within the EU. Further, national member organisations are actively taking part in formulating EWL positions and content of policies for the following year based on their own information gathering, other national co-ordinations motions and the position papers presented by the EWL secretariat on various issues prior to the General Assembly. In addition, after the General Assembly, the summary documents and the work program of the EWL are made available on the EWL website, thus providing anyone interested, be it an individual citizen or a member of the European Parliament with information of the policy issues and specific issues that are being prioritised by women’s organisation all over Europe. These documents offer a unique summary of EU women’s aggregated social, economic and political interests. The work programme, in turn, is the actual basis for the EWL’s contract with the European Commission.

The national organisations have a formal possibility to take part of the agenda setting of the EWL. The member organisations are represented by the EWL, and at least two motions a year are formulated by every national member organisation. The national organisations have delegates represented at the General Assembly, the formal decision-making body of the EWL. Interests of individual EU citizens are aggregated by the EWL via the national member organisations and national umbrella organisations.

In functioning as a two-way feedback pipeline, it is crucial that the national member organisations have some formal channels of information and influence over the positions adopted by the entire organisation. Once again, the examples of the regional West Swedish Women’s Lobby (VSQL) and the national Swedish Women’s Lobby show that national member organisation do have formal channels to influence proposition and the EWL general position on various issues.

The procedures preceding the General Assembly offers additional forum to for information sharing and feedback. The period surrounding the General Assembly is an intense period of discussions and deliberations at national level and highlights the regular contacts between the EWL and its national member organisations (VSQL Chairwoman, interview September 2004). The national member organisations meet regularly with member organisations from other EU states to discuss strategies and objectives. It is evident that the general assembly offers a
national level platform for women to negotiate their interests and political demands prior to channelling them to the EU level.

7.4 Summary and discussion

The strategies and activities of the EWL studied within the three policy areas (general gender equality policy, women in decision-making and violence against women) show three things: the EWL has undergone a professionalization; the organisations constitutes a source of knowledge for decision-makers and other interest organisations and the EWL is building new platforms for women to mobilise around issues outside the EU legal remit. Further, the EWL has the capacity to mobilise and lobby at multiple levels simultaneously. The lobbying strategies of the EWL include a range of material, media, actors and a multiple level coordination of lobbying activities. The EWL mobilises a range of actors, not just actors in civil society, but academia, politicians, decision-makers and activists are being provided with a structure in which to interact. The EWL is extending the platform from which to mobilise and acts beyond the EU legal remit, which, it can be argued, is what the Commission wants the EWL to be doing.

When women’s interests are debated in the institutions of the EU, those interests appear to have become the same as the interests and policy areas of the EWL. Measuring influence or who influences who is not the ambition here, but still, the material at hand does not make it unreasonable to suggest that the EWL has had an impact on gender equality policy in the EU. There is a considerable overlap between the European Commission’s strategy for gender equality and the EWL’s strategy for gender equality. In both roadmaps, the priority areas and proposed actions to obtain the objectives are basically the same. The Commission’s Roadmap has been produced with the input of the EWL’s model Roadmap for gender equality.

The European Commission is often characterised as overburdened, understaffed and underfinanced. Combined with its role as policy initiator and drafter of legislation, the Commission is especially open to ideas and input in the early stages of preparing EU policy. The Commission is often described as a type of institution where outside influence may have an actual impact given that those on the outside know how to influence and has developed its contacts with the

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153 The Commission, responsible for initiating legislation and executing it, is roughly made up by 17,000 officials working for 320 million EU citizens. In comparison, the British civil service work for 50 million people and the British ministry of defence alone employs 116,000 civil servants.
Commission. The characteristic of the Commission as under-resourced highlights two of the initial points of this chapter: the success of an interest organisation depends on its ability to provide the decision-making institution with resources and its ability to develop contacts or informal networks with ‘the right’ officials within the appropriate institutions. The EWL appears to have the capacity to provide the political authorities with resources and the examples used in this chapter shows that the EWL has been successful in developing contacts and allies within the EU institutions. The EWL is doubtless in close co-operation with the Commission:

Yes, well it is true because we have, first we have a very strong administrative link because of our funding. We have a budget lying within the budget of the EU ... the money is managed by the Commission so it means we need to, we have to report some activity every third month and have a work programme to submit and we are always in contact because we have to because of the funding (Gréboval, interview December 10, 2004).

In addition to the administrative link, the campaigns described in this chapter underlines how the EWL manages to attract high level politicians and commissioners in its campaigns for gender equality. Commissioners officially support the EWL campaigns and participate in EWL conferences and seminars. The Vice-President of the Commission is only one example. The EWL and former commissioner Diamantopoulou worked closely together on gender equality issues, and that the EWL provided the commissioner with research and position papers. In spring 2002 when sexual harassment was defined as a form of discrimination and incorporated into the Equal treatment directive, the EWL referred to commissioner Diamantopoulou as their champion in the European Parliament. In Diamantopoulou’s speaking notes on violence against women at the Employment and Social Affairs Council the same year, the EWL was especially thanked for its input in the form of the research and information it provides.

There is also a close cooperation with individual parliamentarians. During the time I spent at the secretariat, members of the European Parliament called the secretariat simply asking for information, or stopped by to discuss an issue. It is common that parliamentarians contact the EWL either to ask for advice on a specific matter or to simply inform the EWL about a future development. Other examples of the exchange of expertise are the policy-shaping draft reports concerning gender equality or equal opportunities that are sent directly to the EWL secre-
tariat for comments and input. Draft Directives are also sent to the EWL for comments and feedback.

In addition to the support and participation of individual commissioners, the administrative link and the informal co-operation through unofficial contacts and networking between the EWL and the Commission – referred to as ad hoc consultation (see chapter eight) – there is a fourth, formally institutionalised procedure through which the EWL participates and influences EU policy: consultation. Through the consultative status the EWL has as a founding member of the Social Platform, the EWL enjoys a formal collaboration with the Commission staff and commissioners. The next chapter discusses the processes of consultation and representation, and the criteria to participate in EU policy-making. The coming chapter thus widens the perspective again and returns to the political system of the EU.
PART III

REPRESENTATION AND ORGANISED INTERESTS
In this penultimate chapter of the thesis I broaden the perspective again and return to the political system of the EU and the specificities of EU governance, specificities which have consequences for the organisation and representation of interests in the EU. The EU polity encompasses three simultaneously present yet different principles of interest representation. 1) the representation of member states' interests as the basis of the Council of Ministers, 2) the representation of individual citizens' interests as the basis of the European Parliament, and 3) the representation of societal, organised interests as the basis for interest representation of the Commission (see chapter two). This thesis has focused on the latter.

This chapter examines interest representation through EU consultation processes and representativeness more thoroughly. What are the implications of this specific form of interest representation, and of the criteria for representativeness as developed by the Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee for the EWL and the EWL organising?

The argument developed, the argument I want to make here, includes that the legitimacy of a corporatist policy-making style of the European Commission requires that the organised interests involved are somehow representative of the interests of the groups that constitute their members. Representativeness of those consulted, whether formally or informally, increases the legitimacy of the decisions made and of those making the decisions. For this purpose, the Commission needs the European Women's Lobby as a representative of women's organised interests in the EU. Organised interests in civil society have, depending on their level of organisation and structure, the potential to legitimise the Commission's decision-making, something that both transparency and openness potentially have failed to do (Naurin, 2004). To be able to do so, organised interests must perform the functions of input, output and legitimating, and to in turn be able to perform those functions, civil society organised interests must be organised in specific ways. The potential legitimacy derived from the institutionalisation of civil society interest organisations not only benefits the Commission; it benefits the organisations by allowing them a political platform from which to act as a social and political interest group. The gain representative monopoly. This is the corporatist ideal, that is, the system works as a trade off where legitimacy of decisions is retrieved from representative organised interests which in turn gain a seat at the bargaining table. They get to be among those making the decisions. There is however no guarantee that to be among, to have presence, leads to a controlling pres-
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ence (Jónasdóttir, 1991, 1994). Further, having such presence, this platform from which to act as organised interests comes with a price. Interest organisations wanting a piece of the cake, or rather wanting to make an impact on the cake and how it is cut into pieces, are limited by the rules of engagement. This chapter discusses these rules, their background, how the European Women’s Lobby has engaged with them and how the EWL is equipped to adjust, adapt or challenge those rules.

8.1 Aim of chapter

The aim of this chapter is to analyse the ways in which the European Women’s Lobby adapts and adjusts to the conditions of representativeness developed by the EU institutions. Secondly, the aim is to explore the basis of legitimacy of European Commission decision-making from the perspective of the representativeness of civil society organisations. By using representativeness, as outlined by the Economic and Social Committee (EESC, 2001, 2002) and clustered in the Commission’s White Paper on Governance (European Commission, 2001a), I consider in what way the European Women’s Lobby, representing the social and political interests of European women at the EU level, fits in to a corporatist model of political representation of organised interests and political legitimacy through the representativeness of organised interests.155

To address the questions I look at the EU institutions conditioning interest representation and the development of those institutions. What are the arguments and rationales used? I look at the different consultation processes and at the involvement of the European Women’s Lobby therein. Thereafter follows an analysis of the conditions of representativeness. I discuss the capacity of the European Women’s Lobby to adapt to those conditions. Concretely, the questions further explored here are: How is the EWL involved in the different consultation procedures at the EU level? What is the background of developing rules for representativeness? What are the criteria of EU representativeness? Why are there criteria for consulting interest organisations in the first place? Can the EWL be consid-

155 I discuss corporatism in chapter 3. However, and in short, the understanding of corporatism here is based on the idea of the representation of organised interest rather than individual citizens’ interests in the policy-shaping and policy-making processes. Further, it is not only a question about not representing individuals but a certain way of thinking about interests as economic and societal which is understood as not involving individuals directly.
ered representative? If so, how and why? What resources and capacities does the EWL have to be, or to become, representative?

8.2 The structure of consultations and the EWL

The European Commission is, as we have seen, compelled by the EC Treaty to consult the European Economic and Social Committee, the “bridge between Europe and organised civil society” (EESC, 2009a, 2009b) when initiating and shaping policy in the field of social policy. The European Economic and Social Committee represents interest organisations in “organised civil society” by defendng their interests in consultations on social and economic EU policy prior to decision-making. The European Economic and Social Committee is an intermediary between organised civil society interests and the Commission (i.e. something of the gatekeepers in this particular capacity). The European Economic and Social Committee has developed extensive contacts with civil society interest organisations within certain fields, including contacts with the European Women’s Lobby. There has been intensification in the dialogue and consultation with organised civil society, in both the policy-initiation and policy-shaping phases, and in the implementation of EU policy and decisions (European Commission, 2005d: 1).

The contacts are formalised, via various advisory committees where interest organisations are part of a formal consultation process, via the participation of interest organisations in expert groups and via ad hoc meetings; and less formalised via random meetings, phone calls, e-mails or in the corridors of the EU institutions. The cooperation between the Economic and Social Committee and the Commission is institutionalised. The development is parallel to the intensification of consultation between the Economic and Social Committee and organised interests (European Commission, 2005d). The developments and intensifications are seen as being in the common interests of all parties (European Commission, 2005d).

156 The use of ‘organised’ in ‘organised civil society’ is especially important to remember here. It distinguishes individual citizens of the European Union from organisations of various pre-supposed group interests and represents a corporatist policy-making structure where what is to be represented is organised interests, not individual citizens (EESC, 2009b).
8.2.1 The EWL in the consultation procedures

The EWL is present in the three main consultation procedures. The Commission has repeatedly resisted the formalising of procedures and rules for consultation and it has been reluctant to limit its access to organised civil society and argued in favour of remaining an open and accessible institution to outside interests (European Commission, 2008d, 2007, 2006d, 2005b, 2002, 1992). The civil society organisations are the links to the world outside of the institutions, civil society organisations are:

[t]he principal structures of society outside of government and public administration, including economic operators...the term has the benefit of being inclusive (European Commission, 2002).

The Commission consults organised interests in civil society through three different procedures; the European Women’s Lobby participates in all three. The EWL participates in formalised consultation in the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities Between Men and Women in the European Commission (see chapter two). Further, the EWL participates in the both the High Level Group on Disabilities and in the Working Group on Women in Rural Areas.\(^{157}\) Formalised consultation is the procedure where the Commission is compelled by a formal political commitment to consult an interest organisation or groupings of interest organisations during and prior to the decision-making process. Being formally recognised as a party in an advisory body is a recognition that brings opportunities to influence and more importantly, it brings the participating interest organisation legitimacy as a representative of the interests of ‘their’ group.

The European Women’s Lobby participates in a second consultation procedure called structured dialogue through the Platform of European Social Non-Governmental Organisations (Social Platform). As the women’s interest organisation in the Social Platform, other relevant committees in the Commission also consult the European Women’s Lobby when gender equality related policy is on the table. The dialogue can take many forms, for example that of the bi-annual meetings between the Commission and the Social Platform. Structured dialogue is a systematic and established practice of regular meetings between non-

\(^{157}\) The EWL has consultative status with both the Council of Europe and with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. Further, on UN level the EWL participates regularly in the activities of the UN Commission on the Status of Women and has cooperated with the UN Rapporteur on Violence against Women and the UN Rapporteur on Trafficking.
governmental organisations and the Commission, but without a formal structure of committees or structures with defined operating rules and processes. The extensive amount of discussions in dining areas, chats after seminars and during conferences, exchange of views after a public hearing and what may look like random, open meetings in a corridor is a third consultation procedure referred to as Ad hoc meetings and has obviously existed within the EU for as long as the EU has. From time to time and context to context this form of consultation has been more or less recognised as a legitimate standard procedure. Ad hoc meetings were, perhaps somewhat naively, considered as a method of becoming more open and transparent to the European public. Ad hoc meetings were intended to function as a guarantee of openness and transparency rather than keeping organisations not already on the inside of the system out (European Commission, 1992). For an interest organisation not present in Brussels, lacking staff, lacking contacts with the political authorities, or lacking the resources to establish contact with the political authorities, ad hoc simply means shut out. Already unrepresented and marginalised groups tend to become even more disadvantaged the less formal the procedures are (SOU 1995: 110).

The European Women’s Lobby is an accredited interest organisation at both the Commission and the Parliament, that is, the representatives of the European Women’s Lobby can not only get through the actual doors of the Parliament and the Commission buildings, their presence there is legitimate and expected. Further on the ad hoc note, there are overlaps between the staff of the EWL and the Commission. A former EWL General Secretary left the EWL to work for the Commission; the present General Secretary left her job at the Commission; commissioners and members of the Parliament consistently support EWL campaigns; commissioners and parliamentarians participate in EWL campaigns; and national level ministers officially support EWL campaigns.

In addition to the procedures of consultation described above, there have been attempts to institutionalise a dialogue with interest organisations by setting up a so-called Civil Dialogue, similar to the Social Dialogue (European Commission, 2008d; European Parliament, 2009b). Civil society organisations began to gain

\[159\] At European level, social dialogue takes two main forms - a bipartite dialogue between the European employers and trade union organisations, and a tripartite dialogue involving interaction between the social partners and the public authorities. The Social Platform, created in 1995 with the EWL as a founding member, is regularly consulted within the Social Dialogue as a social partner representing civil society. The Social Dialogue includes the social partners (management and labour) whereas the Civil Dialogue includes civil society interest organisations. However, since the term civil society in EU
official recognition in the 1980s, but it was not until the early 2000s that civil society was pointed out as a means to bridge the gap between the EU and its citizens (European Commission, 2001a, 2001c, 2001e). Ideas about participatory democracy, through civil society organisations in a civil dialogue took off with the European Constitution and later in the Lisbon Treaty. In the social dialogue, representativeness is a key demand from the Commission. The Commission regularly employs research institutes to evaluate the representativeness of the social partners and, to the extent they are present, the civil partners within the social dialogue. Participation in the consultation process and/or the social dialogue offers substantial institutional opportunities to influence EU policy. It also signifies that the consultative body in the Commission’s point of view represents a wider European public. The European Economic and Social Committee, as well as the draft Constitution drawn up by the European Convention, both underline the importance of the representation of citizens through a civil dialogue on the one hand, an a social dialogue on the other (European Convention, 2003; EESC, 2006, 2003ab, 2002, 1999). The criteria discussed later in the chapter were part of the discussions surrounding the setting up of a civil dialogue.

