



# UEAPME: Lobbying and Advocacy at EU level



[www.ueapme.com](http://www.ueapme.com)

# UEAPME: lobbying for SMEs in Europe (1)

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- European association of crafts, small and medium-sized enterprises
- 80+ members
- 12 million enterprises
- 55 million people across Europe
- One of the four European Social Partners

# UEAPME: lobbying for SMEs in Europe (2)

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## ■ Our strengths:

- SMEs: 99.8% of all enterprises and 2/3 of all jobs
- UEAPME is the only representative SME association
- European Social Partner, more than an ordinary lobby group

# Why do we lobby? (1)

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- To answer to the **concerns** of European crafts, small and medium-sized enterprises
- To seek policy **changes** that improve the (regulatory) environment in which our clients operate
- To fulfil one of our **core functions** as an intermediary organisation, i.e. representing and defending our clients and their needs

# Why do we lobby? (2)

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- Because our opinion is sought after and valued, and the European institutions themselves encourage us:
  - A Council Resolution in 1993 called for *“strengthening of the partnership between the European Institutions, the Member States and the organisations representing SMEs with a view to consolidating growth and employment”*
  - The European Charter for Small Enterprises seeks *“to develop stronger, more effective representation of small enterprises’ interests at Union and national level”*
  - Report European Charter for Small Enterprises: *“providing small businesses with the opportunity to voice their interests, preferably in a systematic matter, is of crucial importance”*

# What do we lobby for?

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- Think small first approach
- To highlight the impact of legislation on small businesses
- Not for exemptions

# Who do we lobby?

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- About 80% of legislative decisions affecting businesses are directly or indirectly started in “Brussels”
- Our focus is therefore on the European institutions, mainly:
  - The European Commission
  - The European Parliament
  - The Council

# Who do we lobby?

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- In Brussels, there are approximately:
  - 5.000 organisations representing various interests
  - 30.000 lobbyists
  - 28.000 EC officials (40% of them are translators and interpreters)
  - Almost 1 lobbyist per EC official

# The European Commission (1)

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- 27 Commissioners (1 President, 5 Vice Presidents) nominated by Member States and approved by the European Parliament
- Term of office 5 years; 1 Commissioner per MS
- Competences:
  - Near-monopoly to propose new legislation
  - Guardian of the Treaties: ensures that legislation adopted is applied correctly
  - Administration and execution of community law

# The European Commission (2)

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Starts the **legislative process**:

- “Need for action” (may be initiated by Member State, political parties, EP, associations,...)
- DG/Service in charge, committees including MS, experts
- Public Consultations, Green/White Papers
- Cabinets of Commissioners
- College of Commissioners

# The European Parliament (1)

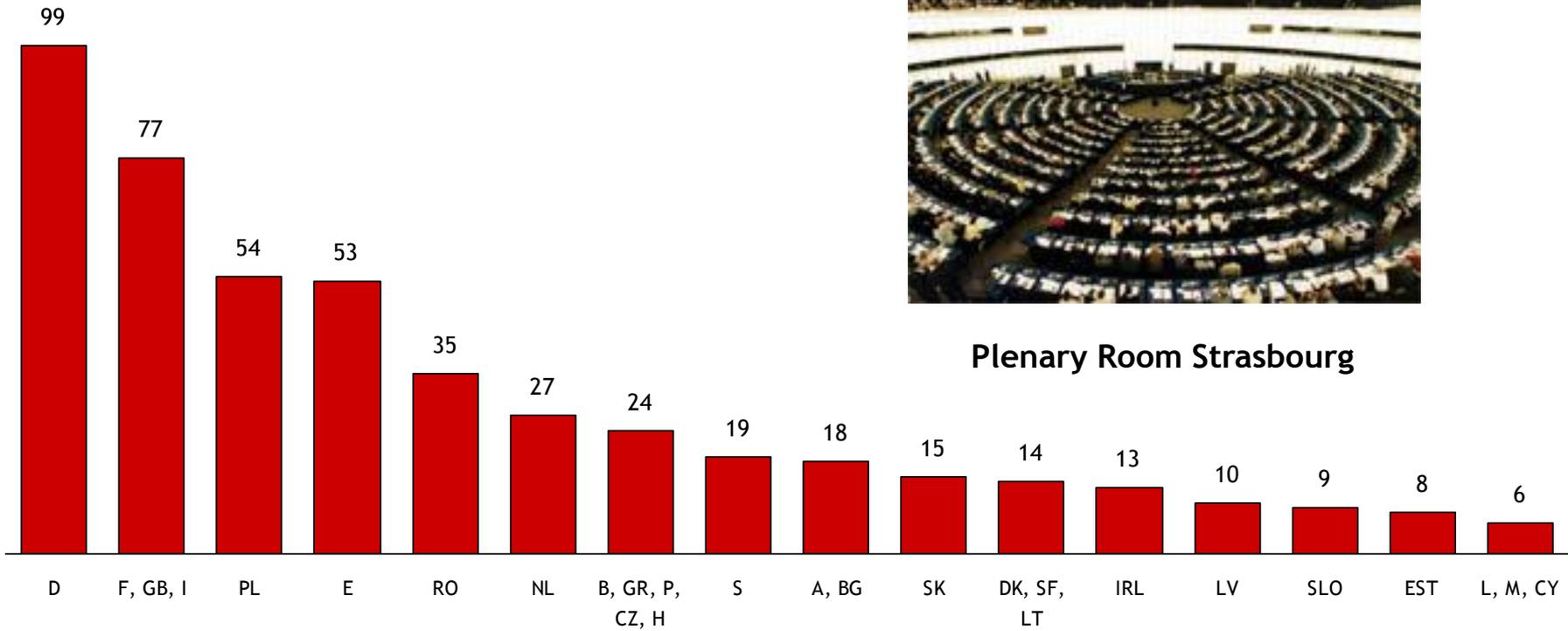
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- 785 Members (Lisbon Treaty: 750+1)
- MEPs cooperate in supranational political groups
- Competences:
  - Legislative powers
  - Supervision of the executive
  - Budgetary powers
  - Consent to accession of new MS and to new association agreements

