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The New Kids on the Block

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University Representation in Brussels

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Abbreviations

DG	Directorate-General
ERRIN	European Regions Research and Innovation Network
EU	European Union
EUA	European University Association
FP6	The Sixth Framework Programme
FP7	The Seventh Framework Programme
FP9	The Ninth Framework Programme (Horizon Europe)
HES	Higher Education Establishments
IGLO	Informal Group of RTD Liaison Offices
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NTNU	The Norwegian University of Science and Technology
UNILION	Universities Informal Liaison Offices Network

1 Introduction

Today, universities are not simply institutions for Higher Education. Universities have had a change in role throughout the last decades; they have been recast as a major research player in the public science systems and seized the position that traditionally belonged to large research organisations (Nedeva, 2013, p. 226). Universities' connection to the European Union's (EU) research and innovation policy is tied to the fact that they are huge players in the EU's framework programme for research and innovation. In fact, Higher Education Establishments (HES) are the top players in the current framework programme, Horizon 2020, in terms of both number of participations in projects and size of financial contribution received (European Commission, 2017, p. 19). The growing attention to research and innovation in the EU is visible through the quadrupled budget for research and innovation over the last three framework programmes (Table 1). A result of this increased budget and attention, seems to have mobilized universities across Europe to 'open shop' in Brussels.

In line with the questioning of the EU's democratic legitimacy in the 1990s (Schmidt, 2013, p. 2) the European Commission sought to have an open and structured dialogue with specific stakeholders as well as, the wider 'civil society' to strengthen the EU's *output legitimacy* (Greenwood, 2019, p. 21). The EU's output legitimacy refers to strengthening the democratic legitimacy of the EU's policy output by working more closely with, and listening to the people (Schmidt, 2013, pp. 3-4). Concurrently, there has been massive growth in EU lobbying (Coen and Richardson, 2009, p. 3) including lobbying for university interests. Within the last 15 years, several universities have opened office in Brussels. As this study will illustrate; the office composition, number of officers, universities represented, and their priorities varies. Still, these offices have many similarities and seem to share two overall objectives: to increase their universities' research opportunities, and to influence the research and innovation policy formulation within the EU.

This study will explore the field of university interest in Brussels and discuss the incentives for opening a university office in Brussels. Moreover, the study aims to gain insight into how the university offices operate and in which way they represent their home institutions. This thesis is a preliminary study; it will show how universities are represented at EU level through the Brussels route and attempt to classify what type of interest representation organisations these offices are. The research question chosen for the study is accordingly:

How are universities represented in Brussels?

To cover the aim of the study more thoroughly, three sub-research questions have been added: (1) What are the main characteristics of the university offices? (2) How are the universities interest represented through these offices? And (3) What is the main type of university office in Brussels? Together, the three sub questions will help answer the main research question.

The term university is defined differently by the European Commission and European University Alliance (EUA). The EUA defines the term university as "those institutions with full power to award doctoral degrees with their twofold traditional vocation of research and teaching", and separates universities from other higher education institutions that do not

share this description (EUA, 2003, p. 2). The European Commission's definition of *university* includes all higher education establishments, with, for example, the "Fachhochschulen", the "polytechnics" and the "Grandes Ecoles" which are excluded from the EUA's understanding of the concept (European Commission, 2003, p. 3). This study will be using the European Commission's understanding of the term university, and it will be used interchangeably with the term Higher Education Establishments, as is also done by the European Commission in their communications.

The role of interest representation and lobbying in the EU legislative system can be perceived as negative by the public, but lobbyists play an important role in a healthy democracy (Dialer & Richer, 2019, p. 5; European Commission, 2007, p. 3). Interest organisations tend to be experts in their specific fields and possess the type of information required by EU-staff. In this way they function as a response to problems arising from the knowledge deficit faced by understaffed EU policy-makers (Dialer & Richter, 2019, p. 5). The term *lobbying* and *interest representation* are synonymous, but in the EU context, the term *interest representation* is preferred because of the negative connotations of the term *lobbying*. The European Commission's communication and follow-up to their Green Paper, 'European Transparency Initiative' defines interest representation like this:

> (…) several participants in the consultation process were critical of the Commission's use of the term 'lobbying' to describe this phenomenon. Therefore, it should be stressed once again that the Commission's definition of 'lobbying' did not include any negative value judgment. Lobbying was referred to as "activities carried out with the objective of influencing the policy formulation and decision-making processes of the European institutions". The Commission explicitly underlined the legitimate and useful role of lobbying activities in a democratic system. The Commission's new register (see below) will nevertheless be entitled 'Register of Interest Representatives' (2007, p. 3).

This study will use the terms *lobbying* and *interest representation* interchangeably and as equal terms. The definition of lobbying rendered above, is quite restricted. The Inter-Institutional Agreement of the EU Transparency Register (2016) defines the type of activities that should register in their database as:

> Activities carried out with the objective of directly or indirectly influencing the formulation or implementation of policy and decision-making processes of the EU institutions (…) irrespective of where they are undertaken and the channel or medium of communication used (as cited in Greenwood, 2019, p. 26)

If interest representation or lobbying in the EU is defined through this definition, it includes any organised activity, anywhere and through any approach – that somehow aims to influence the policy- or the decision-making process of the EU. This study will be based on this wider understanding of the terms lobbying and interest representation.

Interest representation in Brussels has long been an active field of research, and the literature on lobbying is quite comprehensive. The predominant areas in the existing literature focus more generally on lobbying strategies (Beyers 2004; Beyers & Braun, 2014), how to influence the EU's policy and the EU's openness to interest representation (Coen and Richardson 2009; Greenwood 2011; Klüver, 2013; Dialer & Richter, 2019). The books of Coen and Richardson (2009), Greenwood (2011) and Dialer & Richter (2019) all widely discuss interest representation in the EU. These academic books cover the research on EU lobbying from the last decade and though they all include case-specific examples, none of them look at university representation in the EU. The focus of these cases often addresses specific policy fields rather than specific types of actors, as is the case in Dialer

& Richer (2019) where Part V of the book is devoted to 'trade agreements' and interest representation. In contrast, this study focuses specifically on universities with offices or permanent representation in Brussels and how these offices represent their home institutions interests in Brussels.

The numerous university offices, the many ways they collaborate, and the HES substantial participation rate within EU research and innovation funding are all reasons for why it was expected to find some, if not many, case studies involving universities in the literature on interest representation in Brussels. However, this expectation was not met. Broad literature searches failed to detect any prior studies on university interest representation in Brussels. Prior knowledge of university offices and universities as lobbying actors cease to exist, at least not in connection with the EU. It seems that these developments are passing by without gaining much attention by scholars. A possible reason for this could be that scholars looks beyond their own institution when conducting research.

In light of the restrictions in secondary literature, a questionnaire was conducted to gather more information about the work and characteristics of these offices (see: annex 1 & 2). The target group of this study was the Brussels based university network, Universities Informal Liaison Offices Network (UnILiON), a growing network of Brussels-based university offices launched in November 2018. Altogether, the network represents more 44 liaison offices representing 139 universities from Europe, Japan and Russia (UnILiON, 2018c). The total number of universities with permanent representation in Brussels is not clear. There has been a new wave of mobilization of universities in Brussels. Though some universities have been represented for several years, many new offices have popped up over the last five years and new networks for universities, like UnILiON, have been created.

This study is divided into five chapters. The first two chapters will assess and present the conceptual framework and methodology of the study, thereafter the research question will be addressed in the following three chapters before the analysis is collectively concluded. In more detail: *Chapter two* will provide some background information on how and why the EU has facilitated interest representation at EU level. It will present the two main strategies the interest organisations use to skew EU policy in their preferred direction and, furthermore, it will assess the political orientation of universities and present the universities role and interest in the EU structures for research and innovation. *Chapter three* will then present the methodological choices and considerations for this study. This study's use of mixed methods will be presented, and the questionnaire connected for this study will be explained in more detail. Thereafter follows the analysis of the questionnaire results and discussion.

The analysis is divided into three chapters. *Chapter four* will address the research question in answering to what the main characteristics of the university office are and define the universities main interests in being located with an office in Brussels. *Chapter five* will thereafter look into how the offices prefer to strategize when representing their home institutions interests. Moreover, whether they prefer to operate alone or collaborate with a network and also which type of strategies the offices utilize when communicating their positions or view on a new or existing EU policy. In the end, chapter five will discuss if these offices can categorize as lobbying offices, or if this description does not apply to all. *Chapter six* will discuss how the universities interests are represented in Brussels via the offices in the specific case of Horizon Europe, which is the upcoming framework programme for research and innovation. In the end, *chapter seven* will answer to the research question

and claim that universities are usually represented via their own office in Brussels, that often takes part in a larger network.

2 Interest Representation in the EU: The Case of HES

The multilevel characteristic of the European policy system gives the actors seeking to participate various routes for communication (Greenwood, 2011, p.2 3). Simply put, one can speak of a national route, where an interest organisation can utilize national structures. Or the Brussels route entailing representation to the European institutions as a more direct approach to the EU institutions constitutes (ibid., p. 25). Because this study's focus lies on universities with offices in Brussels, the generally focus here is on interest representation via the Brussels route. The first section will first present how and why the EU has facilitated interest representation at EU level, and further the two main types of strategies interest organisations use. The second section will move on to assess the political orientation of universities and define them more generally as interest organisations. The last section presents the developments at EU-level in research and innovation funding and considers the role of universities in the EU structures.

2.1 Interest Representation

From the 1990s to 2001 the European Commission changed their preferences from seeking an open and structured dialogue with 'special interest groups' to include the wider 'civil society' (Greenwood, 2019, p. 21). The EU was experiencing an increasing pressure to defend its output legitimacy, as the Union's policy output became both wider and deeper. Various procedures designed for a open and structured dialogue helped the EU institutions by being a 'marketplace of ideas' from which the Commission could choose (ibid.). Because of the democratic deficit, lack of recognizable political parties and a common public sphere, Greenwood argues that the EU institutions use organised interests as the 'best available proxy' for civil society (ibid., p. 22). Dialer & Richer (2019) emphasise that the EU is still in lack of a common public sphere and face a democracy dilemma when they discuss interest representation in the EU (p. 2). The authors further draw on Justin Greenwood's justification of the vast interest representation in Brussel as mending the democratic deficit of the supranational EU (ibid.).

There has been a massive growth in EU lobbying, at both the EU and national levels, over the past two decades (Coen and Richardson, 2009, p. 3). As illustrated above, it can be argued that interest representation can strengthen the EU's output legitimacy. It can give the broader public insight into the lobbying activities and actors represented at EU level. In 1995, the European Parliament was the first of the EU institutions to have a transparency register. In 2008, the European Commission followed, before the two institutions merged the registers into the EU Transparency Register three years later (Greenwood, 2019, p. 26). The EU transparency register provides information to the EU citizens on what interests are being pursued, by whom and with what budgets (Transparency Register, 2019a). In the case of interest organisations with a permanent representation in Brussels, it is important to consider the rules and norms these organisations are expected to play by if they want to interact with EU policy makers or have a say in the processes at the EU level.

The organisations with whom the EU institutions interact can publish an entry in the EU Transparency Register. Entering in the register binds the registered organisation to an obligatory code of conduct[1], but is incentivized by a set of 'carrots'. Those registered are required to meet with a Commissioner, their cabinet, a Director General of a Commission service, or to gain European Parliament Accreditation Pass (ibid., p. 25). Registration is also required to be able to part take in various stakeholder consultations (ibid.). The register is monitored by 'watchdog' NGOs such as Transparency International EU (ibid., p. 26) whose mission is to prevent corruption and promote integrity, transparency and accountability in the EU (Transparency International EU, n.d.). Their role is unofficial and is independent from the EU institutions. The EU transparency register is thus not just a portal for EU citizens but is valuable for the checks and balances and lobby regulation within the EU system. For the interest organisations with representation in Brussels that seek to influence policy at the EU level, it is be important to be registered in the Transparency Register.

EU lobbying is both diverse and complex which makes it difficult to establish reliable theoretical generalizations (Bouwen, 2004, p. 337). However, the scholars of EU interest representation have made considerable progress by systematically studying the political strategies of various interest organisations seeking to influence the policy-making process in the EU system (Bouwen & McCown, 2007, p. 423). Beyers (2004) states that actors utilize various channels and mediums (strategies) to influence the EU. He found that these influence strategies often are combined by the various types of interest actors (Beyers, 2004, p. 232). The two conventional understandings of influence strategies presented in Beyers (2004) are: *voice* (public strategies) and *access* (inside strategies). Voice strategies can simply be described as public political strategies and take place in the public sphere where communication between the various stakeholders becomes visible for the broader public (Beyers, 2004, p. 213). This could for instance be social media campaigns, or hosting events that are open for wider participation. Access strategies on the other hand, are more hidden from the broader public and can be explained in short as the exchange of policy-relevant information with public officials through both formal and informal networks (ibid.).

Access strategies require 'access' to specific officials, venues or networks. Examples can be to take part in a Commission Expert Group, or to have less formal meetings with an EU official both inside and outside of their office. Although access directly transfers information to EU policy makers, it should be emphasised that access does not automatically mean influence (Bouwen & McCown, 2007, p. 425). Actors could gain access to the policy-making process without being heard or gain any benefits of the situation (ibid.). Although the European system is open to lobbying activities, the external access is skewed in a particular direction (Beyers, 2004, p. 217). Public officials particularly need expertise, technical knowledge thus, interest organisations that are able to deliver knowledge that improves the EU's understanding on specific problems will have a better access to the EU system (Beyers, 2004, p. 217; Bouwen, 2002, p. 370). Bouwen (2002, p. 369) further describe the exchange between the lobbying entity and actors at EU level to be and exchange of access goods, like expertise, in return for 'access' to the EU agenda-setting and policy making process. By providing expert knowledge to EU legislators, interest groups are able

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[1] Code of Conduct:
http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/staticPage/displayStaticPage.do?locale=en&reference=CODE_OF_CONDUCT

to shape the content of policies (Klüver, 2012, p. 492). It is argued that the interest organisations influence increases with the amount of information it is able to supply (ibid.). Interest organisations expertise and specialization can heighten their access to policy-makers and influence on policy outcomes (Dür, 2008, p. 1217) and highlights why information gathering is said to be the cornerstone of lobbying (Dialer & Richter, 2019, p. 8). Information is also said to be the currency of lobbying in the EU (Chalmers, 2013, p. 39) It is not only needed by policy makers, but also affects the organisation, behavior, day-to-day activities, and influence of an interest organisation or group (ibid.).