8.3 Creating support and representative demands

Since the end of the 1980s, the collaboration between the Commission and non-governmental organised interests has both widened and deepened. Interest organisations have become more involved in policy-making and the number of interest organisations and professional and non-professional lobbies present in Brussels have augmented (Greenwood, 1998, 2003, 2007). The interactions, whether with political elites, business or civil society interest organisations were far from formally recognised, let alone regulated, and thus started to become a...
concern in a number of ways (European Commission, 2001a). There was a general concern about the sheer quantity and rapid growth of the number of interests groups present in the corridors of Brussels (Sutherland, 1992; GUE/NGL, 2004). A main concern about the presence of groups, lobbies and interest organisations was, and still is, the ad hoc nature of public consultations and the unevenness of accessibility to decision-making between the different groups (Sutherland, 1992). Business and professional lobbies had come to dominate EU policy-making and civil society interests had become more and more absent. The un-representativeness concerns the elite participation in EU decision-making; there is too little exchange between the EU institutions (especially the Commission) and the demos required to live by the decisions made (Sutherland, 1992; European Commission, 2001a, 2001c, 2002, 2006, 2008). In addition, issues regarding the collection and use of expert advice and scientific knowledge, and the transparency of the advice given, were raised in terms of democratic concerns as the EU was being criticised for its closed and elite nature (Sutherland, 1992). The (in)famous democratic deficit of the EU has become an internal EU institutional concern as well as a public one (European Commission, 2001a). When former Commission President Romano Prodi took office in 1999, the attention was brought back to the issues first raised in the Sutherland report, but under the labels of reforms of decision-making process and European governance. The 2001 adopted White Paper on European Governance (European Commission, 2001a) sets out to involve the Commission, the Parliament, the Council and member state governments in an institutional reform aiming at improving the way in which policies and legislation are prepared and implemented under the existing EU treaties. The underlying aim is to establish (more) democratic forms of governance at all political institutional levels, i.e. at global, European, national, regional and local levels. Good Governance is referred to as bottom-up participation through public partnership with civil society, non-governmental organisations.

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161 EU representation of organised interests centres around approximately 1500 formal interest organisations and groups. Out of these, two-thirds (67%) represent business, one-fifth (20%) citizen interests and the remaining organisations (13%) represent trade unions and public sector organisations on national and regional level. In addition, there is approximately 350 large firms, 200 regions and 300 organisations concerned with commercial public affairs services (Greenwood). All of these are included in the definition of civil society.

162 The Commission defines governance as “the rules, processes and practices that affect how powers are exercised at the European level” (European Commission, 2001a).

163 The choice of promoting new forms of governance under the existing institutional framework somehow became the only option available following the decision of the Nice European Council in December 2000 to call for an Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) on institutional reform in 2003.
tions and business. The White Paper focus on the role of EU institutions in decision-making and includes proposals of better involvement, better regulation, and the contributions the EU can make to world governance (European Commission, 2001a).

The democratic challenge is constructed as a problem that “involved a mismatch between a general sympathy of citizens towards European ideals and a nagging mistrust of institutions” (European Commission, 2000d: 5). The people were not only mistrusting the EU institutions; the EU was perceived of as lacking the mechanisms, the feedback loop, to bring politics to the people. The Commission reiterates the people’s increasing distrust in the EU institutions and the widespread held view of the EU as “remote and at the same time too intrusive” (European Commission, 2001a). The support for the system is too low (see Eurobarometer 71). Hence, the Commission has set out to

[...] help the emergence of a European Public sphere, where citizens are given the information and the tools to actively participate in [...] the European project (European Commission, 2005a).

European citizens’ lack of participation in the EU public debate and their lack of power or control over the EU project have been progressively more discussed in the recent years (Hix 1999; Peeters, 2003; Greenwood, 2004). The White Paper on Governance (European Commission, 2001a) suggested that more openness, accountability and responsibility for all those involved in both the making of policy and living by policy will enhance democracy in Europe and increase the legitimacy of the EU institutions.\textsuperscript{164} It was time to generate, or find ways to generate “[a] sense of belonging to Europe” (European Commission, 2001b: 11). Measures of how to link policy-making to citizen groups and non-governmental organisations, and how to guarantee representativeness of the consulted organisations were discussed (European Commission, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c, 2001e, 2002). Interest organisations should act as mediators between EU and EU citizens, as “facilitators of a broad policy dialogue” as “agents of political socialisation” and as “catalysts of change” (European Convention, 2003; European Commission, 2005b, 2001a: 15; Warleigh, 2001: 619ff). The participation of

\textsuperscript{164} The main recommendations of the White Paper are based on twelve reports, two studies and intense consultation of European, national and regional actors, as well as academics and European citizens. The main recommendations of the White Paper are based on twelve reports, two studies and intense consultation of European, national and regional actors, as well as academics and European citizens. The reports are available online at http://ec.europa.eu/governance/prepa_lb_en.htm.
non-governmental and civil society interests in policy-making are consequently understood as complementing representative democracy through some form of participatory democracy (European Convention, 2003; European Commission, 2005b). The EU should become less top-down and complement its present policy-making processes and tools with “non-legislative instruments” (European Commission, 2001a: 4). A first problem faced was to define who the people lacking influence and mechanisms of input were. Secondly, the question of which organisations that represented those people was put on the agenda, and thirdly, and as a consequence of the first two questions, criteria to decide what had to be in place to be a representative organisations had to be developed. Concretely the recommendations in the White Paper include publishing and establishing of minimum standards for consultation on EU policy and to establish partnerships that go beyond the minimum standards in selected areas hence “committing the Commission to additional consultation in return for more guarantees of the openness and representativeness of those organisations consulted” (European Commission, 2001a: 4). As a means to increasing the degree of representativeness a specific Code of Conduct was developed (European Commission, 2006d, 2008). Interest organisations adopting and adapting to the Code of Conduct as well as other regulations on interactions with the EU institutions were to be more formally and extensively consulted. The Convention on the Future of Europe argued:

> The EU shall, by appropriate means, give citizens and representative associations the opportunity to make known and publicly exchange their opinions on all areas of Union action. The EU institutions shall remain an open, transparent & regular dialogue with representative associations and civil society. (European Convention, 2003: title VI, article 34).

The main problems, as perceived by the Commission, concern the lack of public and citizen participation and input (both as demands and supports); the dominance of business interests at the expense of social and political interests; the lack of support for the EU institutions (weak political socialisation); and organised EU level interests reluctance to inform about and to make the EU available to national level citizens. The solutions suggested include that interest organisations should function as a feedback pipeline between the EU and ‘the remote’ citizens. The problem related to the solution, is both the reluctance, as perceived by the Commission, and the actual inability of interest organisations to function as feedback mechanisms between the EU and its citizens. Secondly, widening opportunities for the participation of stakeholders have been advocated as, next to in-
increased transparency in decision-making, the main strategy to legitimise Commission policy-making to the EU population (European Commission, 2006d; European Commission, 2005b). It has been suggested that the participation of organised interests and civil society organisations in various stages of the policy-making process could complement the shortcomings of the representative democratic element of the EU. The simplification and the improvement of the quality regulations of lobbying and interest representation by civil society organisations are key (European Commission, 2001a).

If civil society organisations and non-governmental organisations are to play the role of facilitators of interests, agents of political socialisation and integration they would have to demonstrate that they themselves are representative of their members, participatory in internal decision-making, and democratically governed. The measures already taken by the European Commission to establish and guarantee representativeness of the interest and lobby organisations with which the Commission consults include demands on the organisations concerning membership density, lobby regulation, codes of conduct etcetera (European Commission, 2000; European Commission, 1998b). The more important criteria concern issues of representativeness, and the Commission maintains that:

For the consultation process to take place via such organisations and networks [European level non-governmental organisations/civil society interest organisations] these organisations need to ensure that their structures are representative, in particular regarding their roots in the different member states of the European Union.” (European Commission, 2000c: 9).

8.4 Criteria of representativeness and the EWL

The Commission’s White Paper (2001a) and the General Principles and Minimum Standards (2002) target representativeness in two direct ways. An interest organisation should be 1) representative in its structures and 2) representative of its members. The Commission is less direct in developing formal criteria or what indicators to use to measure representativeness. A set of specific criteria of representativeness was however developed by the European Economic and Social Committee, and given recognition by the draft EU Constitution (European Convention, 2003) and the Commission’s General Principles and Minimum Standards (2002) as a set of eligible criteria. The criteria aimed at targeting the problem of the lack of representativeness of the consulted interest organisations and were
thus a measure to increase representation. The criteria developed require that in order for an interest organisation to be considered representative, the organisation should exist permanently at Community level; provide direct access to its members’ expertise and enhance rapid and constructive consultation; represent general concerns that tally with the interest of European society; comprise bodies that are recognised at member state level as representatives of particular interests; have member organisations in most of the EU member states; provide for accountability to its members; have authority to represent and act at European level; be independent and mandatory, not bound by instructions from outside bodies; and be transparent, especially financially and in its decision-making structures.165 (EESC, 2002: 5; EESC, 2001: 6).

The criteria relate to whether or not organisations should be able to be formally (as well as informally, as it turns out) consulted in the future civil or the present social dialogue and/or whether or not civil society organisations are ‘representative enough’ to fulfil the needs and wants of the EU institutions. The nine criteria could all be understood in terms of political representation and democratization and/or supra-governmental efficiency and economical rationality (this will be developed in the following paragraphs).

With the criteria as a starting point for the following discussion, the subject matter explored below deals with, firstly, in what way the European Women’s Lobby fits in to the picture of EU representation and representativeness. The criteria are used to further explore the potential and possibility of the EWL to be, or act as, a representative of women’s organised interests. What makes the European Women’s Lobby representative? Secondly, what is the Commission’s argument for accepting or rejecting the criteria? I will discuss the criteria of representativeness as developed by the Economic and Social Committee in relation to European Women’s Lobby structure, aims and activities.

The criteria will be clustered into four sets of wider criteria that correspond to the views and preference as expressed by the European Commission in both the

165 It should be noted that the criteria have been developed by the Economic and social Committee, but are to be implemented by the Commission. The Commission has added that in some cases, representativeness may not exclude certain regional or local interested parties a priori. The Commission underlines the importance of representative European organisations, but “will avoid consultation processes which could give the impression that Brussels is only talking to Brussels”, but, the Commission continues, “on the other hand it is important for the Commission to consider how representative views are when taking a political decision following a consultation process” and goes on to underline the importance of representativeness and to highlight that the “Economic and Social Committee has produced a set of eligibility criteria for the so-called “civil dialogue” (European Commission, 2002).
White paper on Governance and in the Transparency papers (2001a; 2006d; 2007; 2008d). The first cluster is that of presence (to be considered representative the organisation must exist permanently at Community level). The second set of criteria relates to the structure (to be considered representative, an interest organisation should provide direct access to its members’ expertise; have member organisations in most of the EU member states; provide for accountability to its members; and have authority to represent and act at European level). A third set of criteria relates to the interests the organisation represents (to be considered representative, an interest organisation must represent general concerns that tally with the interest of European society and comprise bodies that are recognised at member state level as representatives of particular interests). The fourth set of criteria relates to transparency (to be considered representative, an interest organisation must be independent and mandatory, not bound by instructions from outside bodies and be transparent, especially financially and in its decision-making structures).

8.4.1 Presence

Representative civil society organisations should exist permanently at Community level (EESC, 2001: 6).

Consultation does not formally require actual presence, but given the amount of informal consultation and lobbying, in reality presence in Brussels is required. The number of ad hoc meetings and informal consultations require the presence of interest organisations. The criterion of permanent presence ensures that the interested parties represented can rely on ‘their representative’ developing long term contacts with EU decision makers and the EU decision makers to ‘put their money on the right horse’, the right horse here being the one that can run the longest. It favours civil society organisations having the resources to organise and set up office in Brussels, organisations already transnationally established and organisations with developed networks. It excludes smaller, financially weaker and nationally organised interest organisations as well as organisations in their developing phases. It excludes lobbies or organisations set up around one single time limited issue. Permanent community presence discriminates against young, national, sub-national interest organisations and minorities.\footnote{This issue was raised by both the Swedish and the British responses to the White paper on Governance (Swedish government, 2002; UK government, 2002).}
The Commission “would like to underline the importance it attaches to input from representative European organisations” but the issue “of representativeness at European level should not be used as the only criterion when assessing the relevance or quality of comments” (European Commission, 2002: 11). The Commission prefers to talk about participation (European Commission, 2001a). To participate in consultation beyond online consultations an organisation has to be present in Brussels. To exist permanently on EU level is thus rather an ‘availability prerequisite’ to, on the one hand be able to enjoy the ad hoc meetings which the Commission favours somewhat, and on the other to be available as and when needed for input and output. The Commission certainly recognises the importance of financial limitations of an interest organisation, setting up office in Brussels is expensive. The Commission provides financial and other resources to support certain non-business interest organisations to operate from within Brussels. The EWL is one of those financially supported organisations. Further, the statutes of the European Women Lobby actually stipulate that the European Women’s Lobby must remain in the Brussels region.

8.4.2 Structure

Representative civil society organisation should provide direct access to its members’ expertise; have member organisations in most of the EU member states; provide for accountability to its members; and have authority to represent and act at European level (EESC, 2001: 6).

The criteria target the form of organised interests, something which has been discussed throughout the thesis. The arguments put forward by the Commission in its Governance and Transparency papers target the internal organisation of interest organisations: interest organisations need to organise in specific ways to be considered representative, legitimate and to be consulted as such. The criteria about representativeness in this regard are about shaping the structure, the form, of organised interests.

Shaping the structure of organised interests

Four of the Economic and Social Committee’s criteria of representativeness refer to what the in the White Paper on Governance relates to the structure or form of interest organisations. As has been shown, the Commission is concerned about the lack of interest organisations that on the one hand show interest in bringing
the people closer to the EU institutions, and on the other that have the resources to do so. The criteria, both in the framing of the Commission and in the framing of the Economic and Social Committee, target the structure and organisational form of the interest organisations. Translated into the terminology of the Commission’s White Paper on Governance, the criteria encompass and guarantee efficiency, legitimacy and wide representative participation in the consultation process. The structure of an organisation is imperative to meet the demands of quick input, political socialisation and information sharing. The Commission emphasised the importance of the internal organisation of interest organisations when it indicated the future establishment of an on-line database of civil society organisations which, for listed organisations, or organisations wanting to be listed, “should act as a catalyst to improve their internal organisation” (European Commission, 2001a: 15). The database, now operating, can be used as a search tool to find representative organisations with which to consult. To be permitted listing in the database, certain terms and conditions have to be fulfilled by the interest organisations in question. A specific internal structure is one of the conditions. In addition, the Code of Conduct, regulating the relationship between the Commission and organised interests, is considered as providing standards which:

[...] should improve the representativity of civil society organisations and structure their debate with the Institutions ... [I]n return, the arrangements will prompt civil society organisation to tighten up their internal structures, furnish guarantees of openness and representativity, and prove their capacity to relay information or lead debates in the Member States (European Commission, 2001a: 17).

The main report from the working groups on the Governance paper suggested that partnership arrangements “obviously constitute an incentive for the non-governmental organisation community to organise themselves in pan-European structures” and called for a formalisation of the conditions for civil society organisations’ participation in the European decision-making process (European Commission, 2001e, 2001g). Civil society interactions are to be structured by regulating the structure of the interest organisations. It has been argued that this need to impose “responsibilities on civil society actors as regards to their internal organisation and representativeness have developed as key frames through which the role of civil society is being constructed within the writings of the Commission White Paper” (Armstrong, 2002). Thus, at the same time, a certain problem-to-solve is being constructed: the problem is the unorganised civil society rather than the democratically deficit European institutions. In other words, civil society
organisations need to be taught how to organise themselves properly. The main problem is assumed to be the structure(lessness) of civil society, not the EU. The Codes of Conduct and the Commission’s papers show how the unorganised civil society needs to be informed how to organise and behave. Such strategy shifts the problem focus, and requires less system change.

Membership: legitimising output and input

Being able to consult just one interest organisation and yet, through the structure and membership base of that one organisation having indirectly consulted organisations all over the EU, increases the efficiency of policy-making. The European Commission prioritises efficiency in policy-making (2001a). To gather expertise on a particular policy in its initiating phase is expensive. Contacting experts, setting up advisory groups, organise meeting etcetera takes time, staff and money: all three are resources the Commission characteristically and historically lack (Greenwood, 2002; Wallace and Wallace, 2004).