# The European Parliament (2)



Plenary Room Strasbourg



# The legislative process (1)

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- The most used (and complicated) method is **codecision**:
  - A legislative proposal is drafted by the Commission
  - The proposal is sent to the Parliament and to the Council for a **first reading**:
    - Parliament amends the text (Committees, Plenary)
    - Council can accept (text becomes law) or amend further
  - If needed, there is a **second reading**
  - If needed, there is a **conciliation procedure**
  - If needed, there is a **third reading**
  - In all cases, there are **final formal steps**

# The legislative process (2)

- Other methods include:
  - The **cooperation procedure** gives the European Parliament greater influence in the legislative process. The Council can overrule Parliament's rejection of the particular proposal by adopting a proposal unanimously.
  - In the **consultation procedure**, the Council is not bound by Parliament's position or by any other consultative body, but only by the obligation to consult the Parliament.
  - The **assent procedure** is similar to the consultation procedure, except that the Council cannot overrule a rejection by the Parliament.

Sources: EU, Wikipedia

# How do we lobby? (1)

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- We act as **intermediaries** between enterprises and the European Institutions
- We find a **common position** that reflects the opinion of the different countries or economic sectors
- Our opinion is the result of democratic **consultation** and decision making process
- Regulations based on collectively agreed opinions will be more easily respected

# How do we lobby? (2)

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- We try to strengthen the strengths...
  - being a competent and trustworthy partner
  - providing relevant input to the European Commission and to the European Parliament
  
- ... and to overcome the weaknesses
  - building alliances and networks
  - improving visibility
  - focusing on priorities

## How do we lobby? (3)

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- The process starts **inside** the organisation, either upon members' request or based on the EU policymaking and stakeholder consultation process
- 8 specialised Committees open to all members (environment, social affairs, legal affairs, economic and fiscal affairs...) prepare draft positions on an issue or on a piece of EU legislation
- The draft position is circulated to all members for comments and final approval
- The final position becomes our policy line on the topic

# How do we lobby? (4)

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- The process continues **outside** the organisation
- Each dossier needs a tailored **strategy**, which includes:
  - preparing relevant input (background info, studies)
  - finding experts on the issue and building alliances
  - contacting decision makers and their advisers
  - involving national organisations
  - setting realistic targets
  - trying to become a “relevant” stakeholder on the issue

# How do we lobby? (5)

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- Regardless of the subject, some **recommendations** are always valid:
  - Understand the decision making process
  - Lobby the right person or institution
  - Lobby at the right time (not too early- not too late)
  - Base your opinions and requests on correct information
  - Deliver good documentation and facts

# Be at the right place at the right time

Stages	Addressee for Lobbying
<b>Consultation</b> I. Working/Strategy Paper II. Green/White Book, Communication III. Online Consultation IV. Hearing	Addressing author of documents (Commission) Attending hearing
<b>Commission proposal</b>	European Commission
<b>Council</b> (Working Group, Coreper, Council of Ministers) - First Reading	Responsible National Ministry
<b>European Parliament</b> (poss. Hearing of experts) First reading	MEPs in responsible committee, Rapporteur Attending hearing Responsible National Ministry
<b>Common Position of the Council</b>	MEPs in responsible committee
<b>European Parliament</b> - second reading	Rapporteur
poss. <b>Conciliation procedure</b> -3rd reading	Rapporteur
<b>Adoption of legislation</b>	Responsible National Ministry