Access strategies are focused towards the EU institutions that play an important role in the EU decision-making process and the European Commission has often been identified as the most important lobbying target (Bouwen & McCown, 2007, p. 424). The Commission's officials are dependent on external actor's information supply in the preparation of policy proposals (Klüver, 2012, p. 492). Dialer and Richter (2019, p. 1) note that the general assumption is that inside strategies directed at EU policy-makers or administrative personnel are ought to be the preferred option by interest organisations vis-à-vis outside lobbying. All types of information can be transmitted through access, but it is more difficult to transmit highly specialized and technical information through voice strategies (Beyers, 2004, p. 215). Because of the superior efficiency of access, one would think that actors prioritised access and completely ignore voice strategies – yet, not all actors do (ibid.).

Voice strategies can create possible political costs for policy makers and can stimulate more public and collective effort (Beyers, 2004, p. 215.). However, for interest organisations that work with highly specialized information, voice strategies could be thought to be used more rarely as it is difficult to engage a larger audience on such issues. Still, there is no systematic explanation of which types of actors use what type of strategies and it is rather said that both strategy types are used by the various interest organisations (ibid., pp. 227-228).

Because of the rules put upon EU officials in the EU transparency register, access strategies to a large degree requires an actor to be registered. This type of strategies could also be intensified through the lobbying entity's network and reputation and their level of information. Through a permanent representative and office in Brussels, an actor can more easily grow a European network by being more visible and easily available to EU officials. Thus, having a Brussels office can better already existing relationships with EU officials, or be a step on the way to gaining access to the EU system and grow the organisations network. Building a network in Brussels is generally important as the size of a lobbying coalition often determines an interest groups ability to influence policy makers (Dialer & Richter, 2019, p. 7). Showing that several actors agree on an issue, strengthens their case. For interests where conflicts are low and issues remain technical and below the radar of public salience, are more commonly successful (ibid.).

2.2 Universities as Interest organisations

The EU lobbying landscape is complex and ever changing. The size, range and type of interest groups has evolved drastically since the 1990s (Coen & Richardson, 2009, p. 5). In the 90s, direct lobbying by business, NGOs and social interests increased (ibid., p. 6). Today, an even broader spectrum of representatives are present, which can be illustrated by the various types of actors represeted in the EU transparency register. 15% of lobbying spendings comes from 'academic institutions, think tanks and regional organisations or bodies' (Dialer & Richter, 2019, p. 5).

There is no clearly structured way to decribe EU interest politics. It is neither a 'bottom-up' process of national interests feeding into the EU, or 'top-down' coordination of EU lobbying. It is rather managed through a multilevel process with numerous feedback loops and entry points constrained by the size of the interest organisation, lobbying budget, origin and the policy area (Coen & Richardson, 2009, p. 7). The same goes for actors. There are not just businesses, trade unions and NGOs represented at the EU-level. As the EU has become politically wider and deeper, so has the body of stakeholders ('interest holders'). Concurrently, with a growing EU focus on universities' knowledge output and relevant policy, the HES have experienced a growing interest in politics of their concearn at the EU-level. The growing body of actors with a stake in EU policy has also created an abundance of terms used to describe interest organisations[2]. The frequently used term 'interest group', refers to individuals, organisations or institutions that are associated with a body aiming at influencing public policy (Beyers, Eising, & Maloney, 2008, p. 1108)). This concept can be misleading as it suggests that individuals, organisations or institutions are associated in a body, while other actors operate as single institutions. In this study, the term *interest organisation* is thus preferred.

Not all organisations are political interest organisations, many are latent interest organisations (Beyers et.al., p. 1107). For example, conducting research and teaching students is the main business of a university. However, if the university lobbies the state or EU officials in order to obtain more funding, then it can be viewed as a political actor or as an episodically politically active organisation (ibid. p. 1107). In this view, universities are considered to have political priorities, although they are not really aggregating the preferences of some constituency (Rainer, 2008, p. 5). Universities' policy areas of interest are thought to be limited to the areas relevant for education and research. Education has had a position in European integration since 1950s, but it was in the 1980s that Community actions like Erasmus and other education programmes were introduced (Gornitzka, 2009, p. 113 & 119). The heightened focus on education at the EU level gathered more attention to EU actions in universities across Europe. The universities created new positions for permanent staff to advise on the rules and regulations of the EU action programmes (ibid., p. 120). Overarchingly, the growing EU attention led to the establishment of European associations (e.g. the European University Alliance) and interest groups, who amongst other things, lobby in Brussels (ibid.). Today, the landscape of university interest is more diverse.

The EU Transparency Register had a total number of 11752 registrations on 22 April 2019. The registrees are divided into six categories[3] (Transparency Register, 2019a). The EUs lobbying scene consists mostly of in-house lobbyists and trade/business/professional associations that makes up almost 6000 registrations. Universities fall under category four: 'Think tanks, research and academic institutitons'. When the numbers are disaggregated,

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[2] Interest groups, interest associations, interest organizations, organized interests, pressure groups, specific interests, special interest groups, citizen groups, public interest groups, non-governmental organizations, social movement organizations, and civil society organizations (Beyers et.al., 2008, p.1106).

[3] (I) - Professional consultancies/law firms/self-employed consultants (1,098), (II) - In-house lobbyists and trade/business/professional associations (5,979), (III) - Non-governmental organizations (3,142), IV - Think tanks, research and academic institutions (908), (V) - Organizations representing churches and religious communities (50), (VI) - Organizations representing local, regional and municipal authorities, other public or mixed entities, etc. (575) (Transparency Register, 2019a).

325 entities classify as academic institutions, out of which 53 have a Belgium-based office (ibid.).

Education might have been, and could still be the most important policy field for larger university associations, like the European University Association. However, universities have had a change in role throughout the last decades. They have become major research players in the public science systems and seized the position that traditionally belonged to large research organisations (Nedeva, 2013, p. 226). The EU research agenda which has also seen major developments over the past decade has become more relevant for universities. A general agreement among the universities represented in this study, is that their most relevant EU policy field is research and innovation, and that education comes in second (see: chapter 4.2). In this way, the Brussels offices of the universities are concentrated on a narrow political interest, and thus do not have many thematic lines to monitor.

This study finds that many of the universities used to be, or still are, represented via a regional office (see: section 4.1). Compared to starting from scratch, representation via a regional office allows the institution to utilize already existing structures, limit their spending and limit their resources. This connection to regional Brussels offices suggests that there could be similarities in the work of university and regional representation. Characteristics of the regional offices will thus be presented here as a basis for discussing how universities are represented in Brussels. This accounts for discussing both those still represented via a regional office, the strays from the regional office, and why new offices might choose to have a separate office.

Regional offices function as a channel for information between the territories they represent and the EU institutions (Greenwood, 2011, p. 187). They provide policy input, lobby for territorial and specific interests, access to EU Funds, information, and cooperates with other regions (Greenwood, 2011, p. 188; Trobbiani, 2019, p. 187). It is argued that weaker regions from centralized states mainly focus on seeking EU funding, while stronger regions from high-devolution countries also aim at influencing EU policy-making (Trobbiani, 2019, p. 187). This is illustrated in Greenwood (2011, p. 188) as the two leagues of regional representation. The first league regions seek to influence European public policy, while the second league usually hunt for European projects and subsidies.

Moreover, because regions often have a variety of interests, Trobbianni (2019, p. 187) argued that lobbying through thematic lines could open new opportunities for smaller regions to have a say on policy fields in which they are highly specialized. This indicates splitting up interest into thematic lines, like 'research and innovation', 'energy' and so on while at the same time having different advisors for the specific themes. In this way, the regions interests would be more clearly defined and systematically controlled. It is argued that interest organisations, that represent and defend interests of well circumscribed constituencies, have an advantage to more easily monitor the implementation of relevant policies, than actors representing more widespread interests (Dür, 2008, p. 1217). Furthermore, the specialized staff would strengthen the region's influencing efforts. By channelling sectoral interests, regions can gain access to structures that EU institutions grant civil society actors which provide specialized knowledge in exchange for inclusion in the policy-making process (ibid., p. 188). Trobbiani (2019, p. 193) argues that the thematic focus is also strongly driven by the regions search for EU funding through the development of interregional projects and applications to Horizon 2020.

Regional interests are represented at the EU-level via the Committee of the Regions, which is a heterogeneous advisory body that issues non-binding recommendations to the EU (ibid., p.185). However, it is also often described to be limited and inefficient in its representing efforts (ibid.). Not all regional interests are included in the Committee of the Regions competences such as, research and innovation and agriculture (ibid., p. 188). The incomplete nature and contested efficiency of official channels have caused regional offices to increasingly develop alternative channels and cooperate in thematic interregional networks (ibid., p. 186). Despite the centrality of lobbying, very few regions seek to individually influence EU decision-making and it is emphasised that the only way to achieve some results is to cooperate with other regions in Brussels (ibid., p. 190).

This insight enlightens some issues for specific university interest in cooperation within a regional office. Firstly, even if a university wants to be visible in the Brussels scene, it could be overshadowed under the regional umbrella. If the regional representation does not sufficiently separate thematic areas the office interests are more diffuse and will make the office weaker its efforts to influence EU policy and seek EU funds. On the contrary, if a university is represented through a stronger regional office with clearly defined interests, this could possibly strengthen their position.

It is difficult to determine the reason why some universities have chosen to separate from the regional office. One thought that comes to mind is, however, that having one's own office can create more opportunities for universities and make them more visible in the EU-bubble. It is also feasible that these offices are quite small due to their limited thematic scope. These assumptions will be more thoroughly discusses in section 4.1.

2.3 Universities and European Research

Since the Lisbon European Council in March 2000, the creation of a 'Europe of Knowledge' was a prime objective for the EU (European Commission, 2003, p. 3). In 2003, DG Research (now DG Research and Innovation) issued a communication initiating a debate on the role of universities within the scope of knowledge society and economy in Europe. The Commission made it clear that a healthy and flourishing university world would be essential to realizing the EU's vision (ibid., pp. 2-3). Higher Education Establishments (HES) would, therefore, be central in buliding the knowledge-based society through their societal contribution as a producer of knowledge, scientific research, education and training and its use of technological innovation (ibid., p. 4). Universities were experiencing more pressure and competition to attract talent, due to globalization. Compared to the US, European universities had less to offer and lower financial resources. Thus, the EU saw a need for incentives to strengten the level of excellence in Europe (ibid., p. 3). This Communication from the Europan Commission sent out a clear signal to the HES that the EU saw a need for the HES to shift their focus beyond national boarders.

According to the European University Association (EUA) this was the first time that the Commission clearly acknowledged the unique role universities have in shaping the European knowledge society (EUA, 2003, p. 2). The EUA agreed with the European Commission's report that European universities were experiencing a decrease in public funding and growing competition. Additionally, the EUA experienced that an increasing proportion of their activities were linked to research (Conraths & Smidt, 2005, p. 8). As a result, the EUA believed that the financing of research and innovation at Europe's universities would undoubtedly be one of the main challenges facing the higher education sector at a time where the world was in a rapid transition towards a competitive knowledge

society and economy (ibid.). Though the EU have long had a research policy within research systems, the EU first gained importance as an actor in the early 1990s. The Commission enlarged the scope of activities and fields of research it funded and framed them in a new type of programme, the framework programme (Van Der Meulen, 2002, p. 341).

These developments can also be described as the *Europeanization of research* and researchers. Van Der Meulen (2002, pp. 352-353) defined Europeanization of research to imply more collaboration of university researchers at the European level; the growing importance of European research funding schemes; and the extent to which Europe has become an arena for quality assessment and social accounting. His definition also more generally includes the level of collaboration with European colleagues (ibid., pp. 352-353). However, the Europeanization of research does not restrict national funding. The EU shares competences with the member states in the area of research (European Commission, 2019). Article 4 TFEU section 3 states that

> In the areas of research, technological development and space, the Union shall have competence to carry out activities, in particular to define and implement programmes; however, the exercise of that competence shall not result in Member States being prevented from exercising theirs. [4]

The framework programme in the EU is an added opportunity that facilitates research and collaborations at the European level and creates an extra opportunity for European researchers to get funded. However, the EU funding schemes can be viewed in terms of contributing to another league. Massimo Busuoli, Head of the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) Brussels Office likes to joke with his colleagues by saying: *"So you are one of the best Norwegian researchers? Great! – then you are qualified for the Champions League, will you participate?"* (*my emphasis*: Regjeringen.no, 2018). This highlights the fact that EU research opportunities are perceived by some as another league and to some extent as an arena for quality assessment.

Like NTNU, several universities have opened office in Brussels over the last 15 years (See: chapter 4.1). This coincides both with the fact that research has become an ever-larger focus of the EU and with the literature stating there has been massive growth in EU lobbying over the past three decades (Coen and Richardson, 2009, p. 3). Moreover, it illustrates that universities are growing players in the EU arena. This growth should be seen in context with the substantially larger budget allocated to research funding by the EU over the last years.

Framework Programme 6 (FP6) ran from 2002-2006 and was the first framework programme that clearly intended to contribute to a wider set of policy initiatives. Specifically, to the European Research Area and to answer to the Lisbon Goal of 2000 (European Commission, 2010, p. 1). The 2010 evaluation of FP6, was the first truly comprehensive evaluation of a single framework programme. FP6 allowed for partner research and increased researchers' international networks. The evaluation showed that, receiving FP6 funding was regarded as a quality indicator for the scientists, research groups and the organisations involved (ibid., p. 40). Of all the participants in the FP6, HES represented 37% of the participation.

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[4] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX:12016E004

The following framework programme for research, FP7 was worth €30 billion more than its predecessor. FP7 was a strong financial instrument and a major investment in knowledge, innovation and human capital meant to increase the potential for economic growth and strengthen European competitiveness (European Commission, 2015). FP7 offered more stable and predictable funding opportunities for researchers on a European level than ever before. Among the 29.000 organisations participating in FP7, HES now stood for 44% of the participants (ibid., p. 27). The high HES representation can be a result of the new features that were implemented in FP7. Academic research was for instance reinforced through programmes that supported individual top-level researchers from every scientific discipline carrying out excellent frontier research (ibid., p. 5).

The continuity of participating organisations from FP6 to FP7 was also highest among universities who had a 59% overlap (European Commission, 2015, p. 28). Even though FP7 was argued as being open to newcomers, a very high percentage of the funding was received by organisations that participated in FP6, and only a small number of universities managed to qualify as key players in EU funded research (ibid.). A key message on the road to the next FP was therefore to make success-rates higher and the programme more open to newcomers.