We are terribly understaffed and overstressed. My division is responsible for 44 Directives and 89 regulations; monthly mail which requires a substantial answer numbers about 350 pieces. And I have about nine staff to deal with all of this. The corresponding admin in the USA has 600 people. (Commission official, cited in Coen, 1997)

Having members in all or most of the EU member states is certainly an advantage for EU level interest organisations. In part, it is a matter of enhancing successful implementation and a matter of legitimacy of those consulted. For the civil society organisation, it potentially increases the success rate of lobbying campaigns and the opportunities of influence. For the Commission it means that there is an already up and running available network of interest organisation networks consisting of member state level members to use for output and input. The required structure of wide, membership based organisations can therefore be seen as a win-win principle: it benefits the Commission and it benefits the interest organisation. Having a large membership base addresses the quantitative aspects of representativeness of European organisations. Through the consulted interest organisations’ established networks, information and input can be gathered at a relatively low cost. And if the organisation can guarantee representativeness or at least can be considered to be representative, the economic gain multiplies in that the Commission 1) gets access to widespread established networks of knowledge and information for free, 2) the information and knowledge gathered is representative...
which means that the Commission have consulted enough and 3) the potential future policy output is already more or less legitimised by civil society. Secondly, the Commission and the EU institutions have been criticised due to their disconnection and remoteness from the ordinary European citizens. By using the established channels of large, European wide interest organisations, the Commission can reach the EU citizens through the membership of the consulted interests. Having a large, European wide membership base becomes imperative. The importance of a large membership base was recognised by the EWL early on, in fact, growing as an organisation was the initially single most important task (see chapter six).

Why then, is area coverage important? What is the argument? In order for the Commission’s initiatives to be adopted by the Council, member state governments have the final say. If a consulted interest organisation has anchored the proposal from the Commission in its respective national member organisations, who in turn have lobbied their national governments and on top of that, if the lobbying activities have targeted all EU member state governments, then the Commission proposal is more likely to be adopted by the Council. The EWL is particularly well equipped to manage this kind of multi-level, multi-timed lobbying (see chapter seven and eight). The Council would already have been extensively lobbied by the national member co-ordinations. The member state level organisations already know the policy since they were consulted on it, and the grass roots at national level know the national level, since it is where they mainly operate.

The EWL membership

The European Women’s Lobby prioritises having a large membership base and considers spreading information and informing the national level co-ordinations about EU policy or activities as one of their main tasks (Gréboval, interview December 10, 2004). In fact, EWL’s informative function and responsibility towards the grassroots in this regard was one of the first principles the lobby could agree upon when it was founded (see chapter eight). The EWL is able to mobilise women and women’s interests by being a resource and information service (through telephone, email, web site, news bulletins, press releases) available to all. On the one hand, members are briefed on EU policy and legislation and on the other hand, analysis of policy and legislation are sent to the Parliament, the Commission and to national governments. This meets several of the Commission’s requirements. The information sent to EWL’s members ensures that EU
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The European Women’s Lobby has national co-ordinations in all EU member states, and in three states outside of the EU. In 2005, the European Women’s Lobby had more than 3000 member organisations spread over all EU member states. According to former Secretary General as well as a policy co-ordinator at the staff at the Brussels secretariat a large membership base is the strength of the European Women’s Lobby. Former European Women’s Lobby Secretary General Barbara Helfferich especially highlights the spread in membership base of the European Women’s Lobby as the main reason for their successful lobbying campaigns. Helfferich claims that the fact that the European Women’s Lobby at the time had member organisations in all EU member states allowed the European Women’s Lobby to put fundamental pressure on the national governments and simultaneously lobbying the Commission and the Parliament. By doing this, information and pressure were delivered from three different directions: the Council via national organisations lobbying national ministries and governments, the Commission directly via the Brussels based section of the European Women’s Lobby, and the Parliament through national organisations lobbying individual members of the European Parliament.

**EWL structure: accountability and authority**

A representative civil society organisation must provide for mechanisms where the elected can be held accountable by its members. Internal structures of an interest organisation must be clear and responsibility and authority must be defined.

The authority to act in the name of a specific interest organisation is, in one way or the other, given by the members of the interest organisation. In one sense, the meaning implies the existence of a community or a group organised by some kind of hierarchy as well as the widespread acceptance of that hierarchy. This requires internally established mechanisms through which authority to act can be given. Authority to act within organisations can be given by members at a General Assembly, via pure membership and ‘tacit consent’, or in a multitude of ways.

The Board and the Executive of the EWL are formally held accountable through the General Assembly. At every second General Assembly, the EWL President, Executive and Board are elected by representatives from each national
umbrella organisation. Every two years, then, there is a formal procedure within the EWL where the President, Executive and Board are being held accountable for the actions undertaken during the previous two years.

Authority is given by national co-ordinations and European wide organisations members at the same the General Assembly. The important feature here is that the organisation, via the authority to act at European level, can be considered having mandate to represent its members’ wants, needs and interests. When consulting a wide range of interest organisations with the authority to represent their members when acting on the EU level, decisions made on the basis of the consultation are obviously far more likely to be seen as legitimate and democratic than when decisions have been made after consulting organisations that lack their members consent to represent them. In the case of the European Women’s Lobby, as in national political systems, authority is formally given at the General Assembly and via the election of a Secretary General and a President of the umbrella organisation. The structure and statutes of the European Women’s Lobby guarantee, as we have seen, the representatives authority to act and represent on behalf of the members (see chapter six).

8.4.3 Interests

Representative interest organisations should represent general concerns that tally with the interest of European society and they should consist of bodies that are recognised at member state level as representatives of particular interests (EESC, 2001: 6).

Not all interests can be legitimately represented, or so it seems. They have to either be in tune with the interests of the political authorities or be generally accepted as in line with the EU’s general interests. The interest criteria ensure that EU interest organisations are in tune with the general interests of the EU, mainly in tune with the policies of the EU as an institutional political system. As such, the consequences of the criteria offer opportunities of more efficient integration and provide popular support for the system. Is gender equality in the interests of the European society? This is a contested issue, to say the least. However, the EU has decided that it is. Gender equality or equality between women and men has been an objective of the EU since the Treaty of Amsterdam (article 2 and 3). Equal pay was written in the EC Treaty establishing the European Economic Community in 1957. In the 2001-2005 Community strategy launched by the
Commission an action framework within which all Community activities could contribute to the objective of abolishing inequalities and promoting equality between women and men was established. In the Treaty of Amsterdam, the promotion of gender equality was included as one of the tasks of the Community as set out in Article 2 of the EC Treaty. The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union states: “Equality between men and women must be ensured in all areas, including employment, work and pay” (European Commission, 2000b). Equality is to be achieved via gender mainstreaming and the Gender Institute was set up in 2008 as a means to the mainstreaming end. Gender equality has been used by the Commission as a method for more integration and expansion of Commission competencies (Greenwood, 2004). Thus, it would be hard to argue that gender equality should not be seen as a concern in tune with the interests of the European society. Further, the European Women’s Lobby’s policy portfolio matches the European Commission, or perhaps: the European Commission’s gender equality portfolio matches the EWL’s. Even though the development of EWL policy over the past decade has included an expansion of policy areas, women in decision-making and employment and social policy remain core policy areas (see chapter seven).

Output: Integration and implementation

To consult organised interests that are recognised as the representative of a particular interest potentially guarantees legitimacy of Commission legislation proposals, and efficiency in the decision-making and implementation processes. The Commission, reluctant to incorporate the criteria literally, reframes into a matter of accountability of civil society interest organisations and efficiency of policy-implementation (European Commission, 2001a). The criteria in itself could be explored in terms of common sense: if the national members of an EU level interest organisation are non-representative of a particular interest, how could the EU level confederation or umbrella organisation be representative of that same inter-

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167 The Institute for Gender Equality has as its mission to support the EU institutions and the member states by combating discrimination and supporting/promoting equality between the sexes. More specifically, the aims of the Institute were decided to be to “stimulate research and exchanges of experience by organising meetings between policymakers, experts and stakeholders and it will raise awareness of gender equality policies with events including conferences, campaigns and seminars. Another vital task will be to develop tools for supporting the integration of gender equality into all Community policies” (European Commission, 2005e). The announcement to establish the Gender Institute was made on March 8, 2005.
Integration in the European Union can both be a matter of widened integration or deepened integration where legal competence is being transferred from national levels to EU level. Integration in this respect means that the power of the Commission increases. If it is the intention of the Commission to increase its own powers and legal competence, national member organisations are needed to lobby at national level and representative national level interest organisations are far more likely to exercise influence at national level than non-representative organisations. Integration, and hence the increase of Commission powers, via national interest organisations as interpreted here, helps explain the extended provisions on EU equality competencies at the Treaty of Amsterdam (see criterion three). In the case of the latter, the Commission’s strategy has been to, for example, initiate and fund a conference on a policy area which the EU member states find politically hard to resist (equality, for instance). The conference then leads to the materialisation of an interest group which in turn is funded by the Commission until the interest group’s own national members can lobby their respective national governments without the support of the Commission. In this way, integration deepens and the EU policy competences widens through the help of organisations that are strong enough to claim representativeness on national level. As it is, European interest organisations and non-governmental organisations contribute to the formation of such a European wide public opinion by operating on both national and European levels. Such a European wide opinion, or European wide public, is according to former Commission president Romano Prodi “[s]een as a prerequisite to the establishment of a true European entity” (European Commission, 2000c: 5). A second example of the Commission is funding conferences for the greater benefit of European interests is the EWL three day seminar “capacity building for women’s NGOs in view of EU enlargement.” The purpose was to increase accession countries non-governmental organisations’ understanding of EU gender equality policy (EWL, 2003f). Put somewhat differently, the purpose was to educate women’s organisations that would later on form national coordinations to join the EWL about the interests of the EU.

When it comes to implementation, there are no EU implementing authorities. Even though the Commission is responsible for the follow up on member states’ implementation, the responsibility to implement EU legislation falls on national governments. The Commission’s legal responsibility is to make sure that the member states transpose and implement as decided, not to carry out the actual
implementation. Therefore, having national civil society organisations that are recognised at national level, contributing to policy-making and also helping in implementing policies is a great advantage. A rationale for the cooperation between institutions and civil society or non-governmental organisations lies partly in that the organisations (when structured in a specific way) can be used in order to contribute to European integration (European Commission, 2000c) and “to strengthen a sense of European citizenship, now lacking” (Warleigh, 2001). In other words, the Commission needs interest organisations to be recognised at national level to deepen and widen integration, integration meaning expanding its own powers and increasing support for its policies.

The national members of the European Women’s Lobby are national co-ordinations of women’s organisations. The national and European umbrella organisations are membership based with their own internal structure and procedures of decision-making. The EWL statutes, however, require that the national co-ordinations are representative of a wide range of women’s interest at national level. As such, they are recognised by the European Women’s Lobby and national levels as representatives of women’s interests. The entire EWL process surrounding membership applications and acceptance functions as a guarantor of the national co-ordinations representativeness. The national co-ordinations have to demonstrate that they are in fact representative of women’s interests in the member state which they represent. As we have seen, representativeness is not only a criterion to be admitted as members, but it is regularly followed up on by the EWL membership committee, and organisations not fulfilling the criteria have been omitted from the membership (see chapter six).

8.4.4 Transparency

*Representative interest organisations should be independent and mandatory, not bound by instructions from outside bodies* (EESC, 2001: 6).

Both the White paper on Governance and the Transparency Green paper underline the importance of transparency and openness (EC, 2001a: 2006d). In the European Economic and Social Committee’s version, representative interest organisations should be transparent, especially financially, and in its decision-making structures and they should be independent and mandatory, not bound by instructions from outside bodies (EESC, 2001: 6).
To be independent offers some problem in regards to the Commission's *modus operandi* in general. The Commission itself is responsible for setting up a number of organisations with which it later consults. The Commission also funds a substantial number of interest organisations. As for the European Women's Lobby, 80% of their budget is received from the Commission, a circumstance which might be described as, at the very least, problematic; it may not always be wise to bite the hand that feeds you. Further, the European Women's Lobby's annual work programme, decided on by the General Assembly, must be approved by the Commission. In what way the European Women's Lobby is circumscribed by their financial involvement with the Commission is discussed elsewhere, but it is worth noting that financing organisations with which it consults is not regarded as a problem in the eyes of the Commission. For the Commission, the funding is rather a way to make sure that the organisations are not bound by instructions from bodies outside the Commission. In the Commission communication “Towards a Reinforced Culture of Consultation and Dialogue-General principles and minimum standards for consultation of interested parties by the Commission” (European Commission, 2002) transparency and the independence of interested parties is stated as a main objective that should apply to the organisations seeking consultation. However, financial independence strikes differently at corporate and business interests compared to non-governmental organisations and civil society organisations. When business interests are financially strong, civil society organisations are (traditionally) financially weak. The Commission funding is a way to balance the financial power between business and non-governmental organisations. It is not the potential influence from the Commission that is the rationale behind the criterion. The fear is other interests. What is intended by the free from influence of outside bodies are the professional lobbies of business and industry. Non-governmental organisations and think tanks in the EU all play a key role in policy-making. The European Commission supports the development of such organisations in order to assure a balanced counterweight to the interests of powerful industrial lobbies (see EurActive, 2001: 2).

EU business groups, such as the Union des Industries de la Communauté Européenne, self proclaimed as the “Business Voice in Europe” (UNICE, 2006) have actively supported a wide range of criteria for interest groups to meet, including restrictions in Commission funding and requirements for the independence of interest organisations. Independence in funding has also been endorsed by the European Parliament. Historically, the civil society interest sector has been weak in seeking sources of funding from outside of the EU institutions. The main requirement, which offers a problem for interest organisations, is that in order to
receive a certain percentage of funding from the Commission the organisation must raise the remaining percentage from elsewhere. Otherwise, the Commission funding is withdrawn. The Commission funds the European Women’s Lobby with approximately 80% of the European Women’s Lobby’s annual budget. The European Women’s Lobby must show on record how the remaining 20% percent are to be raised, and if they cannot do this successfully, the Commission withdraws parts of its initial funding. The European Women’s Lobby can therefore not adjust their expenses after the amount received from the Commission.

The agenda of restrictions in funding, expressed in terms of independence, originates from the business interests dominant in the European Economic and Social Committee. The European Economic and Social Committee has historically seen itself as a kind of institutional outlet for organised civil society on EU policy-making, as well as for dialogue and mediation between civil society interests and EU policy-making (2001: art 4.1). Its Article 257 states that the European Economic and Social Committee “shall consist of representatives of the various economic and social components of organised civil society” (2001: art 257). The institution is certainly a potential arena for mediation between different civil society interests, but so far the European Economic and Social Committee has until recently been limited by its un-willingness to reform and thereby its inability to actually include citizen interests within its institutional structures. Several commentators claim that the European Economic and Social Committee remains dominated by producer interest (EESC, 2006; see also Greenwood, 2004; Hull 2003). It is therefore no surprise that the initiative of stricter criteria of representativeness and the proposals of limitations in Commission funding of interest organisations come from the European Economic and Social Committee.

The secretariat of the European Women’s Lobby has repeatedly expressed the difficulty in raising funds from independent sources outside of the EU institutions. The problem, as expressed by Cecile Gréboval of the secretariat, is that the financing issue often out-shadows the practical work that the European Women’s Lobby is to carry out. Moreover, when time and resources are scarce and these two are put on raising funds rather than on lobbying and campaigning, the European Women’s Lobby cannot perform the task they are financed to do in the first place (Gréboval, interview December 10, 2004). When advertising for a new policy officer in 2009, the job description included the capacity to raise funds as a main requirement.

When it comes to that representative interest organisations must not be bound by instructions from outside bodies, the European Women’s Lobby aims at fulfilling this by not allowing direct political party membership, something which prior
to the 2001 White Paper on Governance was allowed. Women’s sections of political parties have previously been members of the European Women’s Lobby. Not to be bound by instructions therefore raises some problems since it prevents some organisations from being members and since it causes problems in terms of raising funds for the European Women’s Lobby. Firstly, having a large membership base is a strength in other regards: to represent four thousand organisations makes a heavier argument than to represent four organisations. Secondly, the term ‘outside bodies’ is not further defined. What constitutes an outside and an inside body? The very purpose of an open membership of European Women’s Lobby as an umbrella organisation is to extract and aggregate interests from outside bodies, that they must be members cannot be the motive behind this criterion. It seems that what this criterion includes is the exclusion of professional lobbies. An interest organisation or confederation of interest organisations should thus represent itself rather than letting a professional lobby firm represent their interests.

**Participation in exchange for transparency**

The Commission itself has been widely criticised for being a closed, non-transparent policy-making institution. In an effort to meet the criticism and to overcome it as well, several Communications on openness and transparency have been published and adopted by the Commission and the other two main EU institutions (Council and Parliament). Openness has come to be regarded as important in terms of credibility, without transparency and open communication processes, the processes of administration, policy-making and decision-making lack credibility and democratic foundation. From this follows that the consulted parties in the consultation process must also operate in an environment characterised by openness and transparency. The public must have the opportunity to inform itself on which parties that are involved in the consultation processes and how these parties conduct themselves. It must therefore, at the very least, be apparent which interests the consulted organisations represent and how inclusive that representation is. Any interested party that wishes to submit comments on a policy proposal by the Commission must therefore be ready to provide the Commission and the public at large with the information described above. This information is made available either through the CONECCS database (where organisations that are eligible for this database and wish to be included on a voluntary basis are in-
The European Women’s Lobby is included in the CONECCS database and keeps an open directory over member organisations, their websites, their contact persons and telephone numbers and addresses. This was not the case until late 2005, after the Commission decided to implement standards and criteria for increasing the representativeness of civil society interest organisations eligible for consultation. Prior to 2005, there was no member register at the European Women’s Lobby website, apart from a listing of national co-ordinations, or rather a listing of in what countries the EWL had member organisations. Today, the EWL website includes information on European Women’s Lobby decision-making procedures and the relation between member organisations and the board of European Women’s Lobby. All in all, the information on finances, funding and the decision-making structures of the European Women’s Lobby is accessible to anyone interested in searching for the information. During the course of 2003-2009 the website has become more and more informative on European Women’s Lobby activities, structure, policies, activities and decision-making procedures. The number of staff and the number of members elected to the Board have steadily grown and a full time web administrator has been employed.

The Commission White Paper on Governance includes a promise for more participation of interest organisations in return for more transparency of the decision-making structures of the organisation. One could argue that the Commission, under the pretext of transparency demands on an organisation, has in fact given itself the opportunity to interfere with the internal structure of an organisation (Code of conduct, European Commission, 2008d; see chapter six). For instance, organisations with an internal structure of decision-making based on central steering can coordinate and organise themselves faster and be more efficient on a particular issue than compared to organisations lacking this internal organisation characteristic, which gives the former the upper hand. This demand, or criterion, is one of the more challenging ones, both in practice for the civil society

168 To be eligible, or ‘qualified’ in this sense, an organisation must be a non-profit representative body organised at European level, 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, either for insertion on the database or in support of its request for inclusion (European Commission, 2002).
organisations, but also in terms of democracy. Without transparency, input legitimacy may be based solely upon elite groups and elite civic participation.

Financial openness is important in several respects. With respect to democratic concerns, financial resources alongside other resources such as knowledge, time, and networks need to be managed and made transparent in a way that does not contradict equal opportunities to access of policy-makers. In reality, this cannot be controlled. In contrast to a democratic political system in a narrow sense, where one man/women equals one voice is the defining characteristic, lobbying provides quite another relation; namely that of more resources giving a stronger voice which in turn gives stronger possibilities of influence.

8.5 Summary and discussion

Consultation, formal as well as informal, with civil society interest organisations is vital to the European Commission. Therefore, the formation, financing and maintenance of civil society interest organisations such as the European Women’s Lobby are fundamental. Organised interests are, in some respects, the only constituency available to the EU supranational institution. They provide input to the system, legitimise output and perform a feedback function between the European people and the EU institutions. They act as gatekeepers of national level organised interests.

For the legitimacy of policy and policy-making, interactions with organised interests are critical to the European Commission. The Commission has perceived interest organisations as mediators between the EU and the European citizens. Interest organisations help resolve the problem of EU structural remoteness from EU citizens and fill a politically created public space at European level. Ideally, EU level organised interests legitimise EU decision-making on the input side by representing an aggregation of organised interests throughout Europe and they assist in policy output by and through their membership anchoring EU decisions at member state level. To have the capacity to perform both the input and output function, to legitimise Commission decision-making, interest organisations must be organised in a specific way. This is, I argue, why the criteria of representativeness look like they do.

Interest organisations and their institutionalised relation to the European Commission represent a corporatist policy-making style. As such, the relation represents a recognisable form of political interaction between organised interests and authoritative politics and decision-makers. The legitimacy derived from the
institutionalisation of civil society interest organisations not only benefits the Commission; it benefits the organisations by allowing them a political platform from which to act as a social and political interest group. They get to be among those making the decisions. There is however no guarantee that to be among, to have presence, leads to a controlling presence. Further, having this presence, this platform from which to act as organised interests, comes with a price. Interest organisations wanting a piece of the cake, or rather wanting to make an impact on the cake and how it is cut into pieces, are limited by the constraints set by the Commission. These constraints include, more than anything, the very form and structure of the organisations representing organised interests.

**Why those criteria, how the European Women’s Lobby and where women’s interests?**

An important conclusion drawn from this study is that an interest organisation hardly can adjust and fulfil all of the criteria as suggested by the Economic and Social Committee. First, the criteria are not always clear-cut, second they include demands for resources scarcely found among civil society interest organisations, and thirdly they opt for a long-term commitment to future existence, which any interest organisation cannot simply make. Moreover, business and corporate interests with financial resources of their own will benefit more from the criteria of representativeness than the European civil society interest organisations, since representativeness is resource demanding and exclusive. The European Women’s Lobby, aiming at inclusive membership and representation of women’s interest throughout Europe, adopt, adapt to, and contradict the picture of EU representativeness. As a civil society organisation, their resources are remarkably large. The organisation collects a wide variety of interests and ‘boils’ these down into one single umbrella association, fitting neatly into the organisational structure of interest organisations and interests represented as preferred by the Commission.

Perhaps the question to ask should be: which qualities of the represented are important enough to be represented and how is such decision of representativeness made – what are the principles ‘guiding’ or determining the criteria of representativeness?

To exist permanently at Community level is a question of participation, fostering civil society organisations and in the end: efficiency. Community level existence enables rapid consultation, easy access from both the Commission and the interest organisation in question, and the ability to endure, that is, long term existence. Once an organisation or confederation of organisations has established itself in Brussels, chances are that they will remain in the EU policy-making proc-
Community level existence is also a way of fostering civil society organisations into confederations in a way so that the Commission can deal with one representative confederation/umbrella organisation rather than with 200 disparate ‘special interests’ national interest organisations. For the European Women’s lobby to be able to unite the heterogeneous group of European women is certainly a resource saver for the Commission. Understood in this way, the criteria that representative interest organisations should comprise of member organisations in most of the EU member states; have authority to represent and act at European level; and provide for accountability to its members are also criteria dealing with the structure of organisations which in turn can be explained by the Commissions preferences in dealing with one peak organisation rather than many interest organisations. Legitimacy in this sense means that the initiatives coming from the Commission have, via wide consultations with representative interest organisations, been anchored in the opinions and interests of the European wide public. Interest organisations work as input by legitimating European policy, and on the output side by implementing EU policy. It is effective in the very same way, that is, by implementing policies with the help of interest organisations that have already been on the inside, that have been a part of the consultation procedures. The participation will, still, further empower the non-governmental organisations and civil society interest organisation that are already participating in regular contacts with the Commission and hence further marginalise ‘alternative interests’. While the criteria empower the European Women’s lobby, they marginalise interests not represented or put forward via the European Women’s Lobby. The criterion of having members in most of the European Union member states is not a guarantee of widespread interests. As seen with the process of proposing, amending and adopting motions at the General Assembly, radical demands can be put forward by member organisations, but some demands will become moderated and filtered as they make their way through the decision-making process.

To provide direct access to its members’ expertise and enhance rapid and constructive consultation is interpreted as an efficiency criterion. Time, money and other resources are scarce, and by guaranteeing rapid input from experts and non-governmental organisations, the ideal of quick consultation processes can be obtained (some consultations are only open for a period of eight weeks). It seems that there is also a tendency of fostering civil society interest organisations. In the Codes of Conduct and in the White Paper on Governance, interest organisations
are promised more participation if they are structured in accordance with the idea that a representative civil society organisation should provide direct access to its members’ expertise. It also becomes apparent how the EU relies on interest organisations for the ‘Europeanising’ of civil society, for policy-making and for implementing EU projects.

The incentives to outlining criteria of representativeness at the EU level can, in short, be summed up as a quest for organisational participation, accountability, legitimacy and fostering civil society organisations. Efficiency is a rationale as well. These underlying principles answer the initial question posed in this chapter: in what way does the EU force certain specific structures of interest organisations by developing specific conditions for representation? The EU forces the structure of civil society interests through the principles of accountability and efficiency, and by sidestepping representative/electoral democracy. In the Commission’s publications (2001a; 2006b; 2008d) the basis for legitimacy lies in consulting a specific kind of organised interests, preferably large membership-based civil society organisations in general, and accountable, transparent, EU wide, geographically diverse organisations that represent an interest or interests of general concern in particular. The Commission thus seems to allocate a different kind of representation, namely that of representative associations/organisations, which runs and develops outside, or perhaps parallel to, representative/electoral democracy. The relationship between these two models is not clear: they run parallel and operate in different parts of the same system. While citizen participation takes place within the system of representative democracy of the European Parliament, participation by representative organisations develop outside the system of representative democracy. Representative organisations belong to quite another type of representation than representative democracy and/or citizen participation through representation; the former are not elected.

The liberal electoral notion of representation as we know it, in which interest representation consists of an aggregate of individual citizens interests, can not be found in the relation between the Commission and civil society organisations. This relation is best described as a model influenced by corporatist features. The basic unit is not aggregated individual interests, but organised interests. Organisations consult, negotiate and co-operate with the European Commission, and this model runs parallel to that of the liberal electoral which is the predominant model in the European Parliament. It also runs parallel to a model where legitimacy is derived from representing member states, the model which is the basis of the Council. There are, then, three different and contrasting models of representation and legitimacy to be found within the European Union. For the corporatist
one to have political legitimacy there needs to be, firstly, an environment of organised interest to do the bargaining and secondly there needs to be a guarantee that those organised interests are in fact representative of its members and of its members’ interests. This gives legitimacy to the Commission’s decision-making. This is the explanation for why the Commission has accepted a structured set of criteria for when, which and how to consult civil society interest organisations. This is why the European Women’s Lobby adopts and adjusts to the criteria of representativeness.

PART IV
WRAPPING IT UP AND MOVING FORWARD
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WRAPPING IT UP AND MOVING FORWARD
CONCLUSIONS

9.1 Summary

On a general level this thesis concerns the changed and changing institutional conditions for gender equality in Europe and the organisation and institutionalisation of women's social and political interests at the EU level. The questions I have asked deal with the ways in which political structures and authorities enable and/or obstruct women to generate, sustain and control their presence in politics as women. More specifically, the thesis has addressed the present and changing conditions for women to organise and act politically on the supra-state level of the European Union. The focus has been women's civil societal organising and the organising of women's interests in and by the EU. The overall questions explored have been: How and why are women increasingly organising on the EU level? How and why has the EU provided opportunities and constraints to facilitate women's civil society organising and the promotion of women's interests? I have explored how EU institutions, such as the European Commission and the legal remit of the EU, have structured and provided opportunities for women to mobilise and organise to act as an authorised party vis-a-vis and within the EU system. I have also asked how the very same institutions have provided constraints for the organisation and representation of women's organised interests. I have studied the structure of the European Women's Lobby, the participation of the EWL in EU politics, the relation between the EWL and the EU institutions; the relation between the EWL's member organisations; and the forms the representation of women's organised social and political interests at EU level can take.

At a first glance, the conclusions appear simple: women are increasingly organised at the EU level because women, just as men, want their political and social interests represented and the form of organising is influenced by the specific character of the EU political system which requires both the input and output of organised interests. Women have organised in ways that, under the given conditions of institutional constraints, have emerged as the most strategic in order to gain influence. But how does it come that women, as a collective, are not only recognised as a politically relevant group in society but also legitimised, or given a legitimate basis, to act and be present as women in an organised relationship with the EU system's main authorities? This would be somewhat of an anomaly in the member states.
9 CONCLUSIONS

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On a general level this thesis concerns the changed and changing institutional conditions for gender equality in Europe and the organisation and institutionalisation of women’s social and political interests at the EU level. The questions I have asked deal with the ways in which political structures and authorities enable and/or obstruct women to generate, sustain and control their presence in politics as women. More specifically, the thesis has addressed the present and changing conditions for women to organise and act politically on the supra-state level of the European Union. The focus has been women’s civil societal organising and the organising of women’s interests in and by the EU. The overall questions explored have been: How and why are women increasingly organising on the EU level? How and why has the EU provided opportunities and constraints to facilitate women’s civil society organising and the promotion of women’s interests? I have explored how EU institutions, such as the European Commission and the legal remit of the EU, have structured and provided opportunities for women to mobilise and organise to act as an authorised party vis-a-vis and within the EU system. I have also asked how the very same institutions have provided constraints for the organisation and representation of women’s organised interests.

I have studied the structure of the European Women’s Lobby, the participation of the EWL in EU politics, the relation between the EWL and the EU institutions; the relation between the EWL’s member organisations; and the forms the representation of women’s organised social and political interests at EU level can take. At a first glance, the conclusions appear simple: women are increasingly organised at the EU level because women, just as men, want their political and social interests represented and the form of organising is influenced by the specific character of the EU political system which requires both the input and output of organised interests. Women have organised in ways that, under the given conditions of institutional constraints, have emerged as the most strategic in order to gain influence. But how does it come that women, as a collective, are not only recognised as a politically relevant group in society but also legitimised, or given a legitimate basis, to act and be present as women in an organised relationship with the EU system’s main authorities? This would be somewhat of an anomaly in the member states.
To move on and deal with this more complicated question, I have firstly studied what the specificities of the EU political system are; specificities that open up for certain constraints and certain forms of interest representation. I have discussed the EU as a specific kind of political system and politico-institutional context in which the European Women’s Lobby has been set up and in which the organisation exists. The aim of chapter two was to describe the power distribution within, and the structure of, the EU as to enable an analysis of the ways in which the specific form of EU governance provides opportunities and constraints for women to act and organise in order to pursue their social and political interests. The chapter describes the distribution of power within the EU and analyses what kind of polity the EU is. My answer is that the EU polity is both similar to and different from traditional western electoral democratic polities. The main three EU decision-making institutions rest on different bases of legitimacy. More specially, the Commission operates through managerial politico-economic principles, technocratic efficiency and corporatist features of policy-making, where policy-making is understood as both the initiation and shaping of policy. Council rests on the basis of representing the member states and the Parliament on the liberal electoral representation of individuals. On the other hand, the EU strives deliberately to gain legitimacy as a democratic polity in the eyes of its member states’ citizens. It strives to get rid of the democratic deficit criticism. The managerial procedure, by which policy-making and decision-making power is exercised, and the system by which the Commission operates, have extensive consequences from the perspective of women’s interests and the organising and representation of those interests. It gives certain organised interests an opportunity to participate, but it simultaneously limits the ways in which those interests can be organised; it puts constraints on the aggregation and articulation of interests. One question is what the actual price of this system is. Corporatist policy-making arrangements have traditionally kept women out. However, the in part neo-corporatist policy-making system of the EU is in fact equipped to engage in, confront and challenge the under-representation of women in EU policy-making at large.

I have argued that in this specific political system, organised interests in civil society and the EWL perform the functions of input, output and feedback to the Commission and between the Commission and the member state level grassroots. Organised interests function as intermediaries between the levels. The Commission, as a political authority, strives to gain legitimacy of its policy-making through the input and output of representative organised interests. The representativeness of organised interests is key; there is no electoral basis legitimising the
The corporatist policy-making system of the EU is in fact equipped to engage in, confront and challenge the under-representation of women in EU policy-making at large. The chapter describes the distribution of power within the EU and analyses which the specific form of EU governance provides opportunities and constraints for certain constraints and certain forms of interest representation. I have discussed the EU as a specific kind of political system and politico-institutional conceptions from the perspective of women's interests and the organising and representation within, and the structure of, the EU as to enable an analysis of the ways in which those interests assume an either or understanding of interests. Women have an interest in being among those making the decisions. Looking at the form that women's interest representation can take, the internal institutional developments of the EU have offered an opportunity for women in civil society to organise to pursue their political, social and economic interests, that is, to enable the creation of a site, a platform, of organised interests from which a controlling presence seems to have developed. By examining the formation and form of EU women's organisations in civil society in parallel with the developments of gender equality policy and institutional changes in the EU, two arguments are developed. Firstly, the mobilisation of women's interests through organisations and lobbies up until and in the 1990s could be explained and should be understood in terms of political opportunity structures provided by the EU and in terms of the interaction between institutions and interests. Secondly, the potential of the EU to challenge and transform gender relations is more far reaching than usually assumed. This second argument concerns both the structure of the EU and the nature of EU gender equality policy where I withhold that the EU has been a progressive force in advancing gender equality in policy domains beyond the economic domain. The EU has advanced gender equality by offering the support to create, by financing and by sustaining a platform from which women can pursue their social and political interests. Second, the EU has been a progressive force in the way in which the specific form of EU governance provides opportunities and constraints for certain constraints and certain forms of interest representation. I have discussed the EU as a specific kind of political system and politico-institutional conceptions from the perspective of women's interests and the organising and representation.
which institutions and directives, not necessarily having had gender equality beyond the domain of employment as a target, have in fact had a spill over effect into other domains of women’s lives. Thirdly, by incorporating demands articulated by women’s organised interests into EU policy on gender equality; and fourthly, the EU has been a progressive force in the advancement of gender equality by not only funding the EWL, but by funding women’s organisations predominantly active in policy domains outside the EU legal remit. The EWL, and its institutionalised relation with the Commission, is this platform.