In 2014 Horizon 2020 was launched with a budget of €80 billion. The interim evaluation published by the European Commission in 2017, shows that HES are still the group with the highest participation. Universities have the largest share of applications, receives most funding contribution (39%), but also have the lowest success-rate (13,1%) (European Commission, 2017, pp. 11, 19 & 24). The low success rate speaks of the vast competition the universities researchers meets at the EU-level. Horizon 2020 was bigger and more open to newcomers. After the first three years, statistics showed that 54.4% of the participants in Horizon 2020 are newcomers, however, only 2% of all newcomers are HES (ibid., p. 34). The low success-rates show that getting the EU funding is comparable to getting through the eye of a needle. One specific measure to get ahead in the process and strengthen university researcher's success rates could therefore be to have an office in Brussels.

In the next budget period, the framework programme for research and innovation will be redefined. Horizon Europe, as proposed by the European Commission, now looks to become the most ambitious research and innovation funding programme ever. The Commission proposes a budget of €100 billion for 2021-2027 for Horizon Europe and the Euratom Research and Training Programme in which €97,6 billion is allocated to Horizon Europe (European Commission, 2018a). Thus, research and innovation continue to be a focus of the EU and continues to have a growing budget. Chapter six will in more detail describe the upcoming framework programme and relate it to the work of the university offices in Brussels.

Graph 1: Growth of Framework Programme funding 1984-2020
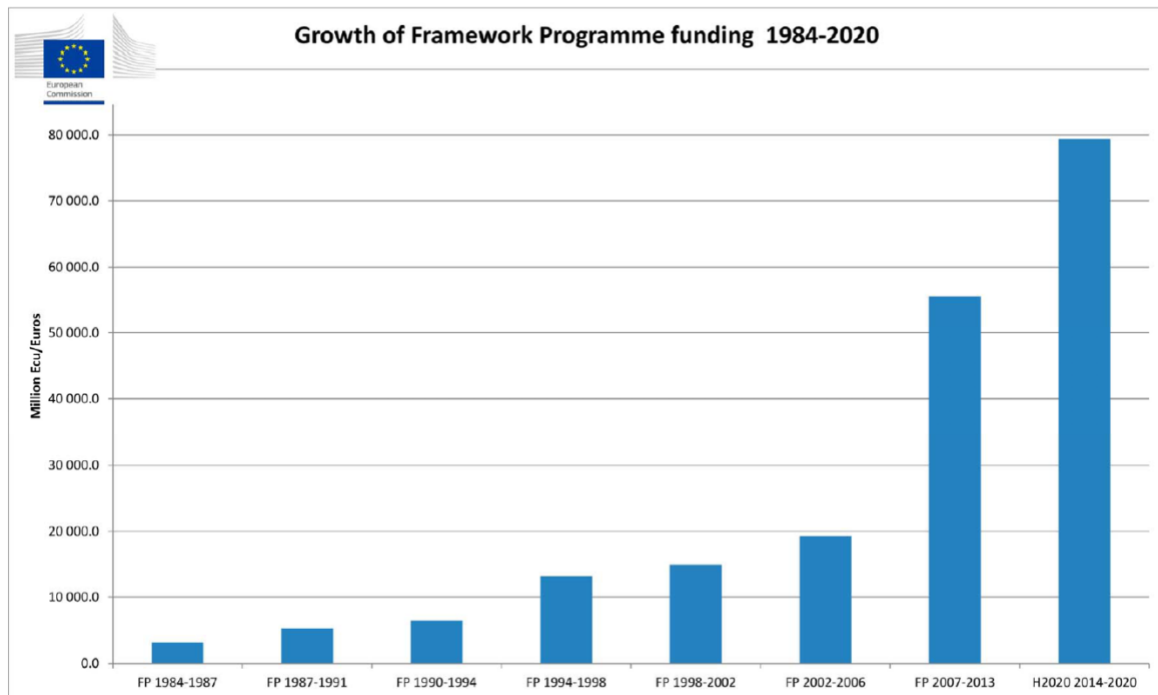
Source: European Commission, 2013

In the single case study of Primeri and Reale (2012, p. 117) it was concluded that university participation in EU framework programmes had not produced changes in the institution's organisation, human resources, production or research priorities. Still, some priorities or adaptions must have been curved in the EU direction, seeing that HES has been the largest beneficiary group in the last three EU framework programmes, and has received more funding than any other group, including research organisations. Moreover, today, there are over 50 academic interest organisations with an office in Brussels (who are registered in the Lobbying Register). On another note, Primeri and Reale's conclusion could still be expected today if one were to conduct a single case study, because the political orientation of universities will vary - even for the universities represented in this study. Though the sample of this study has chosen to open a Brussels office, not all of them have set research priorities aimed towards the EU programme (see: section 4.2). Because of differences like this, it is necessary to look at a broader spectrum of entities if one wants make conclusions on a more general level.

3 Method

3.1 Mixed Methods

There is little to no existing research on the chosen topic. Thus, in agreement with my supervisor, it was decided that conducting a questionnaire in order to gather original data would give the best insight into the characteristics and work of university offices in Brussels. Although there is little research and information on university offices and interest representation, the conceptual framework on EU lobbying is well established. The data collected via the questionnaire will be analysed through the existing conceptual framework of interest representation in Brussels to address the research question, *how are universities represented in Brussels?* This study, therefore, depends on both quantitative and qualitative data.

The core idea of *mixed methods* research is that the mixing of data can provide a stronger understanding of a problem than a qualitative or quantitative method can provide by itself (Creswell, 2014, p. 215; Read & Marsh, 2002, p. 231). Mixed methods research is relatively new in the social- and human sciences as a distinct research approach (Creswell, 2014, p. 217). In Creswell (2014, p. 14) mixed methods is defined as a combination of qualitative and quantitative research and data in a single research study. Several terms are used to describe this approach (synthesis, integrating, multi-method) but mixed methods is the dominating term in recent publications (ibid., p. 217). Mixed methods first appeared in the 1980s in the fields of health sciences, education, management and sociology (ibid., p. 217). Since then, mixed methods has developed and been applied in several fields of research. Mixed methods research is considered to minimize the limitations of both qualitative and quantitative methods while at the same time provide for a complex and sophisticated approach to frontier research (ibid.). Because this is a preliminary study, mixed methods can be advantageous as is opens the possibility to study a larger subject pool, while at the same time allowing for filling in and reflect on the quantitative data with existing literature. There are various ways to conduct mixed methods research. This study utilizes *explanatory sequential mixed methods*, where the quantitative research is conducted and analysed first, before the results are built on and explained in more detail with qualitative research (Creswell, 2014, p. 15; Read & Marsh, 2002, p. 239). This method is *explanatory* in the sense that quantitative data results are explained further with the qualitative data, and *sequential* because the quantitative data collection was conducted before the qualitative (Creswell, 2014, p. 15). The questionnaire conducted for this study was initially informed by my personal experiences from working in Brussels and an initial literature review.

Figure 1: Illustrating Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods
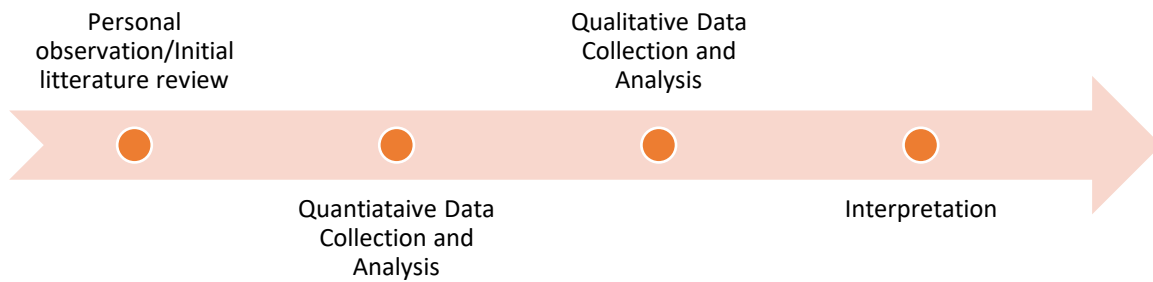
Source: Charlotte Eide, 2019 as proposed by Creswell, 2014.

The course of this study demands an initial mapping of universities with permanent representation in Brussels and the office's characteristics. It further demands insight into their goals and tasks. This type of information is most likely to be up-to-date if collected from the institution itself. The information is also more simply attained in a larger quantum via a questionnaire with numeric or closed-ended questions, rather than via more open-ended and in-depth interviews. Because this study's research question seeks to more generally characterize how universities and their interests are represented, a questionnaire was as more appropriate to collect more cases to base the analysis on. Furthermore, this study is limited both in time and funding, and thus, interviews would have to be limited to fewer cases.

The quantitative data provides the study with insight into the objects that are studied, while the qualitative data provides the study with an understanding of interest representation in the EU and with a conceptual framework for assessment. In this way, the qualitative data functions as a field in which one can compare the study's findings with other types of interest representation and lobbying strategies, and thus place the new information in the literature of interest representation in the EU. Furthermore, qualitative data in the form of official EU documents are added to the study to better understand the work of the university offices in Brussels. Research and innovation policy and funding are determined as the most relevant focus for the university offices, therefore, an assessment of the EU framework programmes and universities role in the EU funding schemes is presented. This assessment is based on the European Commission's documents and figures and presents the reader with the development of the framework programmes since the mid-2000s until today. Figuratively, the assessment of the EU framework programmes presents a basis for discussion when analysing the questionnaire results.

To give a comprehensive answer to the main research question, three sub research questions were added. These questions will support the direction of this preliminarily study. This study specifically investigates: (1) What are the main characteristics of the university offices? (2) How are the universities' interests represented through these offices? And (3) What is the main type of university office in Brussels? The first sub-question requires knowledge of the office's characteristics – this covers for instance how many employees are working in the office, how many institutions the office represents and the office' fields of interest. This type of information could be gained by looking into the EU Transparency Register, but the register is not mandatory and therefore may not include all relevant actors present in Brussels. Furthermore, the EU transparency register is only able to provide information regarding the policy areas of interest and the number of registered meetings with EU officials. Sub-question two will address how the universities interest are

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represented, and more specifically in the case of the next EU framework programme, Horizon Europe. In this case, the EU Transparency Register is not sufficient, as the information that can be retrieved is too general and not necessarily up-to-date.

To gain more detailed insight into the question of '*how are universities represented in Brussels?*', a questionnaire was conducted. The questionnaire was thought to be the best method of recording data for this study. Moreover, the chosen selection ended up being more inclusive than if the data had been collected through the Transparency Register, as not all respondents were registered there.

3.2 The Questionnaire

The selection for this questionnaire was the newly established informal university network, UnILiON (UnILiON, 2018a). The network was formally launched in November 2018 and seems to be the only network that is restricted to university participation while being limited to members with a permanent office in Brussels. In contrast to other networks, participation in this network is free. The purpose of the network is to provide a common meeting place for the exchange of information between the university officers, that works on behalf of the universities in Brussels. It is feasible that membership in UnILiON is pursued because the network is open to participation without payment. Within a short time, UnILiON has become a network of 44 university liaison offices. The network represents universities from EU member states, associated member states and third countries (ibid.). There can be and probably are other offices that would be relevant to investigate, and it is difficult to say if the UnILiON network is a perfect sample. There is a possibility that other networks could have been targeted for this questionnaire but to my knowledge there are not any other networks restricted to permanent university representation in Brussels that exist. UnILiON is, in this case, seen to represent the typical case of university offices in Brussels. Furthermore, as an added bonus, I have professional contacts in the network, as the secretary was my former trainee supervisor. This gives me access to the network which allowed me to more easily contact the group of liaison officers who would serve as the respondents to the questionnaire.

My personal connection to and knowledge of the field of university representation in Brussels are the two main reasons for why I chose to conduct this study. This both strengthens and weakens the study. While my familiarity with the field increases my understanding of the office's terminology, their various activities and dynamics it also raises the issue of personal bias. This personal bias is present both when designing the questionnaire and when analysing the data. To mediate this bias, this study is concentrated on the offices in general and does not pose the respondents with personal questions. In the analysis, the results are analysed quantitatively, and not as separate responses. Thus, this study is interested in the large patterns and trends at the macro level, to give more generalized conclusions and does not focus on single cases. In order to protect the integrity of the respondents, the questionnaire was also kept anonymous and did not collect personal information or IP addresses.

The questionnaire consists of 20 questions and was estimated to take 15 minutes to fill out. This was decided by me and my supervisor as the maximum length to ensure that the busy university officers would have time to fill it out. Most of the questions were informed by my personal experience and observations from working in the university branch in Brussels. Some of the questions in the questionnaire were inspired by Riccardo Trobbiani's (2019) research on European regions and their interests. His study looked at similar

characteristics and tasks of regional offices, as this study seek to investigate with university offices. Borrowing questions or taking inspiration from other surveys is an acceptable practice (Andres, 2012, p. 65). Trobbiani's questionnaire collected data on a topic similar to mine, and his questions posed as a useful guide. It was particularly helpful to look at what type of questions and scales he used when developing questions. Furthermore, his questions inspired new questions. In this way, former research on a similar topic as well as my former knowledge was merged to develop a questionnaire that investigates the specific case of university Brussels offices and answers the research question.

The questionnaire was composed of various types of questions but consisted mostly of closed questions. The aim of the questionnaire was to generate numbers in order to analyse the data quantitatively. It was thus necessary to develop closed questions that required 'yes/no' answers, multiple choice, or answers reflected through scales (Andres, 2012, p. 35). Three of the questions presented ranking scales that distinguished between alternatives from most to least important. This type of question can be difficult to complete, as the respondent might view several alternatives equally and is here forced to distinguish between them. Therefore, ranking questions are inherently methodologically difficult (ibid., p. 77). The rank of one alternative is dependent on the rank of another alternative and the emphasis given on the top and bottom priority can, through this scale, look more or less important than it actually is (ibid.). In question nine for instance, the respondent was asked to rank many alternatives. In the analysis, the results of this ranking were placed into categories of being among the respondents 'top two', 'middle two' and 'bottom two' – priorities (see: annex 2), instead of having a full scale of priority one to six. This still opened for the results to be analysed quantitatively and distinguish which of the alternatives stuck out as more and less important.

Most of the remaining closed questions also included an 'other' alternative – many of which left room for comments. This was done to include alternative anwers that were not included in the preselected alternatives. By opening up for 'other' comments or follow-up with an open question, the respondent could elaborate with their own words. Where it was seen useful to retrieve a fuller understanding of why the respondents agreed with or disagreed with a question, the question was followed up with an open-ended question where the respondent had an opportunity to explain their answers. This was for instance the case in question 20. The 'yes/no' question was followed up with the question of 'why do you think that is?', the respondent had room to comment on their view and to raise issues that could be important. The same relates to questions where the respondent had the opportunity to select the 'other'-alternative and share an alternative, not considered by me. The questionnaire also included a couple of open questions, nevertheless, they were limited as they asked for 'country of origin' and 'EU policy fields of interest' (see full questionnaire outline in Annex 1).