Women and women’s organisations were active on the EU level prior to the founding of the EWL, but none of them managed to create and sustain such a platform. They were either to weakly organised, had to few members, too poor resources or did not match the decision-making structure of the EU. The EWL is the first single and unified EU level women’s organisation representing women’s interests that has managed to sustain its presence in EU level politics. The structure of the EWL is, I argue, of particular importance as an explanatory variable of this sustained presence. The EWL can be distinguished from many of the previously formed women’s groups, networks and organisations by being a formally organised, supranational and sub-national level, institutionalised and a comparatively hierarchal women’s organisation with member organisations in all EU member states. Its membership base and structure; the formal process of aggregating demands and preferences; the paid staff; the membership monitoring and application process; and the capacity to coordinate simultaneous multi-level lobbying campaigns are of particular importance for the explanations of EWL’s position in the EU. The EWL can further be distinguished by the fact that the Commission is sustaining the EWL, both financially and through public support. The sustained existence of the EWL is explained by its capacity to respond to the preferences of the political authorities in the EU polity; by its contributions to the policy-making process; by its organisational form; by its resources and by the support offered by the Commission. The resources of the EWL include its secretariat in Brussels; the knowledge and expertise of the multi-lingual staff; its wide membership base; its decision-making structure; its General Assembly; and the longevity of the EWL.

I have asked what the EWL actually does, how the EWL does it, and why the EWL does what it does. Policy areas, lobbying campaigns and the potential impact on the Commission Roadmap on gender equality have been studied and the policy areas prioritised by the EWL identified. Though there are many policy areas, I have focused on three: gender equality policies and legislation; women in decision-making; and violence against women. The study of gender equality poli-
cies and legislation shows the professionalization and expertise of the EWL and its impact on EU policy. The analysis of the second policy area, women in decision-making, shows the lobbying strategies of the EWL; its capacity to multi-level, multi-institutional coordinated campaigns; and its capacity to involve commissioners, parliamentarians, academics, trade union leaders and national level political leaders in lobbying actions. It also shows the range of channels the EWL utilises when launching a lobbying campaign. The study of the third area, violence against women, shows the EWL strategies and capacities to develop additional platforms and networks from which to act politically and gather knowledge and expertise from the national levels in policy areas beyond the economic domain. Here, I maintain that the EWL has an impact on women's political interests as it constitutes a uniquely developed and sustained platform for women to act on the EU level and that the EWL constantly develops and expands this platform further, into policy areas traditionally regarded as women's interests but not covered by the EU legal remit. The explanations provided include the capacity of the EWL to develop contacts with the political authorities, its membership, and the resources of the EWL. In part, the EWL has successfully managed to frame problems and objectives in a way that can be, and have been, picked up and incorporated by the Commission.

Are those framings and demands picked up because they are moderated enough to be picked up? Are there radical demands that are moderated or filtered by the leaders? My analysis shows that this is not the case. Demands are filtered, but not by the EWL leaders or staff but by the members themselves. However, although many demands made by the member organisations can be quite mainstream, there are examples of radical demands as well. The mechanism of moderation is inherent in the process of adopting motions at the General Assembly.

In the penultimate chapter, I analysed the basis of legitimacy of European Commission decision-making from the perspective of the representativeness of civil society organisations; and the way in which the EWL adapts and adjusts to the conditions of representativeness developed by the EU institutions. Here, some of the concrete opportunities and constraints are made explicitly visible. By using the set of criteria of representativeness outlined by the Economic and Social Committee and clustered by the Commissions White Paper on Governance I analysed in what way the EWL fits into a corporatist model of interest representation where organised interests must somehow be representative of its members. I examined the way the corporatist arrangement between the European Commission and organised interests puts demands on the representativeness of the organisations. The procedure of consultation includes a trade off where, ideally, the
Commission wins legitimacy and the organised interests win influence. Is this exchange working? Whether or not the Commission has become more legitimate is a question that needs further research, but an indication of the answer is offered here. This is when the importance of representativeness comes in. It is argued that the legitimacy of the corporatist policy-making model of the European Commission requires that the organised interests involved are somehow representative. Representativeness of those consulted, or the claim of their representativeness, whether formally or informally, increases the legitimacy of the decisions made and of those making the decisions. If the representativeness of the consulted organised interests can be used as an indicator of the Commission’s legitimacy as a policy-maker, then in the case of the EWL, which meets the criteria of representativeness, the answer is yes: the EWL increases the Commission’s legitimacy. The other part of the exchange is made visible too, the EWL gains influence both as its position as a legitimate representative of women’s interests in the EU system and through its impact on EU policy. There are however potential losses as well in the exchange. One is the consequences of the strict rules for how the EWL must be structured. Another consequence is the potential risk of a limitation of interests that can be articulated and promoted when the number of consulted organisations is limited.

The EWL is well equipped to adhere to the criteria of representativeness. The EWL has structures and mechanisms in place which makes criteria such as having members in most EU member states, transparency in decision-making, accountability, Community level presence and economic independence rather unproblematic to fulfil. The criteria do not pose a major challenge to the EWL, quite the opposite: the criteria could have been developed with the EWL as a template.

9.2 Findings

How and why have women organised on the EU level?

Women organising on the EU level is not a new phenomenon; women have organised on the level of the EU since the very beginning of the European cooperation. In particular, the European Commission has actively helped to sustain that presence by funding various women’s organisations. Those organisations include organisations active in policy fields where the EU both has and lacks a legal remit. There has been a wide variety of women’s organisations and women’s groups active on the European level, grassroots associations and feminist activists have been gathering and spreading information on the EU and men and women in
Europe. After fifty years of women’s EU level organising, there is now a fairly institutionalised and formal women’s network organised to represent women’s political and social interest in the EU policy process. What kind of organisation is this? Looking at the EWL to find some answers to the question of how women organise on the EU level suggests that the form of organising has changed. The EWL is organised as a membership based umbrella organisation. However, this form and structure of organising was contested – it met with both support and resistance. It was formed with the direct encouragement from and financial support of political actors within both the European Commission and the European Parliament. It was supported by some women’s organisations and resisted by others. One ground of resistance was the doubt that one single organisation could represent the interests of all women. Despite this hesitation, the EWL has come to be accepted as representing the political and social interests of European women. When women’s interests are debated in the institutions of the EU, those interests appear to have become the same as the interests and policy areas of the EWL. Whether or not this is good lies beyond the scope of this thesis, but it can be understood as both an opportunity and as a constraint: it is an opportunity for the EWL to enjoy something of a monopoly to formulate women’s interests and it is a constraint in that this position of the EWL simultaneously restricts other women’s organisations from having a voice on the EU level and from having access to the political authorities. Other major EU level women’s organisations have become members of the EWL. Whether or not the alternative voices would articulate interests other than those the EWL articulates is an empirical question still to be investigated.

The structure of EWL organising as compared to the women’s groups out of which the EWL was founded, is far more adapted to the multi level system of the EU. Where the EU level women’s groups preceding the EWL were limited and loosely organised, the EWL is formal, hierarchal and institutionalised. The EWL has organised in such a way to correspond to the decision-making procedures of the EU, ensuring the capacity to lobby simultaneously at multiple levels. The EWL structure with multiple level organising and co-operation between the EU level, national level and local level legitimises the EWL as an interest organisation representing the interests and preferences of women throughout the community’s member states. This way of organising is understood through the logic of influ-

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169 The chairwomen of Violence Against Women Europe, Rosa Logar, once told me that when WAVE was seeking consultation, the responsible person at the Commission told her that there was no need for the Commission to consult with WAVE: women’s interests were already represented via the EWL (Rosa Logar, February 2004).
ence. In corporatist thought, the logic of influence means that organisations will organise in a way that increases their possibility of having an impact, of having influence, on the political authorities. However, the EWL is also organised according to logic of membership, where the member organisations and the relation between the Brussels based secretariat, the leaders and the member organisation are the bulk and strength of the EWL. The balance between the two logics, the logic of influence and the logic of membership, is aimed at by combining a multi-level organisational structure, hierarchal decision-making procedures and membership rules on the one hand, and membership influence through motions and the General Assembly on the other. In the case of the EWL, the two logics are shown to be compatible and co-existing: they do not constitute a dichotomous category but exist simultaneously on a sliding continuum. The existence of the EWL has changed the way women organise on both the EU and national levels. The organisational form of the EWL has trickled down to women’s organisations on national level. As the EWL is supposed to function as an umbrella of women’s organisations in Europe, the national co-ordinations function as umbrellas for national, regional and local women’s organisations.

**What opportunities have been provided?**

The financial support of the EWL is perhaps the most obvious opportunity provided by the European Commission. So is the very support enjoyed in the establishment of the EWL in the first place in 1990. Then, as we have seen, the initiative to set up the EWL came from women within the European Commission. The support does not only take the form of financial funding, there is also an outspoken support of the EWL activities and position within the EU machinery. Commissioners have repeatedly expressed their support for the EWL, and have joined EWL campaigns and lobbying activities for gender equality in the EU. Most notably, such support has been expressed for campaigns for gender equality in decision-making institutions. The support not only gives the EWL visibility, it also assists in legitimising the position of the EWL as the representative of women’s organised interests in the EU. This position takes an institutional form as well. The consultative status in various EU advisory groups (Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities of Women and Men, High Level Group on Disabilities and the Working Group on Women in Rural Areas) is an additional form of concrete opportunity provided by the corporatist model dominating the operation of and by the European Commission. The EWL has formal consultative status with the Commission as the organisation that represents women through the Social Plat-
form; the EWL is an observer in the Commission’s Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities Between Women and Men; the EWL is represented in the Commission’s Expert Network on Women in Decision-Making; the EWL is an accredited lobbyist in the Parliament; the EWL is included in the Commission database on representative interest organisations; the EWL is listed in the Commission’s Register of interest representatives; the EWL is the group representing women in the EU Civil Society Contact Group and the EWL has formal consultative status with the Commission through its membership in the Social Platform. In addition, the EWL enjoys an informal co-operation with the Commission and the Parliament and other political actors and authorities in the EU through networking and informal contact. The consultative status of the EWL is an official recognition of the representative capacity of the EWL.

The institutional changes within the EU are a different kind of opportunity. Here, it is argued that even though institutions were not necessarily created to promote women’s interests or gender equality, some have in fact been used to do so. Article 119 in the Treaty of Rome had the purpose to correct market distortions between the EU member states, but led to the mobilisation and organising of women to push for the right of equal pay between women and men within member states. Here, women organised on EU level and used the European Court of Justice to surpass and push for change on the national level. The Single European Act, which transferred power and legal competence from national level to EU level, is a second institution which opened up for the organisation of women’s interests at EU level. It was not until the implementation of the European Single market that women formally mobilised into one single EU wide women’s organisation on EU level. The legal remit of the EU, or perhaps the lack thereof, is a third institution that has offered a specific opportunity and constraint for women to organise. The fact that the Commission cannot initiate legally binding measures in certain areas due to the restriction of the EU’s legal remit leads the Commission to fund interest organisations in civil society to push those issues forward. In particular, violence against women is such a policy area. It is, however, not the only policy area where soft law measures have been used by the Commission and civil society organisations such as the EWL to promote women’s societal interests. By mapping the main EU level women’s organisations and by asking how they are funded, what activities they pursue, and what their priorities are, it is shown that some of the main recognised EU level women’s organisations are in fact engaged in domains outside of the EU legal remit. Some of them are funded with this precise purpose. It may of course be argued that this opportunity is equally a constraint. This has been argued in the context of the EU and the
Commission seen as toothless in any policy area beyond employment and the labour market. This is not necessarily false, there are, as we have seen, many studies coming to this conclusion. There is, however, a general tendency of some of those studies to be either limited to specific policy areas which renders the interconnectedness between policy areas invisible, or a general blindness to the form side of women’s interests. The lack of a legal remit can, somewhat paradoxically it may seem, be argued to have strengthened women’s civil society organising through EU soft law measures, funding of civil society and for example violence against women programs carried out and implemented by women’s civil society organisations in Europe.

What constraints are placed on the EWL?

I have argued that the in part corporatist decision-making system of the EU is in fact equipped to engage in, confront and challenge the under-representation of women in EU decision-making at large. Simultaneously, it places restrictions on what kinds of organisations that are let in and given the opportunity to represent the interests of their member organisations; how they can, or must, be organised; and how they must be structured. I have also argued that the way the European Commission is set up and intended to function promote a specific form of corporatist interest mediation and interest representation where the EWL has organised to meet the needs of the Commission and the interests of women.

Corporatist theory holds that organised interests seeking influence must be organised in specific ways and exert some controls over their members and their members’ demands. The organisation must be representative and be able to generate, aggregate, articulate and represent its members’ interests to the decision-making institutions. It must be able to deliver its members to the EU political authorities; this requires certain resources and a certain kind of organisational structure. It requires members in all EU member states and it requires established channels to transfer the interests of the national level member organisations first to the EU level and second to the EU decision-making institutions. It requires multiple level existence; it requires Brussels presence; and it requires mechanism for interest aggregation and articulation. The EWL is organised in a way so that it meets these requirements. It has a Brussels based secretariat with paid employees; it has the general assembly; it has the national level general assemblies; it has the processes thorough which motions are put forward, amended and adopted and it has member organisations in all EU member states and beyond. When there was no national co-ordinating women’s organisation, one was created to match the
requirements of the EWL to become the national EWL member organisation. This form of organising facilitates the mediation of demands and interests between levels. In part, I understand this very form of organising as a consequence of the corporatist model developed as a system of interest representation of the Commission in parallel to the systems of interest representation found in the Parliament and in the Council.

As a consequence of the corporatist policy-making style of the Commission, then, the EWL has become increasingly institutionalised and professionalised over the years of its existence. The trade off is that while the EWL has enjoyed support and funding from within the Commission to constitute an established EU level platform from which women can formulate, mobilise and pursue their interests at the EU level, the EWL has must organise and take control over the interests aggregated from the member state level organisations and of the form of the grassroots organisations. The very structure of the organisation can be seen as part of the price the EWL has to pay to be granted somewhat of a representative monopoly in terms of opportunities to influence EU policy-making through the various channels of consultation.

Further, the way in which representative monopolies work means that the EWL is becoming something of a political gatekeeper vis-a-vis women and women’s organisations demanding radical political change and interests that currently are not encompassed by or represented via the EWL. As such, the privileged position of the EWL in the EU system restricts and limits the representation of some women’s preferences and wants. In this capacity, the EWL can be argued to have become a gatekeeper of women’s political interest in the EU system where the gatekeeping function both includes and excludes interests.

The demands and constraints placed on the involved organised interests increase the more stress the political system is put under and the less public support the system enjoys. It was in a context of decreasing public support that the Commission published its white paper on governance with the intention of, if not popularise the Commission then at least democratise it in the view of the EU citizens. The white paper, however, somehow seems to have shifted the problem from initially being the Commission’s lack of accountability and transparency, to being the uncivilised civil society. Increased representativeness of civil society organisations was called for, as was an increased facilitation of information by civil society organisations. The EU level organised interests should take their responsibility and educate their member state level grassroots about the EU and EU policy, was the Commission’s message. The latter two calls can obviously be understood as the Commission calling for a mechanism for political socialisation of the
EU citizens by the organised interests that are somehow given a privileged position by the Commission. The Commission needs the input and output of organised interests to ensure its legitimacy, but it cannot retrieve this via elections, from voters, from individual citizens or from political parties – they do not exist in this part of the EU system. Instead, an institutionalisation of organised interests, where the latter are granted some advantages compared to other organisations in exchange for certain support is becoming increasingly visible and important. The demands, the costs, of such privileged position include that the EWL has to be open, transparent, democratic and accountable to its members. They include, in turn, that the EWL’s member organisation are open, transparent, democratic and accountable to their members.

The EWL’s annual work program is the basis of the contract with the Commission. The work program is thus the basis for funding. As such, the work program has to be approved by the Commission in order for the EWL to be able to renew its contract and to receive funding. There are two major effects of this. The first one is the problem of planning. With an annual work program and an annually approved budget and funding, long term planning is difficult. The second, and more serious, is the potential limitation of issues and interests that the EWL can promote. If the Commission has to approve the organisations work programme, and the Commission has opinions on the work program, the question is how much this restraints the EWL? Are there radical interests that cannot be pursued? Is the EWL managing, or restricting, its members and the ways in which member organisations are allowed and able to articulate and have their interests represented? These questions and conditions are part of the corporatist trade off, where the hybrid logic of corporatism structures the ways in which interests are organised, articulated and represented within the political system. If the EWL is solely focusing on gaining influence, the logic of influence suggests that the EWL will end up alienating itself from those they represent. Some demands, demands construed as too radical or demands that would not “be in tally with the general interests of the EU” (see chapter eight) would in such a case be moderated by the leaders of the EWL. There is in fact a process of demands being moderated, but the moderators are not the EWL leaders; demands are being moderated by and within the membership through the process of submitting, amending and adopting motions (see chapter six).

To be considered representative, the EWL has to represent interests that tally with the interests of the EU. Are there, then, a silencing within the organisations where some of the interests pursued on grassroots level cannot make it to the agenda of the EWL – interests that are filtered before reaching the EU level? Is the
Commission influencing the agenda of the EWL to an extent that the EWL becomes a tool of the Commission? Is the EWL, in fact, a Commission bureaucracy rather than a civil society interest organisation? Is the EWL, as some versions of corporatist theory would suggest, co-opted by the Commission? My analysis suggests that the answer is no. My answer is that despite the limitations and constraints; despite the fact that the Commission funds the EWL and despite the fact that the Commission has to approve the EWL work program, the EWL is not a Commission bureaucracy. The organisation works independently and there are examples of the EWL pushing the EU gender equality agenda forwards and expanding it rather than examples of the Commission limiting the scope of the EWL. The EWL should be understood as an incorporated, not co-opted, independent interest organisation with the potential to function as two-way pipeline facilitator of preferences, interests and demands.

It is no exaggeration to claim that the EWL offers a remarkable EU level platform for women to act and pursue their economic, social and political interests as women. This platform, which is being supported and sustained by the EU institutions, constitutes a platform from which women not only has a presence in politics, but potentially a controlling presence. As such, the very existence of the EWL can be understood as being in the interest of women.

9.3 The problem of EU legitimacy revisited

Legitimacy through shifts in decision-making power

In the last sections of the thesis, one of the questions hinted at in chapter two will be revisited, namely that of the legitimacy of the Commission’s policy-making: how do the EU and the Commission derive legitimacy? A first standard argument rests on legitimacy as derived from democratic elections. The respect for democratic principles generally involves the capacity and institutional design of a political system to hold decision-makers accountable to their constituents/the people and ensuring that the decisions made, as well as the very institutions that make them, are legitimate in their roles as decision-makers. This is when free and open elections are crucial. Members of the European Parliament are elected by the European people; the commissioners are not. The parliamentarians can thus be held accountable for their policy decisions, the commissioners cannot. The decision-makers at the policy-initiating and policy-shaping levels cannot be held accountable to the European public in a way we would expect in a western liberal democracy and the decisions made by the Commission can thereby be questioned.
on grounds of legitimacy. Due to the EU institutional structure and the complexity of EU decision-making, it is not only impossible “to throw the rascals out if voters do not like the output of policy [...] but it is almost impossible for voters even to identify the rascals who should be thrown out” (Gallagher, Laver and Mair, 2006: 148). Legitimacy in decision-making would hence increase if the decision-making power of the Parliament increased and the decision-making power of the Commission decreased.

The problem with this type of argument is that the European Parliament is not, per definition, as legitimate as argued. The EU citizens, the voters in the parliamentary elections, are never presented with alternative political party programs for the political directions of the future EU; voters are not presented with alternative sets of decision-makers to choose from; political parties do not dominate EU politics; there is no European demos/people with an identity as such and European election campaigns tend to become blurred with national level politics. Secondly, even if the voter and the system of election would indeed increase the legitimacy, the voting turnout is in itself questionably too low. Most EU citizens do not vote in the European Parliament elections. The turnout in the most recent election (2009) was 43 percent. Thirdly, not only do relatively few EU citizens vote, the voting turnout to the European Parliament is steadily decreasing. In the first public election to the Parliament in 1979 the turnout was 63 percent. The turnout ten years later had decreased to 59 percent. Another ten years later, in 1999, the turnout was 50 percent. Thirty years after the first open election to the European Parliament, the voting turnout had decreased even further: in 2009, only 43 percent of the citizens of European Union voted. Fourthly, there are significant differences between voting turnouts among the EU member states. In 2004, 91 percent of the Belgians voted whereas only 17 percent of the Slovakians did. When the European Parliament is not elected by a majority of the EU citizens it cannot be argued that it is legitimate and held accountable by the same citizens. Hence, the democratic deficit cannot be solved simply by increasing the powers of the European Parliament while decreasing the powers of the Commission.

170 In most EU member states the voting turnout lies between 30-50 percent. Luxembourg and Belgium are clear exceptions with average turnouts around 90 percent. In the 2009 election the turnout was below 30 percent in the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia and Romania (European Parliament, 2009a).
Legitimacy through transparency and accountability

A second argument as to how to increase the legitimacy of EU decision-making targets the perceived problematic institution rather than the power distribution between institutions. The identified problem is that the European Commission cannot be held accountable for its decisions as it is not possible to follow the decision-making process within the Commission. There is a lack of transparency. Even if the majority of the EU citizens do not vote to legitimise the European Parliament, the fact is that in theory they could. In theory and in its institutional design, individual members of the European Parliament can be held accountable by the European public and ousted from office; the members of the European Commission cannot. The problem identified is the lack of transparency of the European Commission. As a means to remedy the problem of lacking accountability and legitimacy, more transparency of Commission decision-making is being called for (Gallagher, Laver and Mair, 2006; Senior-Nello, 2009). Ideally, transparent decision-making processes strengthen the legitimacy of the political system by enabling citizens to hold the decision-makers accountable for the decisions made.\(^{172}\) Since the early 1990s efforts to increase EU transparency in general and transparency of the Commission in particular have been made. Access to EU documents at large, including Commission documents as well as general information on decision-making procedures and policy, have increased considerably. Simultaneously, however, public support for EU membership has decreased. Also, as noted earlier, the voting turnout in the European Parliament elections has steadily decreased since 1979. The most notable drop in turnout occurred between the elections of 1994 and 1999, in the same time period as the project to make the EU more open, accessible and transparent took off. It is thus not clear exactly why or how more transparency could increase either legitimacy or accountability of the European Commission (Naurin, 2004).

Legitimacy through organised interests

In efforts to understand the European Commission, the institution has been depicted as a kind of government or a kind of executive. It appears as if the Commission could be understood by pointing out its differences or similarities to already known and established political institutions. In its role as legislative initiator and implementer of EU legislation, the Commission is depicted as the EU government and thus criticized for not being accountable as a government in a de-

\(^{172}\) See Naurin (2004) for why more transparency will not democratize the EU.
mocratic political system should be. But the European Commission is not a government. Firstly, governments in most European countries are heavily dependent on the Parliament and can be ousted from office by the same (Switzerland being an exception). The European Commission is not heavily dependent on the European Parliament. Secondly, in many European Union member states, the members of government are also themselves members of parliament. This is not the case in the EU. The commissioners are not members of the European Parliament. Thirdly, political life in European countries is dominated by political parties, and the majority party in parliament (ideally) forms government. EU political life is not dominated by political parties and the majority party in the European Parliament does not form the Commission. The commissioners are not appointed by the majority party leader of the European Parliament.

The problem with the proposed strategies to legitimise the Commission, described above, is that the attempts to increase legitimacy and accountability of the Commission is based on a problematic conception and idea about what the Commission should be, and what the Commission is. It seems that the literature treats the Commission as if it should function as a parliament dependent government, or as some other form of already established and known national level decision-making institution. In doing so, the Commission is compared to an already known form of political decision-making institution, and then criticised for not measuring up to the democratic criteria of such institutions. Instead, the starting point and assumption should be that the Commission, and the EU as a whole, is an institution in its own right. The fact is, then, that European Commission is not intended to be accountable: it is deliberately designed in a way so that it should not be able to be held accountable to the individual voters and citizens of the EU. The Commission cannot and should not derive its legitimacy from any political community of individual voters: they do not exist. It cannot derive legitimacy from the demos: that does not exist either. It cannot derive legitimacy by opening up the institution to public scrutiny: the commissioners cannot be ousted anyway. The Commission cannot derive legitimacy by claiming to represent the European citizens: the citizens have not elected the commissioners as their representatives. Accountability and legitimacy have to be derived from elsewhere.

In consequence, the question still remains: how can the decision-making of the European Commission be made legitimate? The answer proposed in this thesis is that the legitimacy of the European Commission is derived from two other sources, namely from: the principle of efficiency and from the representation of organised interests. The sources of accountability and legitimacy in this case go beyond parliamentary representation and include a functional articulation of so-
cietal interests combined with the capacity of the EU political system as a whole to effectively deliver stability and/or welfare through economic growth. Parliamentary representation of interests on the one hand, and a functional representation and effectiveness on the other, are being combined, with various weights, in different parts of the EU polity. The functional representation of interests, expressed mainly in the form of organised civil society interests and lobbying with neo-corporatist elements within both the Civil and the Social Dialogue, can be applied to the modus operandi of the Commission. So can legitimacy through effectiveness and promotion of economic growth. The Commission can legitimise its decisions through extensive consultations with accountable, legitimately representative interest organisations. The Commission consults European civil society organisations prior to initiating legislation and the Commission funds EU civil society organisations to implement its programs. The demands on these organisations to be open, transparent, democratic and accountable to its members increase as the Commission can derive legitimacy from the organisations it consults. The Commission and its relations with civil society have developed a system of politics that operates in parallel with, rather than in opposition to, the formal representative parliamentary system. Organised interests are supported, financed and sustained because they have the potential to legitimise EU decision-making.

9.4 Moving on

There are limitations to the scope of a thesis; this thesis is no exception. In this thesis, the EWL’s structure, policy areas, activities, campaigns, motions, general assembly, decision-making processes, position in the EU system, moderation of demands, logic of organising and the relation between the EWL and the European Commission are, as far as I am aware, described and analysed simultaneously for the first time. This means that there are many more questions to ask and to be developed. I will suggest a few in two different areas. A possible third will be hinted at.

Violence

The EWL organises around violence against women. The organisation has created a separate policy centre and observatory of national experts to work on violence. In this sense, the EWL has created new platforms from which women can organise to pursue c content oriented interests. It is quite clear that that the very form
of organising has had an impact on the way women organise around issues throughout Europe. What is less clear, and as far as I know, not yet researched is what EWL has meant for combating violence against women in the EU member states? I see two different kinds of impact to investigate further. The first is the structure of civil society and the correlation to the strength of violence against women organisations’ voices in national policy making. In the UK, violence against women organisations in civil society have come together under an umbrella campaign/organisations called End Violence Against Women (EVAW), as the EVAW grew in membership, it took over the position as the main consulted women’s organisation in the area of violence against women. Previously, Women’s Aid had been the main consulted organisation. Is this a visible pattern throughout Europe? Are umbrella organisations the only way to organise to be heard in national as well as European policy-making? Is there any impact, and if so, is this impact mainly on civil society or on national policies? This brings us to a second question about the impact of the EWL in the area of violence against women: What has the EWL meant for policy and the handling of victims and perpetrators of violence against women crimes in different member states? The EWL is running a three year project on the safe return of women victims of trafficking in the Nordic and Baltic states – what is the impact of that project? Is there any impact? Has the EWL had an impact on national level policy on violence or is policy on violence still mainly a matter of UN framings and references? What are the differences and similarities across the EU member states with regard to the way civil society organises around violence against women?

Civil society

What has the EWL meant for the organising of civil society on national level? A first indicative answer is given in this thesis: the EWL has changed the way in which women organise on the national level. I would like to take this question a step further and ask about the comparative strength of women’s civil society organisations in the EU member states. Here I am thinking in a similar mode as when the strength of trade unions is measured and analysed. One could imagine using a similar typology and set of indicators for measuring the strength of women’s civil society organisations, that is, density rate, membership, the degree of centralisation, whether or not the leaders can coerce its members (see Visser, 2006, 1992), participation in institutionalised consultation procedures, participation in governmental or parliamentarian networks and research etcetera. The list of indicators is obviously not exclusive. For me, a natural starting point would be
to use the EWL national co-ordinations as the objects of study for such analysis. For one thing, using the EWL national co-ordinations as research objects would make women’s organisations score high on an indicator such as the degree of centralisation would score high. A second step would involve trying to explain the differences and similarities of the strength of women’s civil society in the EU member states. Could variations be explained by variations in and strength of the gender regime? Is the typology of liberal, corporatist and social democratic welfare regimes useful to explain the strength in women’s civil society organisations?

Men’s interests
What about men’s interests? The title of this thesis is “Gendered interests in the EU” while, apparently, only women’s interests are organised and represented in the EU, the existence of which this study is about. I have found no evidence of a similar European Men’s Lobby. Why (do) women and not men organise (deliberately) on basis of their sex/gender in the EU and elsewhere? Or do, in fact, men organise on the very same basis as well? Is the whole, seemingly gender neutral political system simply vested male interests? There are, and has through history been, both anti-women/anti-feminist and pro-women/pro-feminist organisation (see for instance MacMahon, 1999). There is also the relative recent theorising explicitly asking about men’s interest, suggesting that there is relevance in understanding interests as gender based (MacMahon, 1999, see especially part one “The interests of men”). How are men organised in civil society? Is there specific organising on the basis of sex/gender, beyond the fathers’ rights groups that are becoming predominantly more visible and heard?

This last issue brings us back to part one of this thesis where an assumption about the commonality of interests was grounded in a theory of a historically specific society and the different or equal conditions of women and men in that historically specific society, that is, a historically specific society characterised by the social and political antagonism based on sex/gender.

173 Actually, when using Google and Google scholar to search for the phrase “European men’s lobby”, the search engine replies: “Did you mean ‘European women’s lobby’?” (http://www.google.com/search?q=%22european+men%27s+lobby%22&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8&sourceid=ie7&rlz=1I7SUNA_sv).
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Interviews


E-mail correspondence


APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire

1 Age
   <30  30-39  40-49  50-59  60-69  ≥70

2 Sex
   Female  Male

3 Country

4 National party affiliation

5 Party group in EP

6 Member of which EP committees
   BUDG Budgets
   CONT Budgetary Control
   ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs
   EMPL Employment and Social Affairs
   ENVI Environment, Public Health and Food Safety
   ITRE Industry, Research and Energy
   IMCO Internal Market and Consumer Protection
   TRAN Transport and Tourism
   REGI Regional Development
   AGRI Agriculture
   PECH Fisheries
   CULT Culture and Education
   JURI Legal Affairs
   LIBE Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs
   AFCO Constitutional Affairs
   FEMM Women's Rights and Gender Equality
   PETI Petitions
   AFET Foreign Affairs
   DEVE Development
   INTA International Trade

   Position in committee
   _____________________
   _____________________
   _____________________
   _____________________
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7 Number of years in the European Parliament

8 Have you ever heard about the European Women’s Lobby?
   Yes  No

9 How much do you know about the European Women’s Lobby?
   Nothing
   Little
   Fairly much
   Much
   Very much

10 In a sentence or two, what would you say that the European Women’s Lobby is working with/lobbying for?

11 As a member of the European Parliament, have you ever been contacted by the EWL?
   Yes  No

11b If yes, how often?
   On a daily basis
   Once a week
   Once a month
   Once a year
   Once

12 As a member of the European Parliament, have you ever contacted the EWL?
   Yes  No

12b If yes, how often?
   On a daily basis
   Once a week
   Once a month
   Once a year
   Once

13 Would you say that the European Women’s Lobby is an important source of information in your work as a parliamentarian?
   Not at all
   A little
   Fairly important
   Very important
   Vital
14 Is the European Women’s Lobby important in your work in any other way apart from as a source of information?
   Yes      No

14b If yes, in what way?

15 Would you say that the European Women’s Lobby is important in terms of (please rank from 1-10, where 1 is the most important):
   __ Agenda setting
   __ Creating public debate
   __ Creating internal EU debate
   __ Organising public interests
   __ Raising awareness of women’s interests publicly
   __ Raising awareness of women’s interests within the EP
   __ Linking public interests to the EP & EU
   __ Influence decision-making
   __ Representing women’s interests
   __ Other, namely:

16 Would you say that the European Women’s Lobby exercise any kind of influence over EU policy?
   Yes      No

16b If yes, could you please describe how/state in what way?