The group targeted for this questionnaire is a highly specialized group, who share a common technical language, the questionnaire therefore included technical terms like 'FP9' without an explanation. Many of the questions were, for practical reasons, accompanied by a guide to how to answer them (see annex 1). Still, in some, but in very few cases, the open questions are visibly misinterpreted by the respondent. Where this misinterpretation is clear the response has been treated as 'no answer'. An example of this is in question 11 where the respondents were asked which EU policy fields were most relevant for their office. One respondent replied by naming EU institutions rather than policy fields. This was interpreted as 'no answer' as the given answer could not be related to the question. The misinterpretation seems to be a case of misreading. In hindsight, I see that this error could

have been avoided if the policy fields were pre-listed and the question was turned into a multiple choice or rating-question.

Before the questionnaire[5] was sent out to the respondents, it was pilot-tested by some of my fellow students to ensure that there were no errors in the form. The questionnaire was, after the testing, sent out with a cover letter to the heads of offices in UnILiON (see Annex 3). The questionnaire and cover letter were first distributed to the core group mailing-list, where the heads of offices are represented, by the Secretary of UnILiON on my behalf. A personal reminder was thereafter sent out from my student-email one and a half weeks later. In total, the survey collected 16 responses. At the time, UnILiON had 44 members, which equals to a 36% response rate. It seems that a few responses have not been registered. This was noticed late in the process and has been discovered through email contact I have had with some of the respondents. The number of such cases is not certain, but apparently occurred on at least two occasions. Why the responses were not collected could be a result of the respondents opening the URL to the questionnaire, putting it aside for a while and not reloading the page before filling out and submitting the form. At that point the time limit for the web-page had expired. This is a clear weakness with conducting online questionnaires and was not accounted for prior to sending out the form.

The Heads of Offices that were asked to reply to the questionnaire have busy schedules and thus, a 100% response rate was not expected. Because this study is also time-limited, the questionnaire was only open to collect responses for three weeks. After the three weeks, the questionnaire was closed to ensure there was enough time to analyse the result and complete the study on time. Another reason for why some could have chosen to not participate could be that all the questions except for one were mandatory. There are both strengths and weaknesses of making the questions mandatory. On the one hand, it ensures that the respondents answer all the questions which is important for the validity of the analysis. On the other hand, if a respondent does not feel that one question could not be answered by them, it could cause the respondent to not submit their response at all. Whether this was the case for any of the officers in this study is not known.

The 16 responses are satisfactory in this small-scale study, though a 100% response rate would have, of course, been preferred. Measures could have been taken to secure a higher response rate. More time or another reminder would probably open for more responses. The questionnaire could also have been sent out to other university offices outside UnILiON. It would be quite time consuming to find single targets. Moreover, because I do not have access to these offices, response-rates were thought to be low compared to the amount of time it would take.

In total, the 16 respondents to the questionnaire represent 74 universities from 12 different countries: Cyprus, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, Norway, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom. There is thus a great number of universities represented, form both EU member states, third countries, and associated member states. The wide variety of national background and relationship to the EU shows that the selection is inclusive. It is thus, more generalizable to the general pool of university interests in Brussels than if only answers from offices representing universities from the same country were collected. There is an overrepresentation of Western European countries which is also the case for the UnILiON network in total (UniLiON, 2018b). This, however, is not unique

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[5] Web-tool used for filling out the survey was: www.surveymonkey.com

for either UnILiON or this study. In 2016, 95% of all lobbying spending came from countries that joined the EU before 2005 (Dialer & Richter, 2019, p. 5). This overrepresentation seems to be due to a lack of representation from post-2005 member states in general. Although the geographic discrepancies in interest representation raises some basic and democratic questions of interest representation in the EU in general, it will not be of further discussion in this study.

The questionnaire findings do not allow the researcher to fully explore the meanings that respondents attach to responses or actions (Read & Marsh, 2002, p. 240). Therefore, it is important to note that not all is uncovered in this questionnaire. Some questions might have been too limited whereas other questions might have been overlooked or even not included in the questionnaire. Questionnaires do not allow for follow-up questions in the same way as an in-depth interview. Moreover, the results of the analysis do not provide the reader with any fixed truth. It rather suggests alternatives that, on the basis of my sample, seem more or less generalizable for the university landscape in Brussels.

Figure 2: Map showcasing the geographic location of universities represented in the questionnaire in Europe (missing: Japan)

Source: Author's own compilation based on the questionnaire's response.

4 Setting Up Shop in Brussels

The study will now move on to analyse the responses received through the questionnaire and compare the results with the existing literature on interest representation in Brussels. Keeping in mind that this study aims to give insight into how the offices operate and in which ways they represent their home institutions, this chapter will explore the characteristics of these offices to give the reader a better picture of the practical side of *how universities are represented in Brussels*. The first section will present the opening years of the offices, how many full-time employees they have, and the number of universities represented by these offices. Furthermore, it is interesting to investigate in which way the universities might have been represented in Brussels prior to having their own office. The section will therefore also draw lines between regional Brussels offices and university offices, as 50% of the respondents to this study used to, or still have, an affiliation with their regional office. The second section will then move on to present the policy fields, main tasks and the goals perceived by the respondents as the most relevant for their office. Additionally, it will look into how many of the universities represented have set research priorities and compare them to the structure of the current framework programme, Horizon 2020.

4.1 Characteristics of the Offices

There seems to be two waves of university offices opening up shop in Brussels (Graph 2). The first wave in the late 2000s and the next one in the late 2010s. The first cluster are the six offices opening between 2007-2010. This cluster overlaps with the first three years of the seventh framework programme. In FP7 the budget increased tremendously and thereby possibly incentivising universities to open office at this time. The following cluster consisting of eight offices that opened between 2016-2018. Out of the 16 universities examined, the results of this study are that 15 of them opened an office in Brussels after the EU framework programmes became considerably more valuable. After 2007 the EU framework for research an innovation became more stable and predictable than before. The EUs promising budget could have encouraged universities to mobilize in Brussels and result in universities 'following the money' like many actors before them.

Graph 2: Overview of the opening of offices

Q1: When did your Brussels Office open?
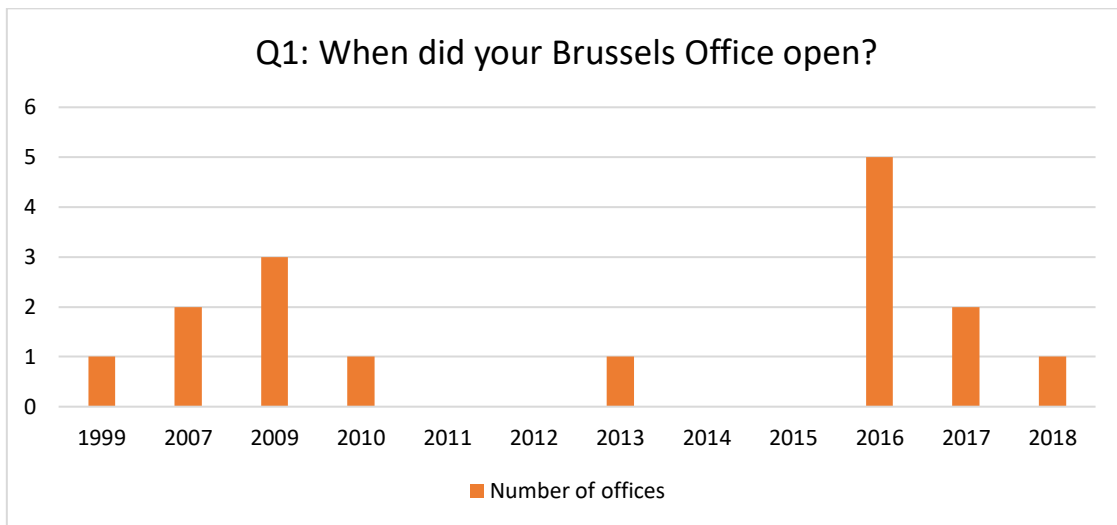
Source: author's own compilation based on the questionnaire's response.

When the results of graph 2 are compared to the registration years of academic institutions with Belgium-based offices in the Transparency register (Transparency Register, 2019b), which is showcased in graph 3, the two clusters are not as clear. In graph 3, the first cluster is not relevant. It is important to note that the EU Transparency Register as it is today was first launched in 2011, which could result in the first cluster being shifted forward. Yet, the years 2016-2018 stand out in both cases. Almost two thirds of the registered entities in the Transparency register, registered within the last three years. Registration in the register does not have to align with the opening date of an office. Offices may have been registered both before and after an office actually opened. But on an overarching level, the two graphs illustrate that universities opening offices in Brussels is a quite recent phenomenon. Moreover, these very recent openings and registrations show that there is a continuously growing body of university interest in the Brussels scene.

Graph 3: Number of registrations by year in the EU Transparency Register (Academic Institutions)

Number of registrations by year in the EU Transparency Register (Academic Institutions)
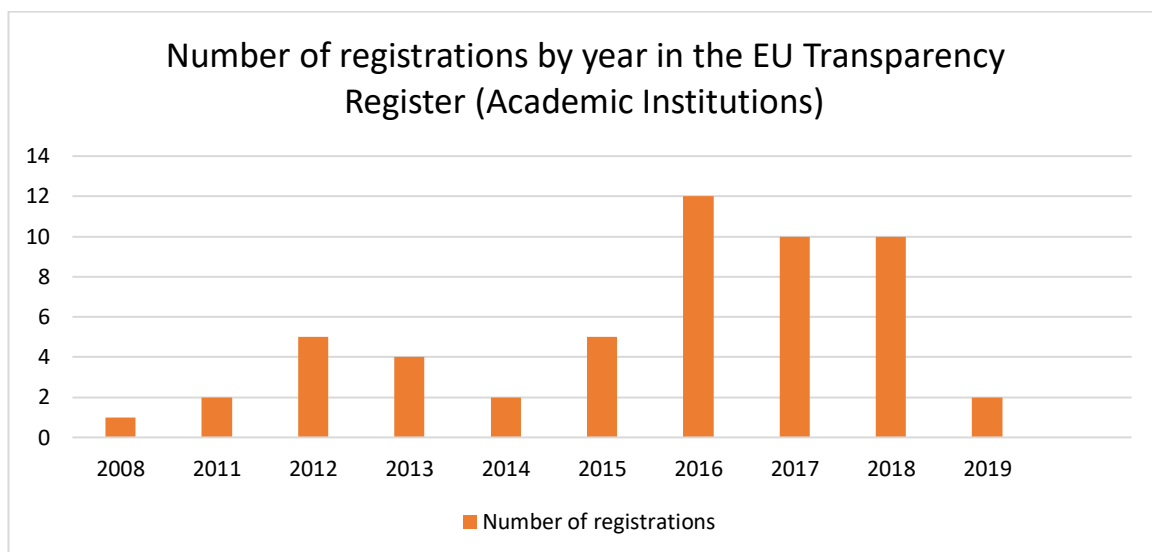
Source: Transparency Register, 2019b

Graph 4 presents the number of universities represented via the single office. It shows that the university offices are usually quite small, both in terms of officers and the number of institutions they represent. Of the 16 offices studied, 13 of the offices represents four or fewer universities. Seven of the offices represents a single university. Other answers were: six, 11 and 31 universities represented. The reason why some offices represent a considerably larger number of institutions is not analysed here, but the diversity in size is certainly interesting. Overall, based on these results, the majority of these offices usually represents one, or quite few institutions, this is certainly not a rule and there are a few exceptions.

Graph 4: Number of universities represented via the single office
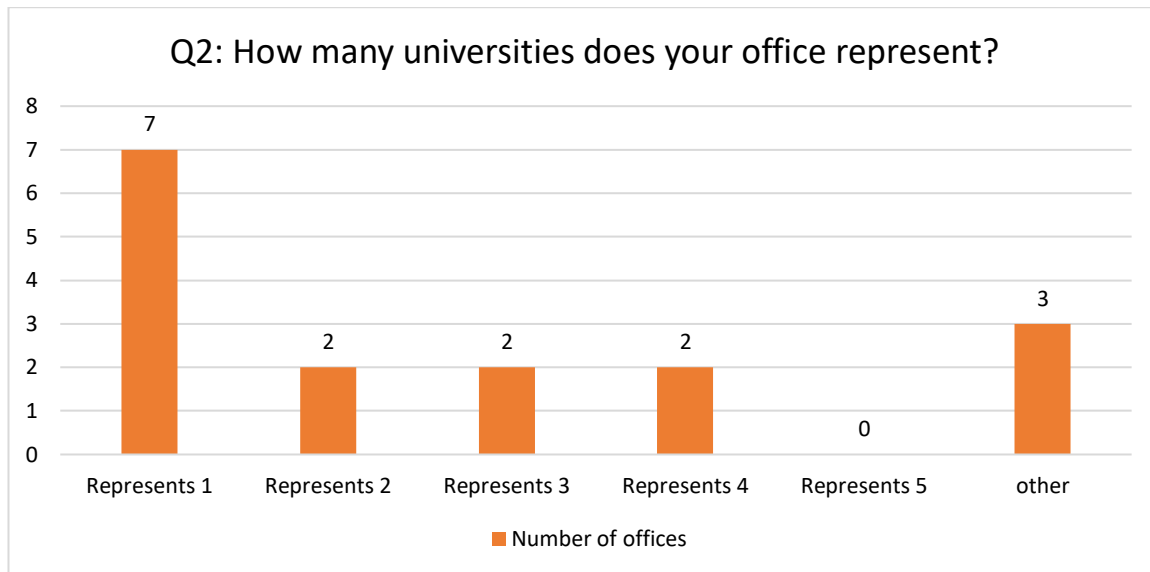
Source: author's own compilation based on the questionnaire's response.

It could be expected to see a proportional number of universities represented to the number of full-time officers. Indeed, the number of full-time employees working at the university offices are presented in table 1 and show that the two elements does coincide to a large degree. Out of the 16 offices, 11 offices represented here conveyed that they have one full-time employee. Seen in comparison to the number of institutions represented (Graph 4) it becomes evident that in some of the cases, a single representative is responsible for more than one university.

Table 1: Q7: How many full-time employees work at your office?

Answer Choices	Responses	
1	68,75 %	11
2	6,25 %	1
3	6,25 %	1
4	6,25 %	1
5	6,25 %	1
More than five	6,25 %	1

Source: author's own compilation based on the questionnaire's response.