17 On what level of policy-making would a non-governmental organisation like the European Women’s Lobby be most likely to influence EU policy?

18 Other comments
## Appendix B: Research design

<table>
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<th>Measurement/structure</th>
<th>Material/method</th>
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<td>Input function</td>
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<td>Demands contained in work programme</td>
<td>Motions compared to work programme</td>
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<td>Logic of membership</td>
<td>Membership base</td>
<td>History of EWL; Annual reports.</td>
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<td>Growth of organisation</td>
<td>Interviews; Annual reports; membership lists</td>
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<td>Form versus content</td>
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<td>Logic of influence</td>
<td>Form versus content</td>
<td>History of EWL: annual reports</td>
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<td>Decision-making process</td>
<td>Statutes; EU institutions; decision-making processes; membership application form;</td>
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<td>Representativeness criteria</td>
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<td>Impact</td>
<td>Comparing EU/EWL roadmaps</td>
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<td>EWL issues in the EU</td>
<td>EWL/EU policy areas; framing of policies</td>
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<td>Resources of the EWL</td>
<td>Staff; budget; connections to MEPs; connections to Commission</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mobilising outside of EU remit</td>
<td>Policy centre on violence against women</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C: EWL member organisations 2006

National Co-ordinations of EWL

Austria  Österreichischer Frauenring
Belgium  Belgian Coordination for the EWL; Nederlandstalige Vrouwenraad
Bulgaria  Bulgarian Coordination of EWL
Croatia  Croatian Women’s Network
Cyprus  Cyprus Women’s Lobby
Czech Republic  Czech Women’s Lobby
Denmark  Women’s Council in Denmark
Estonia  Estonian Women’s Association Roundtable
Finland  Coalition of Finnish Women’s Association (NYTKIS)
France:  Coordination Française pour le Lobby Européen des Femmes
Macedonia  Macedonian Women’s Lobby
Germany  Deutscher Frauenrat
Greece  Coordination of Greek Women’s NGOs for the EWL
Hungary  Hungarian Women’s Lobby
Ireland  The National Women’s Council of Ireland (NWCI)
Italy  Coordinamento Italiano della Lobby Europea delle Donne
Latvia  Women’s NGOs Cooperation Network of Latvia
Lithuania  Lithuanian Women’s Lobby
Luxembourg  Conseil National des Femmes du Luxembourg; Coordination Luxembourgeoise pour le LEF
Malta  Malta Confederation of Women’s Organisations
The Netherlands  Netherlands Coordination to European Women’s Lobby
Poland  Polish Women’s Lobby
Portugal  Portuguese Platform for Women’s Rights
Romania  Romanian Women’s Lobby
Slovak Republic  Slovak Women’s Lobby
Slovenia  Women’s Lobby Slovenia/Ženski lobi Slovenije
Spain  Coordinadora Española para el Lobby europeo de Mujeres
Sweden  The Swedish Women’s Lobby
Turkey  EWL Coordination in Turkey
UK  UK Joint Committee on Women (Engender, National Alliance of Women’s Organisations; Northern Ireland Women’s European Platform; Wales Women’s National Coalition

European-wide and International member organisations

Committee of Agricultural Organisations in the EU (COPA)
European Centre of the International Council of Women (ECICW)
European Confederation of Independent Trade Unions (CESI)
European Confederation of Trade Unions (ETUC)
European Council of WIZO Federations
European Disability Forum (EDF)
European Federation of Business and Professional Women (EFBPW)
European Federation of Women Working in the Home (FEFAF)
European Network of Women Entrepreneurs (FEMVISION)
International Alliance of Women (IAW)
International Council of Jewish Women (ICJW)
International Federation of Women in Legal Careers (IFWLC)
International Romani Women’s Network
Medical Women’s International Association (MWIA)
Soroptimist International Europe
University Women of Europe (UWE)
Women’s Committee of the International European Movement
Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)
Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA)

Associate member organisations

Andorra
Grup de Dones per la Reflexio i l’Accio

Belgium
A.S.B.L. Amazone
Mental Health Europe/Santé Mentale Europe
Centre Féminin d’Education Permanente
Groupement Belge de la Porte Ouverte
European Network of Migrant Women – EnoMW

Bosnia and Herzegovina
CURE Fondation

Denmark
KVINFO – Danish Centre for Information on Women and Gender
The Danish National Federation of Early Childhood Teachers and Youth Educators

France
SOS Sexisme
ACOMED / Association de Conjoints de Médecins

Germany
Evangelische Frauen in Deutschland
Terre des Femmes

Greece
National Council of Greek Women
The Greek YWCA

Italy
AIDOS – Associazione Italiana Donne per lo Sviluppo

Luxembourg
Centre d’Information et de Documentation “Thers Bode”
Femmes en Détresse a.s.b.l.

Malta
Institute for Gender Studies

Spain
Dones per la Llibertat i la Democratia Toleranciacero

Sweden
West Sweden Women’s Lobby
WO CAD - Women’s Organisations Committee on Alcohol and Drug Issues
Kvinna Skaraborg (Woman Skaraborg)
1.6 Miljonerklubben
The National Council of Women in Sweden

Netherlands
Dutch Foundation of Religious against Trafficking in Women

Ukraine
Civil Initiative “I’m strong enough”

UK
British Federation of Women Graduates
National Council of Women / International Council of Women
Royal College of Nursing of the United Kingdom
The Fawcett Society
Appendix D: EWL motion on prostitution and trafficking 1998

Motion adopted at the 1998 General Assembly of the European Women’s Lobby (June 1998)

TITLE OF THE MOTION: Prostitution and Trafficking

We state that:
1. Prostitution and trafficking in women constitute a fundamental violation of women’s human rights.
2. Prostitution and Trafficking in women should not be associated with the terms "forced" or "free".
3. It should be recognised that "free choice" is a relative factor, situated at the intersection of economic, social, cultural and political options of women in a given society. Inequality severely restricts freedom of choice.

We affirm that:
4. Prostitution and trafficking in women are violations of women’s human rights. Effective protection of these rights will depend on raising the status of women in all areas of life and that this can be brought about through mindful strategies which enable women and men to negotiate in the form of a gender contract;
5. Strategies to confront prostitution and trafficking in women must be multi-faceted addressing on the one hand the needs of women whose human rights are violated while at the same time targeting at the client, the procurer and other people benefiting from the sex industry.
6. Studies on prostitution and in particular studies about traffickers and customers must be undertaken.
7. The definition of male violence includes all forms of sexual exploitation.
8. Until these issues are rightfully recognised and adequately addressed in consultation with a broad-based coalition of women’s groups, prostitutes and women, victims of trafficking must have access to all protective services.
9. These rights should include: access to health care; police protection; opportunities for training and education; legal services and representation including legal residence permits in the cases of women from non EU countries; support and counselling and all other services offered to all women regardless of their activity.
10. There must be education reflecting the view that buying and selling of bodies represents a violation of human rights and as such must be considered illegal.

We call on:
11. Governments and policy-makers at all levels to engage in a broad consultation with all groups concerned with the protection of women’s human rights, in particular women’s organisations, prior to considering any policy or legislation relative to prostitution. The EWL believes that the issues are global and therefore, require multidimensional solutions which address a number of universal issues, notably: inequality of women; globalisation of the world economy; countries in transition; poverty; immigration policies and above all the issue of incessant violation of women’s human rights.
12. Governments and policy-makers to pass legislative measures against trafficking in women, and to ensure full application of these measures.
Appendix E: EWL motion on the demand side of prostitution 2001


TITLE OF THE MOTION: Make it a crime to buy women in prostitution and develop strong policies against pimping

Context
In January 1999 a new law went into effect in Sweden, one that made it a crime to buy another human being with the intent of using her for sexual purposes. However it is not a crime for that person to sell herself in prostitution. The fact that it is a crime to buy, but not to sell sex, makes the law unique. It is unique because it is the only one of this kind in the world and because it is based on a feminist analysis of prostitution; it acknowledges the reality of prostitution, namely that women in prostitution are the victims of a crime, the crime of sexual abuse and sexual violence, and not criminals themselves. It recognises the vulnerability and powerlessness of women in prostitution and the general imbalance between men and women in the society. The new law is also part of a larger effort, with regards to the issue of violence against women on behalf of the Swedish government and includes the obligation for social welfare services to help women to get out of prostitution.

The law has been implemented for just two and a half years, but we are already seeing some positive results. According to police working on prostitution; in Stockholm, street prostitution has declined 70%-80% and prostitution in clubs, hotels and other in-door facilities has declined of about by 50%.

It has also had beneficial effects on stopping the trafficking of women for prostitution. According to Kajsa Wahlberg, Detective Inspector at the National Criminal Investigation Department, who investigates crimes concerning trafficking, the law deters trafficking of women into prostitution since it has made it more difficult for pimps to work in Sweden. Previously pimps could just give the women a mobile phone and send them on the streets, but nowadays they have to find premises and solicit customers. It has also resulted in greater awareness and willingness on behalf of the police and prosecutors to investigate and prosecute pimps and traffickers.

Actions
The member organisations of EWL shall lobby their respective governments to adopt a similar law, one that will make it a crime for men to buy and use women in the context of prostitution. The law shall not in any ways criminalise the women, the victim. On the contrary, the law must be combined with efforts to help the women getting out of prostitution by providing them with financial assistance, education, job training, housing and health care. They should also work for strong policies against pimping.

The EWL should lobby the commissioners and members of the EU Parliament to put pressure on their respective governments to make it a crime to buy women in prostitution and to develop strong policies against pimping. EWL should provide its members with information and support them.
Appendix F: EWL Statutes

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION
EUROPEAN WOMEN’S LOBBY - EWL
STATUTES AS OF JANUARY 2007

(Updated on basis of modifications adopted at GA 2006, registered in Belgian Official Journal “Moniteur belge” on 10/8/2007)

TITLE I – NAME, REGISTERED OFFICE, DURATION, AIM
Article 1 – Name, purpose, duration, applicable law
An International association with an international aim has been set up and is called the European Women’s Lobby (EWL) in order to promote the integration of gender equality in all areas of policy within the institutions of the European Union. The Association, the European Women’s Lobby, will hereinafter be referred to as “the Association”. The Association will be governed under Belgian Law in particular by (i) the law of 27 June 1921 that grants legal statutes to non profit making associations and to public utility establishments, such as modified among others by the Law of 2 May 2002 on the non profit making associations, the non profit making international associations and the foundations, as well as by laws of 16 January and 22 December 2003, by (ii) these statutes, and (iii) by the internal rules of the Association.

The duration of the Association will be unlimited.

Article 2 – Registered office
The Association’s registered office is at 18, rue Hydraulique, 1210 Brussels, Belgium. It may be transferred to any other location in the Brussels region by decision of the General assembly, according to the rules set out for the modifications of the statutes.

Article 3 – Activities
The Association “European Women’s Lobby” represents the concerns, needs and interests of women in dialogue with national, European and international institutions. The Association’s mission is to promote the empowerment of women in all their diversity; to advance gender equality; to combat all forms of discrimination and violence against women and to ensure full access for all women to their human rights through their active involvement in society and in policy development and implementation.

The Association, through its member organisations, aims: to work within democratic, open and transparent procedures of communication, decision-making and accountability in order to support the involvement and empowerment of all women; to provide regular input on all areas of EU policy development and implementation that have an impact on women’s lives and on the promotion of equality between women and men; to monitor the development and implementation of gender mainstreaming in order to ensure that mainstreaming entails the full integration of women’s human rights, needs and aspirations in all areas of EU policy; to take into account the needs and perspective of different groups of women, and the multiple identities of women at all stages of their life cycle.
TITLE II – MEMBERS

Article 4 – Membership Categories, General Membership criteria.
The Association is composed of women’s organisations, the women’s sections of mixed
organisations, individual supporting members, and supporting organisations which are
foundations, organisations or companies committed to supporting the aims and objec-
tives of the Association.
All members must (i) meet the criteria for membership set out in the statutes (ii) accept
the Association’s purpose and aims (iii) pay an annual membership fee.
The Association will have four membership categories: (i) full members (ii) associate
members (iii) individual supporting members and (iv) supporting organisations.
The Association reserves the right to create new categories of membership or to change
the existing categories, without prejudice to the procedure for amending the statutes by
royal decree.

Article 4 bis – Membership Fees
The members pay an annual membership fee the amount of which is decided by the
General Assembly although it cannot be in excess of 5,000 Euros.
Only those members which have paid their annual membership fees will be entitled to
send delegates or observers to the General Assembly or to take their seats on the govern-
ing bodies of the Association as set out in these Statutes.

Article 5 – Full Members
Full members are National Co-ordinations of Non-governmental Organisations and Euro-
pean Wide Non-governmental Organisations

1) National Co-ordinations of women’s non-governmental organisations from the mem-
ber states of the European Union, the European Economic Area countries as well as
countries in the formal process of accession to the European Union which fulfil the fol-
lowing criteria may be considered for full membership. Members must: have legal status
in their own member state/ country as a non–governmental organisation representing
women’s Non-governmental Organisations or have a signed protocol of co-operation to
act as the coordinating body for the EWL in their member state/country as set out in the
internal rules; demonstrate a clear commitment to gender equality on the basis of past
and current activities and future plans; demonstrate a support for the Convention on the
Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol and
the Beijing Platform for Action; demonstrate that they have taken into account, in the
policies and structures of their organisation, the needs and perspective of the many
women that face multiple discrimination, including women of different ages, races or
ethnic origins, religions or beliefs, abilities, and sexual orientation. This list is not exclu-
sive; pay the annual membership fee; be representative of a broad range of women’s
organisations across the whole of the member state/country; act independently of any
political party or religious authority.

A National Co-ordination may be an umbrella of women’s organisations specifically con-
stituted in order to coordinate the work of the Association at national level or a pre-
extisting umbrella of women’s organisations that accepts the role of co-ordination for the
association. There will be only one co-ordination per country organised in an open, de-
mocratic and transparent manner.
The National Co-ordination will draw up its own statutes, or draw up a signed protocol of
cooperation for its establishment, which must include the above criteria. Any National
Co-ordination of women’s Non-governmental organisations which is currently in mem-
bership or is applying for full membership and which does not conform to the above
criteria is expected to make the necessary changes so that they fulfil these criteria, according to the procedure set out in the internal rules.

The rights and responsibilities of National Co-ordinations as full members include: participation in debates and voting rights at the General Assembly, according to the criteria set out in Article 12 of the statutes; to put forward candidates for election to the organisational structures of the Association in accordance with these statutes; to set the policies, guidelines and priorities of the Association and make an ongoing contribution to its activities; to be informed and consulted on an ongoing basis about the activities of the Association.

2) European wide Non-Governmental Organisations, which fulfil the following criteria may be considered for full membership of the Association. These members must: have a legal status recognised in national or international law; be a European wide umbrella organisation of women’s Non-governamental organisations with a focus on policy development within the European Union, or the women’s section of a mixed European Wide umbrella organisation that has the purpose of co-ordinating the work of the Association within their organisation; at the time of making their application for membership to the Association, have representative organisations in at least 50% plus 1 of the countries in membership of the European Union, the European Economic Area and countries in the formal process of acceding to the EU; demonstrate a clear commitment to gender equality on the basis of past and current activities and future plans; demonstrate support for the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol and the Beijing Platform for Action; take into account, in the policies and structures of the organisation, the needs and perspective of the many women that face multiple discrimination, including women of different ages, races or ethnic origins, religions or beliefs, abilities, and sexual orientations. This list is not exclusive; pay the annual membership fee; act independently of any political party or religious authority.

Any European Wide Non-governmental Organisation of women’s non-governmental organisations or women’s section of a mixed European Wide non-governmental organisation, which is currently in membership or which is applying for full membership and which does not conform to the above criteria will make the necessary changes so that they fulfil these criteria, according to the procedure which is set out in the internal rules.

The rights and responsibilities of European Wide Non-governmental organisations as full members include: participation in debates and voting rights at the General Assembly according to the criteria set out in Article 12 of the statutes; to put forward candidates for election to the organisational structures of the Association in accordance with these statutes; to set the policies, guidelines and priorities of the Association and make an ongoing contribution to its activities; to be informed and consulted on an ongoing basis about the activities of the Association.

Article 6 – Associate Members
Associate Members of the Association are non-governmental women’s organisations or the women’s sections of non-governmental organisations that are committed to the purpose and the aims of the Association as outlined in the statutes.
Associate members will have no voting rights in the Association and no right to stand for election to the organisational structures of the Association.

The rights of associate members include: attending meetings of the General Assembly as observers and at their own expense; attending seminars and conferences organised by
the Association at their own expense; receiving the Newsflash and the Newsletter of the Association, as well as any relevant information about the activities of the Association.