Excluding one, all the other respondents state that they represent the entire university. That includes all faculties and departments. The offices' affiliation to their home institutions are presented in graph 5. It shows that the one exception is the office that represents a

single department within the university. This could, for instance, be a more research-intensive department. When the respondents were asked to classify the universities, they represent as public or private, the clear majority of the officers stated that they represent public universities. Specifically, 12 of the offices represent public universities; two represent private universities; and one represent both public and private[6]. On a more detailed level, the majority of the universities are perceived as general universities. In more simple terms, they have a wide scientific span. This was the description given by 13 of the respondents. Other answers were: technical university (one); applied sciences (three); and research intensive (one). Here, the number of responses succeed the number of respondents due to many of the offices representing more than one type of university.

Graph 5: Brussels office affiliation with the university
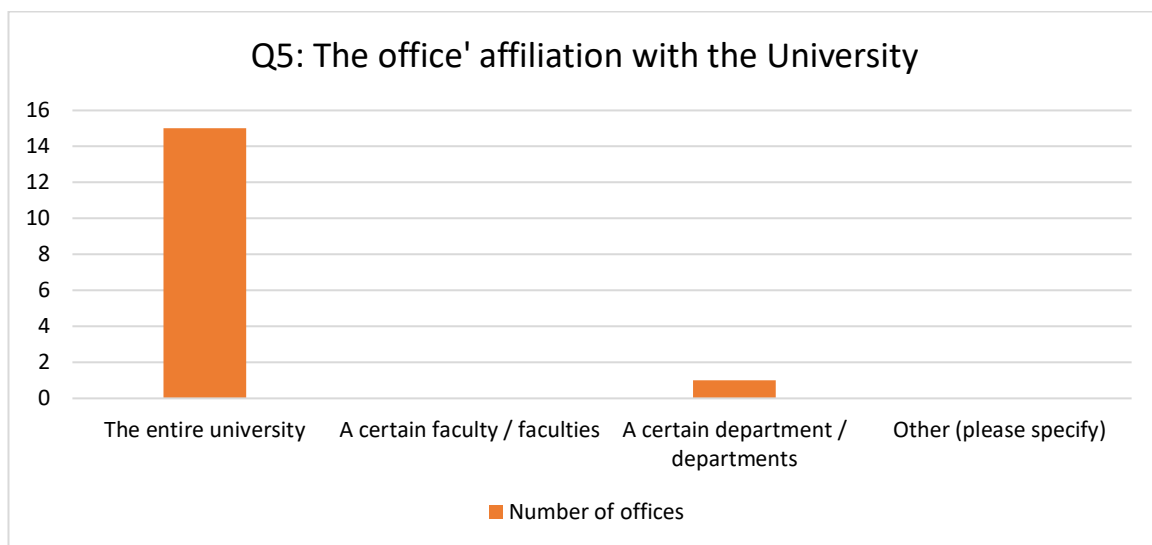
Source: author's own compilation based on the questionnaire's response.

As previously illustrated, these offices are quite young. However, many of the universities were in fact representation in Brussels prior to having their own office. The universities connection to a regional office is presented in graph 6 and shows that four of the offices say that their institutions were represented via a regional office prior to having their own office. Another three of the offices are in fact still represented via a regional office. Another seven respondents note they did not have any representation in Brussels before opening their own office. All in all, including the two 'other' answers,[7] 50% of the respondents say that the institutions they represent did, or still have an affiliation with a regional office.

Graph 6 further, shows that most of the offices represented here have a separate office, while three are still represented via their regional office. It is conceivable that the three respondents that are still represented via a regional office belong to a regional representation with clearly defined thematic lines and specialized staff responsible for the different areas. Keeping in mind that the members of UnILiON are required to have a

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[6] One respondent did not state whether they represented public or private university(y/ies).

[7] (1) we received ad hoc support (non formalized) from the regional office prior to us setting up our own presence, which is based in the regional office. (2) We have a Representation of our region, but universities wanted to have their own supporter in Brussels.

permanent university representation, these regions should have permanent officers working on university interests. The characteristics of their representation is thus that they are affiliated with a larger entity but has at least one permanent officer working on the university members behalf.

The majority of the respondents, however, has an independent office. Four have chosen to separate from the regional office. Their choice could be a result of the universities motivation to more systematically influence the EU policy-making or to be more visible in the EU context. It is especially interesting to analyse possible reasons for why some universities chose to separate from the regional office, as this could give an indication of what the offices aims to achieve on their own. If it is the trend that regional offices are separating their work into thematic lines, universities might have seen it as just as effective, or even more so, to completely separate from the regional office. In contrast to regional offices witch functions more like an umbrella for various regional interests, university offices will be thematically more precise and rather promote their own franchise.

Graph 6: Which of the following statements fits the institution(s) you represent?
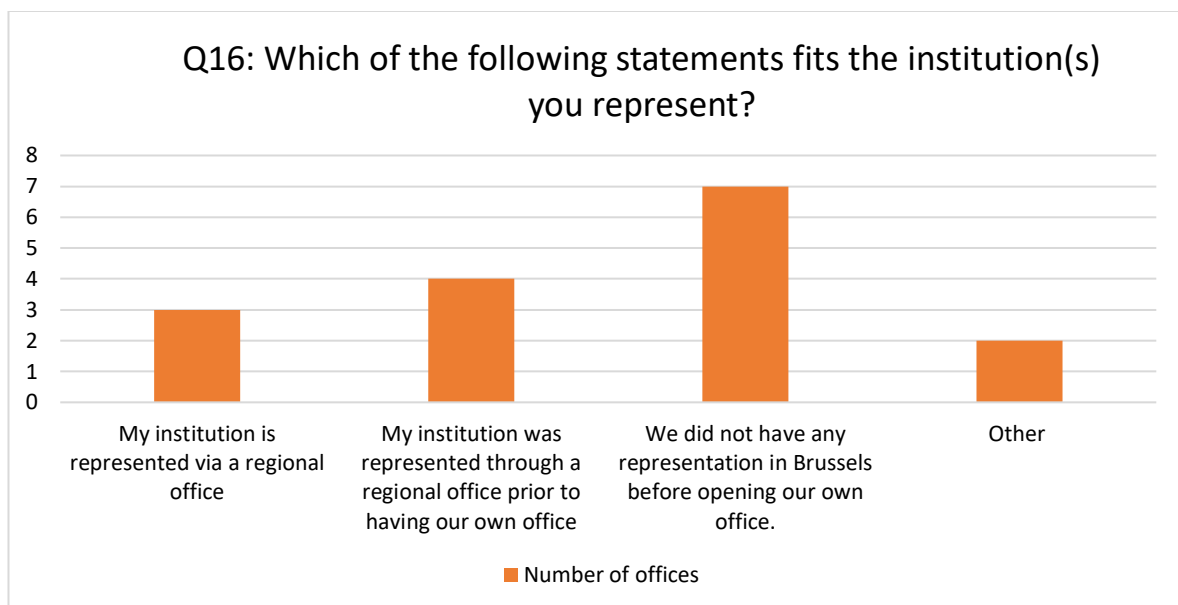
Source: author's own compilation based on the questionnaire's response.

On the basis of the selection in this study, it is fair to suggest that the most frequent characteristic of university offices in Brussels is that they are quite young and small. They are small in terms of both the number of institutions represented and permanent officers. In most cases, the offices act on behalf of general and public universities and represent the entire university. Representing a general university on an overarching level, and sometimes more than one will induces cross-disciplinarily in the daily work of the offices. For the smaller offices, monitoring and collecting information could thus be more challenging as they lack several officers who can specialize within different fields. The history of universities' representation varies between those that formerly were a part of a regional office, those that still are and those that did not have any former representation in Brussels. However, today the majority of the universities reflected in this study are represented via their own office.

4.2 Defining HES Interests in Brussels

Thus far, this study has clarified some basic characteristics with these offices and have seen that though they come in different shapes and sizes, the majority are small. This section will look more precisely into the political focus, office activities and goals, and whether the universities or university offices studies here, have set research priorities.

The vast majority (13 out of the 15 valid responses) perceive research and innovation as the most relevant EU policy field for their office (see Graph 7). Ten of the above 13 have 'Higher Education / Erasmus+' (student mobilization) as their second most relevant policy field. The last three of these 13 did not name any other policy field of relevance. Contradictorily, one respondent listed higher education policy and Erasmus + first and research and innovation second. Although there are some exceptions, the overall numbers collected in this questionnaire suggests that the offices' main political priorities and interests lie in the research and innovation policy field. 'Higher education/Erasmus+' are a clear second priority but is not perceived as important as research and innovation.

One office defined its primary, and only policy field of interest as internships. It is unclear what this answer is referring to and if the question might have been misunderstood. Another respondent was coded with 'no answer' as the question was without doubt misunderstood. Four offices named more than two policy fields Graph 7 includes their third priority (see: annex 2). Three of the offices put regional policy in third place, which coincides with the number of offices that are also affiliated with a regional office. Whether this is a result of their affiliation or a coincidence is not sure.

Graph 7: Most relevant policy field as perceived by the offices
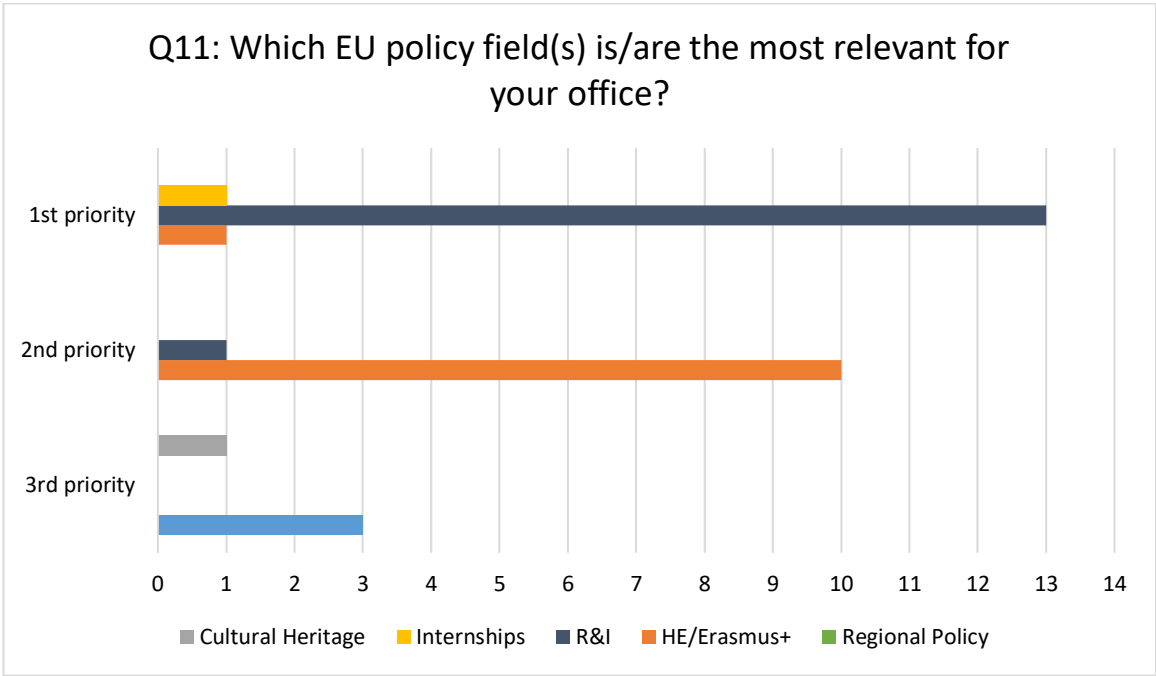
Source: author's own compilation based on the questionnaire's response.

When asked whether the universities they represent have set research priorities, nine of the respondents said no, and seven said yes. Those that claimed to have set research priorities were asked to follow up their response by stating which research areas these were. The research priorities of these seven offices are listed in table 2. Nationality and

exact numbers of universities represented by the office have been anonymized in the table. The time span for these priorities is not collected, but if you have a trained eye, it is evident that the priorities to a large degree overlap with specific priorities in the current EU framework programme (Horizon 2020). These priorities are most likely aimed at the specific framework programme, and therefore may change when the next programme is introduced.

Respondent number five specifically recognize that their office, which represents more than one university has selected priorities to more effectively collaborate at the European Level. Moreover, compared to the structures of Horizon 2020, the other respondents also reveal set priorities aimed towards the framework programme. Horizon 2020 has three pillars: (1) Excellent science; (2) Industrial Leadership; (3) Societal Challenges (European Commission, n.d.a). Though specific areas within all pillars are mentioned, many of the respondents target specific lines within the societal challenges pillar (see table 3).

Table 2: Research priorities as defined by some offices

Respondents	Yes(which?)
1	Climate Change, Food Security, Health
2	ICT, Excellence, SC 3,4,5,6
3	(University 1) ICT, SSH and Bio/Medicine; (University 2) ICT, Engineering, SSH; the rest, no specific priorities
4	We are representing XX universities (…) and each university has a different set of priorities
5	My university network has selected sustainable urban development and health innovation as our prioritised research areas for the purpose of our collaboration efforts at European level.
6	Robotics, Sport sciences, Regional-Interregional studies, Migration
7	Climate and energy transition, marine research and Global challenges

Source: author's own compilation based on the questionnaire's response.

Respondent number two is specifically precise in responding that they have 'SC:3,4,5,6' as a priority. SC will be the acronym for societal challenges, but this pillar is also referred to by other respondents. The societal challenge pillar is displayed in table 3, and a cross reference to this table shows that respondent one, five and six mention specific lines within the societal challenges pillar (climate, energy transition, food security, health and marine research). Furthermore, ICT is mentioned as a priority of three of the respondents, which belongs to the second pillar of industrial leadership (European Commission, n.d.a). One also mentions excellence which is targeting the first pillar.

For the seven offices that state that they have set research priorities, these are not just any priorities, but are priorities directly linked to funding opportunities at the EU level. However, there are still nine offices that do not have such priorities. It is unclear where thus divide springs form. It is also unclear whether such priorities actually function to strengthen the universities competitiveness at European level. This finding both supports and challenges the study of Primeri and Reale (2012). Alhough one could argue that their

study is outdated, the result of a single case study would still depend on the university investigated. When examining whether participation in the EU framework program has led to any changes within universities' organisation, human resources, production or research priorities, a wider selection gives a more nuanced picture. As this study has established, several universities have newly opened an office in Brussels, and furthermore almost half (though still a minority) have set research priorities.

Table 3: Societal Challenges pillar of Horizon 2020

Total funding for 2014-2020	€ million
Health, demographic change & wellbeing	7 472
Food security, sustainable agriculture and forestry, marine/maritime/inland water research and the bioeconomy	3 851
Secure, clean & efficient energy	5 931
Smart, green & integrated transport	6 339
Climate action, environment, resource efficiency & raw materials	3 081
Inclusive, innovative & reflective societies	1 310
Secure societies	1 695

Source: European Commission, n.d.a

In one of the questions, the respondents were asked to arrange a set of alternatives to depict what best characterizes the goals of their offices (one was most relevant and six least relevant). The answers to this question are portrayed in graph 8. Two of the alternatives are related to funding opportunities, while two others are related to EU policy-making. This question is definitely one of the more difficult to analyse as the alternative 'all of the above' confuses the purpose and reading of the question. The alternative should have been excluded, but the difficulties connected with it was not foreseen before the responses were collected. Nevertheless, it is important to take into account that a very high percentage of the respondents have 'other' as their fifth or sixth priority, meaning that the alternatives above are more relevant in describing the goals of their office than other alternatives. This is true for most, but not all responses. There are a few offices that do not recognize any of the given alternatives to be the main goal of the office.

As for the majority, there are some numbers that stand out. Most of the respondents perceive the funding-oriented alternatives as more correct in categorizing the goals of the office. The strongest emphasis was with 'seeking information on future funding opportunities. Thus, the EU framework for research and innovation is viewed as a top priority for the offices. The second most recognized alternative was 'get more EU funding' which indicates that their office works towards the goal of securing more funding for their university. Although the funding-oriented alternatives are perceived as most important by the majority, a minority of the offices are more policy-oriented. It should also be noted that 25% of the respondents recognized 'all of the above', meaning all four options together as the best way to describe the goals of their office.

The strong emphasis on the 'other' option as a bottom priority on the given scale strengthens the validity of the other alternatives. It also indicates that the policy-oriented alternatives are important to take into account when categorizing the goals of these offices, though they are deemed less important than those related to funding by the majority.

Greenwood (2019) identified regional Brussels offices to have two different aims. Some offices seek to influence EU policy (first league) and others mainly seek funding opportunities (second league). The two leagues can also be applied to count for university Brussels offices. Although the majority of the respondents seem as playing in second league, there are some offices that view themselves to be first league offices. Even more so, the overall majority recognize that they have a foot in each league. Yet, there are a couple of offices that do not seem to fit this main characteristic as they do not identify any of the given categories to fit their office purpose.

Graph 8: Perceived goals of the offices

Q9: What best characterizes the goals of the office?

Legend: Priority 1-2, Priority 3-4, Priority 4-6

	Priority 1-2	Priority 3-4	Priority 4-6
Influence EU policy in your area(s) of interest	12.5 %	81.3 %	6.3 %
Report on EU policy changes relevant for your institution(s)	31.3 %	50.0 %	18.8 %
Seek information on future funding opportunities	68.8 %	31.3 %	0.0 %
Get more EU funding	50.0 %	25.0 %	25.0 %
All the above	25.0 %	6.3 %	68.8 %
Other	12.5 %	6.3 %	81.3 %
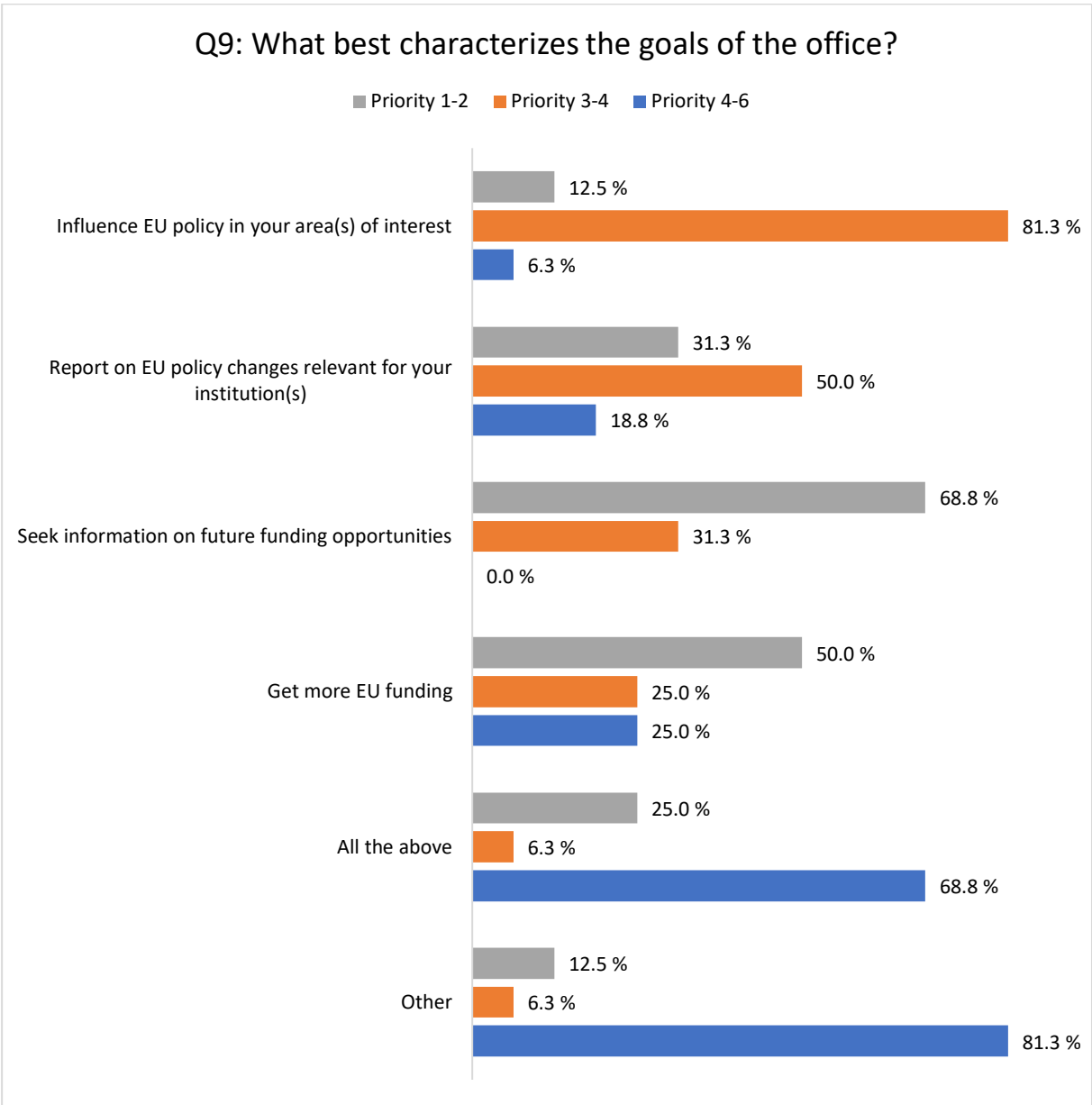
Source: author's own compilation based on the questionnaire's response.

The respondent's emphasis on funding opportunities and research and innovation as their main policy interests (Graph 7) uncovers the EU framework programmes as a significant incentive for universities to have an office in Brussels. Because the framework programme is renewed with every EU budget, it is pertinent to think of it as a central area that offices monitor and seek to influence. Monitoring, in this respect can imply reporting on upcoming funding opportunities or obtaining information on the EUs calls for proposals beyond what is stated in the official call. As for influencing the framework programme, one thought aim of the offices could be to secure that certain fields of research or ambitions are incorporated in the programme.

If the university offices are successful in contributing to shape the framework programmes, then that will also contribute to the offices delivering on their main goals, which includes obtaining more EU funding. It seems that the university Brussels offices that operate with set research priorities have adapted these to the European level. However, it is fair to ask whether these priorities might also be a result of successfully influencing the framework programme. As rendered in chapter two, the EU is dependent on stakeholder's expertise in formulating policy. Nevertheless, this question remains unanswered.

The fact that substantial funds are connected to research and innovation and that most of the offices primarily seek funding opportunities, could explain why higher education is rather viewed as a solid second priority by many. It looks that higher education policy is not as much the incentive behind opening an office as research and innovation policy. Despite higher education being a natural field of interest for universities, I am questioning whether the offices' work on higher education, is rather an added value of having a Brussels office rather than a main reason for opening it. This is thus only a reflective assumption.

After stating their offices' goals, the respondents were asked to rank what best characterizes their offices' tasks. Graph 9 illustrates the responses to the various alternatives and show that some were more popular than others. Especially interesting is that the two highest rated office tasks were: 'networking' and 'to gather information on EU funding opportunities'. The latter, is not that surprising, seeing that it strongly correlates with what most respondents said to be their main goal. However, the importance of having a network becomes strikingly evident here. Networking can contribute to both the funding-oriented and policy-oriented goals of the offices. When seen in context to the support also given to funding oriented alternatives in Graph 9, having a solid network can help to catch new opportunities. Networks create opportunities for collaboration in, for example, gaining access to information or in finding relevant research partners. However, one should assume that networking is perceived as a main task because it contributes the offices to reach their goals, irresectable of what that goal is. Networks will be further discussed in chapter five.

The graph also illustrates a clear divide between which options are ranked as the offices' main tasks, as well as which options are least relevant for these offices. The two blue axis which reflect the two middle categories are thus more even and diffuse. When viewed in contrast to the lower end of the scale, a vast majority of the respondents agree that 'writing proposals for funding opportunities' and 'manage projects' is not as important part of their job as 'arranging meetings with potential partners and EU officials', 'hosting events', 'Collaborating with other universities' or 'receiving visits from home institution'. This indicates that these offices rather work to facilitate for those managing projects and writing proposals at their home institutions, than doing so themselves.

Graph 9: The tasks of the office as prioritised by the respondents[8]

Q10: Rank the following activities according to what best characterizes your office tasks

■ Priority 1-3 ■ Priority 4-6 ■ Priority 7-9 ■ Priority 10-12

Collaborate with other universities to influence EU policy
- 56.3 %
- 31.3 %
- 12.5 %

Arrange meeting for representatives from home institution with potential partners
- 6.3 %
- 37.5 %
- 50.0 %
- 6.3 %

Arrange meetings for representatives from home institution with EU officials
- 6.3 %
- 31.3 %
- 50.0 %
- 12.5 %

Write proposals for funding opportunities
- 6.3 %
- 12.5 %
- 81.3 %

Project management
- 12.5 %
- 25.0 %
- 62.5 %

Receiving visits from home institution
- 12.5 %
- 37.5 %
- 50.0 %

Host events or seminars
- 25.0 %
- 37.5 %
- 25.0 %
- 12.5 %

Networking
- 81.3 %
- 18.8 %

Lobbying
- 50.0 %
- 12.5 %
- 25.0 %
- 12.5 %

Gather information about EU funding opportunities
- 68.8 %
- 18.8 %
- 12.5 %

Gather information on EU policies
- 50.0 %
- 31.3 %
- 18.8 %

Other
- 100.0 %

Source: author's own compilation based on the questionnaire's response.

'Lobbying' was added as an alternative to examine whether the offices recognized the work, they do with the term lobbying or not. Most of the alternatives included in this question

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[8] 1-3 is perceived as most relevant and 10-12 as least relevant to describe the office tasks.

are different ways of lobbying. The most interesting aspect of this alternative is thus to see whether any of the offices ranked lobbying low on this scale – which 12,5% did. This could be because they do not view their work as lobbying themselves. Especially seen in context with the fact that 100% of the respondents have ranked 'other' tasks among the least relevant which insinuates that the alternatives listed are relevant for them. Many of these alternatives would classify as lobbying from this study's definition. The lobbying alternative could also be confusing, and thus been down prioritised by some. However, 50% recognize lobbying to be among their most important tasks and clearly recognize their respective offices' and work as connected to lobbying.

Graph 9 in many ways categorizes universities as opportunity seekers and facilitators for their home institutions. Moreover, strong lines can be drawn to compare the type of functions these offices have to those recognized with regional offices. The university offices similarly function as an information channel between their home institutions, the EU and other relevant partners in Europe. They seek access to EU funds, provide policy input and to widen the European network. This chapter has provided insight into how universities offices operates and shed light on the characteristics of these offices.

Universities are often represented via small offices with narrow objectives, they have various tasks and work methods, but there are some clear trends. The offices are to a large degree opportunity seekers and facilitators for the home institution with regard to EU funding. Many also seek to influence EU policy. Seeing that most university offices have few interest areas, they are indeed in a good position to channel their interests and gain access by providing specialized knowledge in exchange for inclusion in the policy-making process. Because of the small nature of most of the offices, it is not surprising that many of the offices claim to collaborate with other universities to influence EU policy. As with regional offices, these offices will probably have a larger impact if they work together. The next chapter of this study will therefore move on to analyse to what degree university offices operate in larger networks and to what degree networks are preferred in contrast to acting alone.

5 Lobbying in Brussels

This chapter will analyse the questionnaire results that relate to the university Brussels offices' collaboration and influence via networks. The first section will discuss what types of networks these are in order to examine why the university offices seek collaboration with them. In the second section, the activities and lobbying strategies of the offices will be discussed, particular attention will be given to the type of lobbying strategy these offices employ: access, voice or a combination of the both. The third section will discuss what type of lobbying entity these offices are, and moreover seek to define what the main type of university office in Brussels is, by summarizing and collectively discuss the analysis so far. This section will also touch upon general structures in how the interests of the universities are represented though these offices, leading up to the case specific analysis in chapter six.

5.1 Lobbying Alone or in a Network?

The term network includes various configurations, that can be ranged on a continuum from very informal to formal networks (Mahoney, 2007, p. 366). Networks can be comprised of occasional information sharing or be highly organised with secretariats (ibid.). All lobbyists engage in some degree of networking (ibid.). By simply speaking to others, lobbyists can gain information on policy proposals and developments, and knowledge of the positions of other stakeholders - thus some level of networking is expected on every issue (ibid, p. 367). Networks or coalitions could be advantageous to an interest organisation in a political battle in two regards. Firstly, the network can signal to policy-makers that that they have the support of a vast group of interests. Secondly, a network and joint action allow for a more efficient use of resources (ibid., p. 368). The networks which are elaborated on in this chapter are more or less formal. Those mentioned by name in graph 10 and 11, all have web-sites, their own logo and different organisational structures. However, they range from being informal to formal in the way they operate. The networks that classify themselves as informal (e.g. IGLO and UnILiON) do so because they do not promote common positions, and rather function as information-sharing networks. Other networks mentioned, do however take common positions on behalf of its members (e.g. EUA and ERRIN). Guéguen (2019, p.101) argues that monitoring and mapping have become more time consuming due to changes in the legislative procedures in the EU after the Treaty of Lisbon. Graph 9 in chapter four, showed that networking was one of the most important tasks of the university offices. This might be connected to their search for information. Taking part in a network, only for information-sharing purposes, should thus be thought important for these offices.