Article 7 – Individual Supporting Members
Individual supporting members are individuals who accept the Association’s purpose and aims.
Individual supporting members will have no voting rights in the Association and no right to stand for election or to present candidates to the organisational structures of the Association.

The rights of individual supporting members include: attending by invitation seminars and conferences organised by the Association at their own expense; receiving the Newsflash and the Newsletter of the Association, as well as any relevant information about the activities of the Association.

Article 8 – Supporting Organisations
Supporting organisations are organisations, which accept the Association’s purpose and aims.
Supporting organisations will have no voting rights in the Association and no right to stand for election or to present candidates to the organisational structures of the Association.
They do not pay an annual membership fee, in line with Article 4 bis of these statutes, but make a financial or in-kind contribution to the Association in support of its work.

The rights of supporting organisations include: attend seminars and other meetings by invitation organised by the Association at their own expense; receiving the Newsflash and the Newsletter of the Association, as well as any relevant information about the activities of the Association.

Article 9 – Membership application procedure
Applications for admission as a member will be directed to the Executive Committee Membership takes effect following (i) a positive vote of the General Assembly in the case of Full Members or (ii) a positive vote of the Board of Administration for all other membership categories and (iii) from the time the new member has paid its annual membership fee, which may be reduced depending on at what time of the year they are accepted into membership.

Article 10 – Resignation, Exclusion
Any member can withdraw from the Association with immediate effect, provided the member has notified such withdrawal to the Executive Committee by any means of communication set forth in the internal rules and to have paid the annual membership fee to the end of the year.
Any member which violates or is no longer in compliance with the provisions of these statutes or the internal rules, or which acts in a way that is detrimental to the interests of the Association or its members, may be excluded from the Association by the General Assembly upon recommendation of the Board of Administration and having been heard by the General Assembly.
A member which, in whatever way and for whatever reason, ceases to be a member of the Association will, because of such cessation of membership, have no claim for compensation from the Association and will have no claim on the Association’s assets.
TITLE III – ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES.

A. GENERAL

Article 11 – Bodies
The Association has the following Bodies: the General Assembly; the Board of Administration and the Executive Committee

Sub committees, ad-hoc committees and working groups, which are consultative bodies and have no decision-making powers, may be appointed by the Board of Administration in pursuance of the aims and objectives of the Association and in accordance with the internal rules.
They are assisted in their work by the Secretariat of the Association.

B. GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Article 12 – Composition, Powers

12.1. The General Assembly will consist of women delegates nominated by the current full members of the Association according to the rules laid out in the current statutes. Only delegates representing full members who have paid their membership fee will be entitled to attend and to speak at the General Assembly. Associate members and other members may attend by invitation only, as observers, and providing they have paid their annual membership fee.
The Board of Administration can decide at the meeting just before the General Assembly that this meeting will be limited to full members and excluding all other categories of membership.

12.2. Each National Co-ordination will have the right to nominate the following delegates to the General Assembly: Three delegates, including the one which is Board member. Each delegate holds one vote. However, if a national co-ordination, for any reason, only designates one delegate, its delegation will still hold a total of three votes.

12.3. Each European Wide Organisation will have the right to nominate the following delegates to the General Assembly: One delegate. Should the situation arise where a candidate presented by a European organisation is elected to the Board of Administration in accordance with the rules set out in these statutes, this delegate will automatically become a full member of the General Assembly for the length of his/her term of office as defined in article 19 of the present statutes.
If the Board Member mentioned in the previous paragraph is not standing for re-election, as an exception to the previous paragraph, the European organisation concerned will be entitled to nominate a second delegate to the Assembly.
Both delegates will have the right to speak. However, where votes are taken their delegation will only have one vote.

12.4. The National Co-ordinations and the European Wide Non-governmental organisations will ensure their own democratic and transparent procedures for the election of their delegates to the General Assembly. They will also aim to meet the travel and subsistence costs of their delegates based on procedures set out in the internal rules. Full members have a duty to ensure that their delegates to the General Assembly are fully informed and supported in their role.

12.5. The General Assembly is the highest authority in the Association. Subject to the powers conferred upon the other organisational structures and the Secretariat by these statutes, it will have all the powers required to realise the Association’s purpose.
These powers include: the setting of the policies and priorities of the Association; the adoption of the Association's budget and accounts; the adoption of the work programme of the Association; the election and dismissal of the Board of Administration or of some of its members; the admission and exclusion of full members; the determination of membership fees; the granting of discharge to the members of the Executive Committee, the Board of Administration and the Auditor; the modification of these statutes; the modification of the internal rules the dissolution of the Association.

**Article 13 – Ordinary General Assembly**
Without prejudice to Article 14 of these statutes, the President will convene an ordinary General Assembly each year on a date agreed by the Executive Committee.

**Article 14 – Extraordinary General Assembly**
An Extraordinary General Assembly will be called by the Executive Committee whenever required by the interests of the Association or upon request of one third of the full membership of the Association. The president will convene the meeting by any appropriate means of communication as set forth in the internal rules.

**Article 15 – Notice, Agenda.**
Notification for the ordinary General Assembly will be sent to the members, by means of written and/or electronic communication, four months in advance. The notification will set out the draft agenda, the location, the date and the time of the General Assembly and the proportion of costs that will be met for each delegate to the General Assembly. Notification to any extraordinary General Assembly will be sent to members, by means of postal or electronic communication, one month in advance. The notification will set out the agenda, the location, the proportion of delegate's expenses that the Association will meet, date and the time of the extraordinary General Assembly.

**Article 16 – Quorum, Votes**
The General Assembly will only be validly constituted if 50% plus one of the full member organisations are represented by their delegate or by at least one of their delegates where the organisation has more than one.
It is the Association's intention to make decisions by consensus. If no consensus can be reached, then decisions of the General Assembly will be validly adopted if they are approved by a simple majority of the votes cast, except if and to the extent that other majorities are provided for in the statutes.
Thus, a new full member can only be admitted into the Association if two thirds of the votes at the General Assembly are in favour of its membership.
The quorum defined in paragraph 1(one) will become two thirds of full members if the General Assembly is called to vote on proposed changes to these statutes or to the dissolution of the Association. Furthermore, and as a condition for reaching this quorum, the General Assembly can only deliberate if the proposed changes in the statutes and/or the reasons for the dissolution of the Association are mentioned explicitly in the notification. Should this quorum not be reached, a second General Assembly may be convened for any day, which is at least three weeks and no more than six weeks later than the date for which the General Assembly was originally scheduled. This second General Assembly will be validly constituted irrespective of the number of full members present provided that the text in paragraphs 1, 2, 4 and 5 of this article are included in full in the notification.
Amendments to these present statutes will only take effect within the conditions foreseen in article 50 § 3 of the law dated 27 June 1921 as modified by the law of 2 May 2002.
The dissolution of the Association can only be decided by a two thirds majority of the full member organisations present. The decisions of the General Assembly will be recorded in the minutes which will be kept in a file specifically for this purpose at the secretariat of the association, and which without being moved from the secretariat, can be consulted by any member, who must offer a brief explanation for their request.

Article 17 – Procedures
The procedures of the General Assembly will be as set forth in the internal rules, which complement the measures set out in these statutes and cannot contravene them.

Article 18 – Written procedure
In exceptional cases and when the urgency of the matter so requires, the General Assembly may make decisions by a written procedure, including electronic communication.
To that effect the Executive Committee, with the assistance of the Secretariat, will send by means of postal and/or electronic communication, the proposed decisions with an explanatory note to all members. The Executive Committee will deem the proposed decision adopted if, within ten working days following the dispatch of such communication, 50% plus one response from full members have been received by the Executive Committee, care of the Secretariat, and a simple majority reached. Decisions adopted in this way will be subject to ratification at the next General Assembly.

C. BOARD OF ADMINISTRATION
Article 19 – Composition. Powers. Responsibilities
Election
The number of members making up the Board of Administration is determined in such a way as to achieve a balance between the national co-ordinations and the European wide non-governmental organisations. This number can nonetheless never be less than ten or more than forty-five.
Each national coordination has one seat on the Board of Administration, while the number of seats attributed to the European wide Non government organisations is determined by a precise ratio as set out in the internal rules.
Each member of the Board of Administration has one vote.

The Board of Administration will be elected at the General Assembly. The election will be based on two voting lists:
1. a list including the candidates standing from the National Co-ordinations full members
2. a list of the candidates standing from the European wide non-governmental organisations. The General Assembly will vote for or against the candidates presented on each of these two lists.

Powers
The Board of Administration has the powers to manage the association, except for the powers explicitly reserved by the law or these statutes for the General Assembly or the Executive Committee.
They act collectively, except with a special derogation to the present statutes, and always in the common interest of the association and its members.
The Board of Administration will have the following powers:
approves the draft annual work plan of the Association; approves the Association’s draft annual budget and accounts in preparation for the General Assembly; the adoption of
policy statements and position papers; the setting up of sub-committees, working
groups and ad-hoc committees; election of the President and of the Executive Commit-
tee; preparation of recommendations to the General Assembly in relation to the requests
for full membership of the association; approval of applications for membership, except
in the case of full members; preparation of any amendments to the Internal Rules for
recommendation to the General Assembly; the appointment and dismissal of the Secre-
tary General.

Term of Office
The term of office of a Board Member will be for a two-year period. The term of office of
elected Board Members begins at the first Board Meeting following the General Assem-
by at which he-she has been elected and finishes at the end of the General Assembly
when his-her two year term of office is completed. The term of office may be renewed
twice only. A Board Member who has served a full six years cannot stand for election to
the Board again until a further two-year period has elapsed
Members of the Board of Administration will undertake to serve at least one full two-
year term. A member of the board who wished to resign has to send a letter of resigna-
tion to the Board of Administration indicating the exact reasons for her resignation, the
resigning board member must remain in post until the Board of Administration has ac-
cepted the reasons indicated and until her replacement has officially taken on her role.
Should an elected member of the Board, representing a European Wide Non-
governmental organisation resign during their term of office, he-she will be replaced for
the remaining term of office by the representative next on the voting list of non-
governmental organisations elected to the Board of Administration by the General As-
sembly as defined in §4 point 2 of the present article.

Article 20 – Meetings
The President will convene a meeting of the Board of Administration at least three times
each year, at the dates proposed by the Executive Committee, including the meeting the
day before the General Assembly.
The invitations are sent to the members of the Board by means of a written and/or elec-
tronic communication body, four weeks in advance. The convocations contain the
agenda, the place, the date and time of the meeting.
The Board of Administration will be validly constituted if 50% plus one of the members
of the Board of Administration are present or represented by their alternate.
It is the Association’s intention to make decisions by consensus. If no consensus can be
reached, then decisions of the Board of Administration will be validly adopted if they are
approved by a simple majority of the votes cast, except if and to the extent that other
majorities are provided for in these statutes.
Other rules applicable to the organisation and meetings of the Board of Administration
will be as set forth in the internal rules, which simply complement the measures set out
in these statutes and cannot contravene them.
The decisions of the Board of Administration will be recorded in the minutes which will
be kept in a file specifically for this purpose at the secretariat of the association, and
which, without being moved from the secretariat, can be consulted by any member, who
must offer a brief explanation for their request.

D. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Article 21 – Composition, Powers, Responsibilities
(of the Executive Committee)
The Executive Committee will always act in the common interest of the Association and
of the whole membership of the Association.
The Executive Committee will consist of seven members: the President, two Vice-Presidents, a Treasurer and three additional members.

The Executive Committee is elected from among the members of the Board of Administration. Each member of the Executive Committee will have one vote.

The Executive Committee will have the following powers and responsibilities: the preparation of the draft annual work plan of the Association; the preparation of the Association’s draft annual budget and accounts; to ensure the effective management of the Association; the ongoing and effective supervision of the finances of the Association in conformity with the budget of the Association; co-operation between the Association and third parties; external relations of the Association; to make decisions on the representation of the Association on the occasion of external meetings and events; making recommendations to the Board of Administration in relation to all requests for membership of new members; the appointment of senior staff of the Secretariat; and assumption of the tasks of the Board of Administration in between meetings of the Board of Administration if exceptional circumstances and the urgency of the matter so require.

Members of the Executive Committee will undertake to stay in office for the whole of their two-year mandate. In exceptional circumstances a member may none the less resign. If he-she does so, a new election will take place at the next Board Meeting. The term of office of the newly elected Executive Member will run until the end of the next General Assembly at which elections take place.

Article 22 – Meetings

The President, or any other person designated by his-her, or failing that, the Secretariat will convene the meetings of the Executive Committee at least six times each year by whatever means of communication is deemed appropriate as set out in the internal rules. The composition of the Executive Committee must reflect the composition of the Board of Administration vis-à-vis the proportion of representatives from the National Co-ordinations and the European Wide Non-governmental Organisations. The Executive Committee will be validly constituted if 50% plus one of members of the Executive Committee are present. It is the Association’s intention to make decisions by consensus. If no consensus can be reached, then decisions of the Executive Committee will be validly adopted if they are approved by a simple majority of the votes cast.

Any other rules applicable to the organisation and meetings of the Executive Committee will be as set forth in the internal rules, which simply complement the measures set out in these statutes and cannot contravene them.

E. PRESIDENT. VICE-PRESIDENTS. TREASURER

Article 23 – President. Vice-Presidents. Treasurer.

The President will be accountable to the members of the Association. He-she will have the following powers and tasks: Chairing the meetings of the General Assembly, Board of Administration and Executive Committee. Organising, on behalf of the Executive Committee, the representation of the Association at external meetings and events. Supervision, on behalf of the Executive Committee, of the activities of the Secretariat.

If so required by the urgency of the matter, the President can moreover take any appropriate measure, having consulted with the members of the Executive Committee. He-she will report such action to the following meeting of the Executive Committee who will be asked to ratify this decision. The President will always act in the interest of the Association and in accordance with its policies.

The President has the casting vote when there is an equal number of votes cast on a point of the agenda. This applies to all statutory meetings governed by the internal rules and statutes, chaired by the President, or Vice President if he-she is replacing him-her.
as set out in these statutes or the internal rules. The Vice-Presidents will have the following powers and tasks: Perform the tasks of the President when the President is absent or unable to act; Assist President in the performance of his/her duties; The Treasurer will have the following powers and tasks; Monitoring and supervision of the work of the secretariat regarding financial matters; Presentation of the necessary financial interim reports to the Board of Administration; checking and supervision of the financial statements to be submitted to the European Commission.

F. SECRETARIAT
Article 24 – Secretariat . Secretary General
The Secretariat is the administrative office of the Association. Its tasks and functions are detailed in the internal rules. The Secretary General will assume the daily management of the Association and will have operational and administrative responsibility for the Secretariat, including the representation the association to third parties, in accordance with the decisions of the Executive Committee. He-she will be responsible for the management of the staff, including the hiring and dismissal of staff, within the framework of the general mission as set out by the General Assembly. He-she will participate in the meetings of the Executive Committee, the Board of Administration and the General Assembly.

TITLE IV – REPRESENTATION
Article 25 – Legal Representation vis-à-vis third parties
The Association will be validly represented vis-à-vis third parties and with regard to all deeds by the President acting individually or by two members of the Executive Committee acting jointly. The Executive Committee represented by the President or by two of its members will conduct legal proceedings, either as plaintiff or as defendant. Within the framework of daily management, the Association will be validly represented vis-à-vis third parties and with regard to all deeds by the Secretary General. None of the aforementioned persons needs to justify his-her powers vis-à-vis third parties.

TITLE V – BUDGETS AND FINANCIAL YEAR
Article 26 – Budgets and Financial year
The budgets and accounts will be prepared on an annual basis by the Finance Officer within the secretariat and the Secretary General and will be reviewed by the Treasurer. All financial records and the end of year accounts will be audited by an external auditor. Each year the external auditor will prepare a statement and balance sheet, which will be reviewed by the Treasurer and approved by the Board of Administration and by the General Assembly. The financial year of the Association will run from 1st January to 31st December of each year.

TITLE VI – DISSOLUTION
Article 27 – Dissolution
If the Association is dissolved, the General Assembly will appoint two liquidators, full members or not, and determine their powers. The General Assembly will define the purposes for which the assets of the Association must be used. This purpose must be disinterested and must correspond to the objectives pursued by the Association.
TITLE VII – LANGUAGE

Article 28 – Language
The language used for all official documents will be French when required by Belgian law. English and French will be the working languages of the Association and where possible other languages will also be made available through translation of documents or interpretation of meetings.

Title VIII – FINAL MEASURES

Article 29 – Applicable Law
Anything that is not included in these statutes will be governed by the Belgian Law for non profit making organisations, international non profit making organisations and foundations.