In the case of regional representation, the incomplete nature and contested efficiency of official channels has led these offices to develop alternative channels and cooperate in thematic interregional networks. Very few regional offices seek to individually influence EU decision-making, but rather team up with other regions with similar interests. This is because concentrated and common positions from larger coalitions will more easily attract attention by the EU officials. The analysis below will show that this is in many ways true for universities as well. This section will provide greater insight into the type of networks

the university offices prefer to collaborate with. Moreover, universities to a large degree prioritise information and to seek for EU funding above influencing EU policy. It is possible that some of these networks are more oriented an important for information on EU funding, while others could be more important for political influence.

When asked about how their university usually represent its positions and interest, 93,75% of the respondents replied that they utilize either organised policy-specific networks or networks comprising actors from the same country over acting alone. The distribution of answers to this question is showcased in table 4. Most common is representing their positions through organised networks working on specific policy areas, which was the first priority of 50% of the respondents. Another 43,75% of the respondents preferred networks comprising universities or actors from the same country. Out of the three options, it is clear that acting alone is seen as the least preferable. However, there are a few respondents that prioritise acting alone higher than others. Still, the typical form of influence seems to be through networks. This also coincides with the finding that networking was perceived as one of the most important tasks of the offices.

Table 4: Q14: How does your university usually represent its positions and interests?

How does your university usually represent its positions and interests?	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Through organised networks working on specific policy areas	50%	18,75 %	31,25 %	0%
Through networks comprising universities/actors from the same country	43,75 %	56,25 %	0,00 %	0%
By acting alone	6,25 %	25%	68,75 %	0%
Other	0%	0%	0%	100 %

Source: author's own compilation based on the questionnaire's response.

Except for indicating networks are the preferred medium through which universities represent their interests and positions, this table does not reveal any specific networks. Neither does is say where these networks are located, what kind of networks they are or how formal. Graph 10, however, gives an overview of the networks that the offices stated that they take part in, which leaves room to gather more information with regards to the specific networks.

It is not surprising that all the offices work with or takes part in UnILiON, as this was the network targeted by the questionnaire. Other networks added by the respondents were the French research centers office in Brussels (CLORA), Universitas 21, Swedish Fol-network in Brussels, Academic Cooperation Association (ACA), Universities of Applied Sciences for Europe (UAS4EUROPE) and German Rector's Conference (HRK). All these networks were mentioned once.

Most of these networks are multinational (EUA, UnILiON, CESAER, ECIU, ERRIN, IGLO, Science Business, the Guild, UNICA, Yerun, Universitas 21, ACA and UAS4Europe) while the five others mentioned are national networks (DAAD, Russell Group, HRK, CLORA, Swedish Fol-network). With the exception of UnILiON, two of the multinational networks stuck out as more popular than the others. More than ten of the represented offices takes part in European University Association (EUA) and European Regions Research and

Innovation Network (ERRIN). The former is a longstanding association that represents more than 800 universities. According the EUA's info pages, they play a crucial role in influencing EU policies on higher education, as well as, research and innovation (EUA, n.d.). The EUA was also used as an example in the second chapter of this study, as an association that has had a longstanding dialogue with the European Commission. The EUA aim to ensure that the independent voice of European universities is heard and that members are provided with opportunities to shape European policies and initiatives affecting both higher education and research (ibid.). ERRIN on the other hand, was founded in 2001 and works to facilitate regional collaboration and knowledge exchange. Their mission is to strengthen the regional and local dimension in the EU research and innovation policy and programs. Although ERRIN initially focused on regional representation, it is open to other actors as well. The network is open, but not limited to: Brussels-based representative offices of regional administrations, local administrations, universities and educational institutions, research centers, European networks, trade associations as well as, private bodies that have at least a limited mandate in regional development and regional research and innovation policies (ERRIN, n.d.).

The third most popular network is the Informal Group of RTD Liaison Offices (IGLO). They work to strengthen the interactions, exchange of information and cooperation between their Members, their national research systems and the European institutions on issues related to EU research and technological development, in particular the framework programme (IGLO, n.d.). IGLO, like UnILiON is an informal network and does not produce common positions. However, seeing that IGLO is a network for research liaison offices, and the requirements for membership in the network is not stated online, the ways in which the university Brussels offices are able to participate in the network is not sure.

Graph 10: Networks which the office works with or take part in

Q12: Name the networks your office works with or take part in

Network	Number of offices
Yerun	1
UnILiON	16
UNICA	3
the Guild	1
Science Business	4
Russell Group	2
Other	5
None	0
IGLO	6
EUA	12
ERRIN	13
ECIU	0
DAAD	1
Cesaer	2
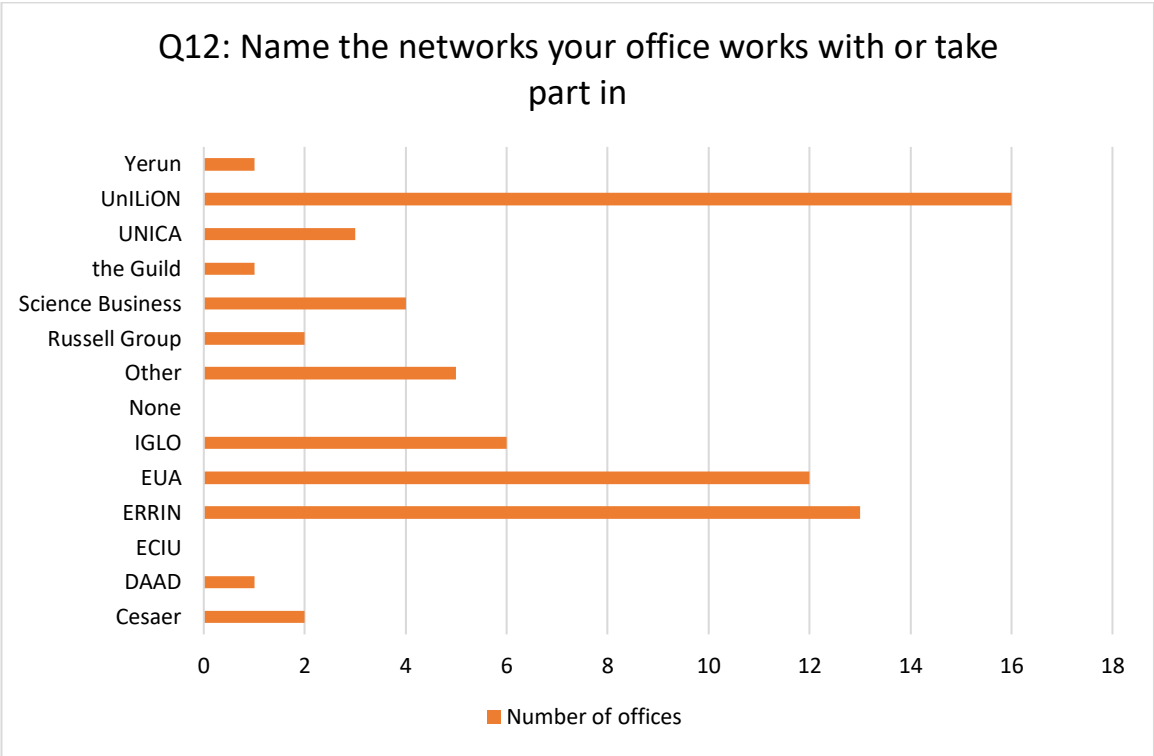
Graph 10 only indicated which networks these offices work with or take part in on a generic level. It does however illustrate that all offices do collaborate with at least one network, and that many of the offices collaborate with more than one network. When asked which of the same networks the offices work most actively with, the emphasis to the various networks changed. The networks the offices say they collaborate most with is presented in graph 11.

Of the respondents, 15 acknowledge that their office works actively with one or more than one network. Out of the 15, all but one has named UnILiON as one of these networks indicating that the targeted network for this study is important for their work. The UnILiON network is described as an arena of exchange where the participants share information, nurture collaboration and act as information multipliers towards the represented organisations (UnILiON, 2018a). UnILiON poses as a single-entry point to a world of excellent universities, and for its members as a door to European Institutions and other external partners (ibid.). The network is not a formal lobbying entity and does not get together to express joint positions (ibid.). In other terms, the network is rather a platform for information exchange, sparring partners and a seedbed for collaboration. Although the network does not take positions on its members' behalf, it still poses as a pool of expertise and could be an attractive group for EU officials to meet and discuss with. Furthermore, it benefits the university offices in their monitoring work. Picture 30 officers around a table with 30 different sheets of information; when they arrive, they all have one sheet, but when they leave, they will have 30. This sort of network is quite valuable for gathering information. UnILiON, is also a quite new network, as it was first launched in November 2018. The recent launch and its speedy growth indicate that the UnILiON-network covers a need that is not covered by other networks. This could be related to the fact that UnILiON is a specific network for university representatives located in Brussels, and functions as a meeting place for similar entities with similar interests.

Although, the EUA is comprised of universities, this network also represents universities that do not have a Brussels-based representative or office. While 12 of the respondents named the EUA as one of the networks they took part in or collaborate with, only two responded that this is a network they actively work with. It is, therefore, likely that the EUA is not perceived as the best network for the type of information these offices seek or goals they have. The fact that the EUA represents so many universities leaves room for the assumption that that the voices of the single institutions might drown in a pool of various interests. Thus, the network might not be specific enough for the goals of many of the offices. However, there are still two respondents that state that the EUA is one of the networks they work most with. This could be because they to a larger degree identifiy with the EUAs work, or they could be more tightly connected to the network (for example if their institution has a representative in one of the networks official settings).

Of the 16 respondents, 13 stated that they took part in or collaborated with ERRIN, while eight named ERRIN as a network they collaborate actively with. However, this is the second most popular response after UnILiON and is thus one of the most popular networks in this selection. In contrast to UnILiON, ERRIN voices the position of its members and works to the European research and innovation policy and funding program, which strengths the assumption that the various networks cover different needs. However, the number of respondents who name ERRIN as a preferred network, also coincides with the with the number of offices that stated that their institution has or used to have a relationship with

a regional office. Still, this could be a coincidence and is merely an interesting observation that could have some weight to it.

UnILiON and ERRIN are the only two networks that are pointed at by half, or more of the respondents. The third most popular network in graph 11 was IGLO, which is, like UnILiON, an informal network and does not take common positions. It could be that the informality of the networks is appreciated by the university offices, because they are not political units, or representatives, but rather facilitators and the eyes and ears for their universities. These types of informal networks that describes themselves at platforms for information exchange support the offices monitoring activities and pose as a channel to retrieve information. After the Treaty of Lisbon, the EU system has become more bureaucratic and legal and have made information gathering to a more difficult exercise (Guéguen, 2019, p. 97). Thus, networks that provide their members with a common platform to share their information and find possible partners, is ever more important, for information gathering. Although everyone in the network will end up with the same information, the ways in which this information is utilized will be up to the various offices and their home institutions.

As for the other networks mentioned by the respondents, there were a couple of networks that were given equal emphasis in both graph 10 and 11. The offices that stated that they had a relationship with Yerun and CASAER, as well as the two 'other' answers, CLORA and UAS4EUROPE, also viewed these among networks they more actively work with. In total, the offices named 11 different networks in which they actively engage, while one respondent reported that they do not actively participate in any network. However, due to the fact that most of the respondents actively work with UnILiON, one can suppose the information exchange within UnILiON to be more fruitful on the basis that its members actively engage with at least ten other networks. If the various offices bring with them information retrieved from one network to another, UnILiON could be thought as a valuable network for the university offices to share information.

Graph 11: Networks the offices most actively work with
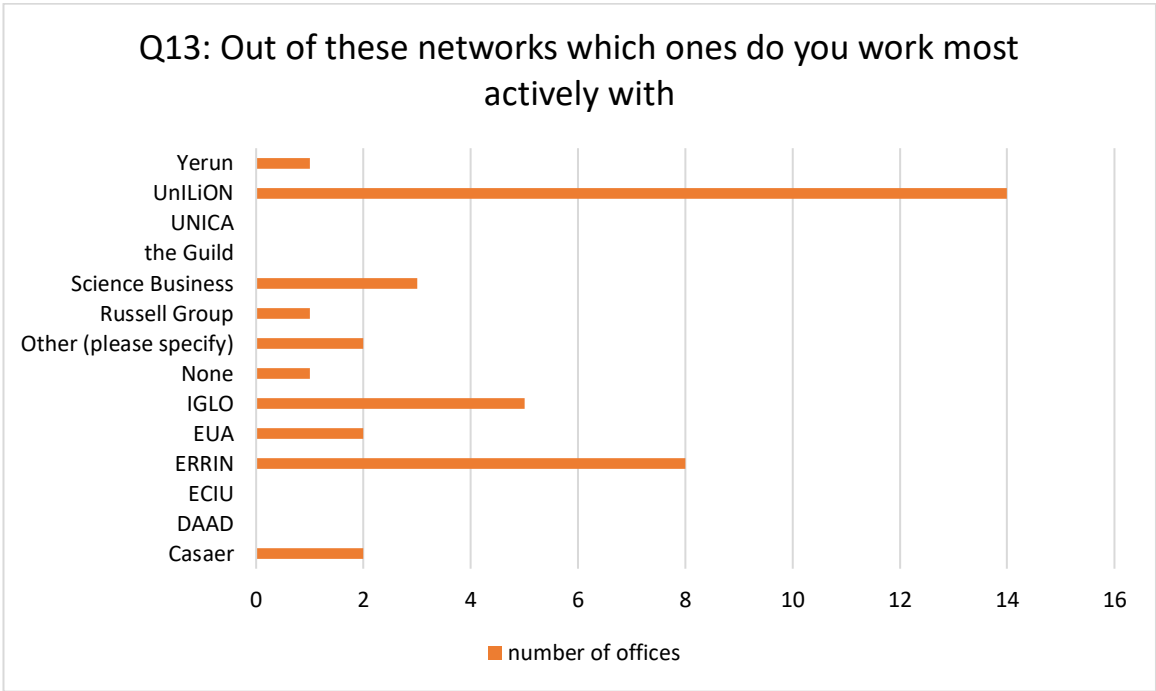
Source: author's own compilation based on the questionnaire's response.

## 5.2 Lobbying Strategies: the use of Voice and Access

After establishing the main characteristics of the university offices, we know that they have specific political areas they work on. These offices firstly seek to strengthen their institutions' participation in the EU framework programmes to gain more from the EU funding schemes. Furthermore, most of the offices to some degree seek to influence EU policy. When trying to influence EU policy, the university offices usually prefer to represent their positions and interests via a network rather than acting alone. Although the informal networks, which cannot take common positions, were indicated to be the most popular among the offices this section will more precisely reveal which channels or strategies the offices prefer to utilize when specifically trying to influence EU policy.

Overarchingly, the two strategies are voice (public strategies) and access (inside strategies). Voice strategies are described as public strategies, because these strategies take place in the public sphere where communication between the various stakeholders becomes visible for the broader public (Beyers, 2004, p. 213). On the other side, access strategies imply that an actor has access to policy- and law-makers. Access strategies are more hidden and includes the exchange of information between a stakeholder and EU officials (ibid.). This exchange of information is dependent on the stakeholder, or offices' network, but also their level of expertise and ability to provide relevant information to the EU officials. The expertise and specialization can heighten the stakeholder's access to policy-makers and influence on policy outcomes (Dür, 2008, p. 1217). Although an interest organisations has access to the policy-making process it is a not given that their message results in any changes (Bouwen & McCown, 2007, p. 425). It is, however, argued that the amount of information an entity is able to provide the EU with can increase their level of influence (Klüver, 2012, p. 492). Because more specialized information is better transferred via access strategies, rather than voice, (Beyers, 2004, p. 215) and universities' interests mainly concern research and innovation which is a highly specialized field, it is likely that their preferred communication routes classify as access strategies.

According to the respondents, the most used channels when communicating a position on new or existing EU policy is organising events with participation of EU officials. Hosting such event invites other stakeholders and the wider civil society to participate but it also requires access to a network that allows you to get an EU official to participate. Whether the EU officials' takes part in a panel debate, give a key-note speech, observe from the audience or actually co-hosts the event is not clear. Nevertheless, it gives the office hosting the event a grand opportunity to make themselves visible and deliver a message directly to an EU official. Hosting such event thus pose as an access strategy as it depends on access to EU officials.

None of the offices chose to use the 'other' option to specify that they do not communicate their positions or view on new or existing EU policy. Collectively, though, some have a higher focus on influence than others. The overall characteristic is that most of, if not all offices, are more or less sporadically politically oriented.

Graph 12: The offices preferred channels for communicating their position on new or existing EU policy.

Q15: Which channels does your office most often use when communicating your position or view on new or existing EU policy?
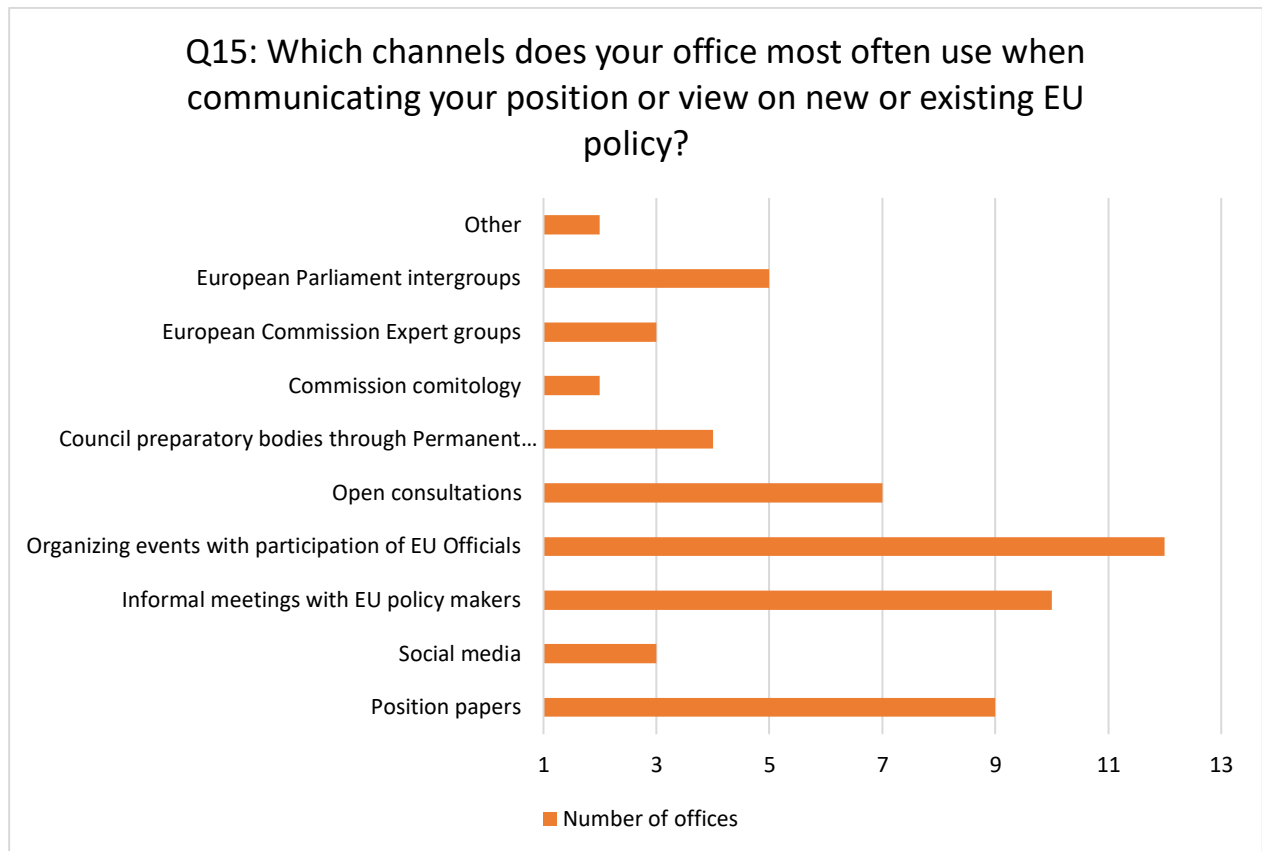
Source: author's own compilation based on the questionnaire's response.

Nine of the respondents say that position papers are among their preferred channels to convey positions. According to practitioner Daniel Guéguen (2019, p. 100) position papers have been the main tool for sectoral lobbies for years. He, however, views them to be obsolete and possibly even counter-productive. Due to procedural changed after the Treaty of Lisbon, the number of decision-makers involved in a file has been significantly reduced. Guéguen further argues that the limited number of decision makers involved requires VIP treatment for every one of them, like, tailored and personalized communications (ibid.). Thus, he argues, general position papers are an obsolete medium. The respondents in this study might disagree with this as it is a tool over half of these offices turn to. Position papers are an access tool that can be used by the various interests, whether they reach their intended destination will depend on the context and recipient. In many cases, the European institutions specifically calls for position papers though stakeholder consultations[9]. In the case of the interim evaluation of Horizon 2020, the European Commission published an online questionnaire where the respondents could upload a position paper at the end. Such initiatives from the EUs side indicates that position papers are still relevant, though Guéguen might have a point in that they are not as effective as

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[9] Public stakeholder consultation – interim evaluation of Horizon 2020.
http://ec.europa.eu/research/consultations/interim_h2020_2016/consultation_en.htm

they might have been before. This could also relate to the growing pool of stakeholders which are making the competition for the EUs attention more challenging.

However, there are new tools that can be used to utter ones' positions to the EU policy makers if used in the correct way – social media platforms which in contrast to position papers is a voice strategy. Three of the offices highlight social media as one of their preferred tools for communicating their views. Through social media, the represented institutions views could reach an enormous audience, it can make the wider public engage in an online campaign and reach EU officials that are active on the social media platforms. Twitter is, for instance, frequently used by politicians and other EU officials[10]. Twitter limits the users' word-count and in this way makes the sender of the information simplify their message into a very short statement. If utilized in the correct way, a Tweet could thus have just as much of an impact as a longer and more complex position paper. This is among the reasons for why Guéguen (2019, p. 100) recommends social media as a better way to communicate for impact. A quick look at the followers to some of the UnILiON-members twitter-account, show the outreach these offices have with their tweets. Followers includes EU Directorate-Generals, EU Commissioners and EU Executive Agencies[11]. Moreover, their followers consist of media outlets and a vast pool of single researchers as well as other university representations. Thus, a single tweet can indeed have a large impact, reaching a vast group of both policy-makers, other stakeholders and media. If used in the correct way, it has the potential to make a large impact.

From what is revealed in graph 12, the offices mainly prefer to communicate their positions via access strategies. It is also evident that the majority of these offices have access to the EU institutions or EU officials. Ten out of the 16 respondents state that one of their most used channels is holding informal meeting with EU policy-makers, which means that several of these offices have professional networks in Brussels that allow them to have direct access to EU policy-makers. Moreover, two or more of the respondents also state that they have access to and prefer to communicate their views through European Commission Expert Groups, Commission Comitology, or European Parliament Intergroups. This indicates that these offices are successful in supplying the EU with relevant information and reflects the exchange of information for access. Furthermore, this reflects that these offices indeed are recognized as holding a high level of expertise and specialization.

Four of the respondents said that one of their preferred channels were Council preparatory bodies via the national permanent representation. This strategy is thus limited to offices from EU member states due to institutional restrictions. Because the offices' message is voiced through another entity on the university offices' behalf, this alternative should rather be viewed as indirect access to the EU, though it reveals access to national structures. Apart from the alternatives included in the questionnaire, a couple of other answers were registered. These were: 'national networks involved in EU programmes' and 'Regional Representation in the Council Working Groups', which are also examples of a more indirect form of access and should be seen in context with the offices' use of collaboration through networks. Especially for the offices that represents institutions from

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[10] Political parties, politicians, activists, liaison offices and many others have twitter-accounts. Larger events, campaigns and policy areas have their own twitter hashtag (#) which is used to collect the discussion in a common feed on Twitter. See for instance #H2020 or #HorizonEurope.

[11] Followers drawn from the profiles of @selpbrussels and @gcpheu. Retrieved on 03.05.2019, from: https://twitter.com/SELPBrussels/followers and https://twitter.com/GCPHEU/followers

member states, national permanent representations could provide a much stronger linkage to the policy-making process and influence, than for associated member states. This study collected responses from offices that represent universities from Norway and Japan, which are not member states and thus have to 'play by other rules. One advantage of representing an institution from a member state is that they have EU officials from their nation in the various EU structures. Access to the European Parliament intergroups and the Council Preparatory Bodies presupposes that the office has a linkage to either a Member of Parliament or permanent representation which officials are from the EU member states.

Usually access strategies are focused towards the EU institutions that play an important role in the EU decision-making process. This is also the case for the university offices and is reflected through graph 12. The respondents have access to the European Commission, Council and European Parliament. It does not come forward which of these EUs institutions is the most attractive to the university offices, but it is evident that it is the decision-making institutions that are relevant for these offices, as it is for other lobbying entities. As for the significance of access for a single office, it is difficult to determine whether the offices that have more access have more influence than offices with restricted access. However, the offices that have substantial access should be thought to be in better position to influence EU policy compared to those with very limited access.

The offices also state that they prefer to work via a network when positioning their view. It is possible that the named channels for communication are used in collaboration with others. This could especially be true for position papers, hosting of events and having informal meetings with EU officials, which also are the three most recognized options. Access strategies could be intensified through a lobbying entity's network. By taking part in informal networks, the offices with less access are able to harvest information from the other offices. This is also consistent with the assumption that networks where the members exchange information are important for the offices monitoring. Besides, an EU official invited to speak or participate in a meeting with a university network representing over 140 universities should be assumed to be prioritised to a greater extent than meeting a single office representing one university. In this way, the networks in which these offices collaborate also pose as an instrument for access. The strategies these offices prefer to use alone, or within a network will however be analysed further in chapter six. In the case of how the universities interest have been represented towards the upcoming framework programme for research and innovation.

Voice strategies do not seem to vary as much as the access strategies in this study. Social media, as the only voice strategy mentioned, seemed to be preferred by the few. Because the type of events described here include participation of EU officials, they pose as an access strategy rather than a voice strategy. The limited focus the offices seem to have on voice strategies could be a result of the type of interest these offices' have. The university interest in this study was defined to mainly revolve around research and innovation. The specific and highly specialized field that research and innovation policy is, makes it more difficult to promote positions via voice strategies since it may be too specialized to engage wider civil society. Compared to other forms for EU policy that to a larger extent will have a visible effect on the people of Europe, research and innovation's effect is rather vague. Thus, it is likely that the event hosted by the university offices are specifically promoted to the research community, which holds the expertise to follow and engage in the discussion (events will more specifically be discussed in chapter six). Furthermore, voice strategies are not deemed to be as effective or appropriate for these offices as access strategies.

5.3 Are they all lobbyists?

Based on the analysis thus far and the definitions and concepts that this study builds on, this section will discuss whether these offices should be characterized as lobbying entities or not. Interest organisations were defined as any organised activity, anywhere, through any approach – that somehow aims to influence the EU policy- or decision-making process. This study has uncovered that the main activity of the university offices could be characterized as interest organisations that in firstly seek to strengthen their knowledge and takeback from the EU funding schemes, and secondly monitor policy changes and influence policy within their field of interest. Some should be said to have a higher focus on influence than others, but the overall characteristic is that most of, if not all offices are more or less sporadically politically oriented.

Although this thesis suggests classifying all these offices as lobbying entities on the basis of the analysis, it seems that some of the offices themselves might disagree with this classification. Being registered in the EU transparency register shows that an actor identifies themselves as a lobbyist and likely expect advantages of being registered through gaining better or easier access than those not registered. Table 5 shows the distribution of responses to the question of whether the office is registered or not in the EU Transparency Register. When the respondents were asked if they are registered in the transparency register or not, 12 of the respondents confirmed that they were, while four of the respondents replied that they were not registered.

The respondents who replied 'no' to the question were asked to leave a comment on why they are not registered. Their responses were: (1) 'do not need for our activity', (2) 'don't know why', (3) 'no comment', and (4) 'lobbying is not as part as the goals and objectives of the office'. Though registration in the Transparency Register is not mandatory, it is highly encouraged from the EUs side if the activity of the organisation overlaps with the activities stipulated in the Inter-Institutional Agreement of the EU Transparency Register. It is likely that two of the offices that are not registered in the Transparency Register are the same offices that specified that they viewed their office' goals to be something other than what was listed in the questionnaire. Because their goals are different than the other 14 offices, they should perhaps be characterized differently. However, graph 9, which indicates the main tasks of the offices, showcases that the possible answers provided in the question were viewed as more fitting to describe their main tasks than 'other' answers. Many of the preselected alternatives are indeed 'lobbying-tasks', moreover, because no office prioritised the 'other' answer higher, it suggests that the respondents did recognize their tasks to include those that can be classified as lobbying.

Furthermore, in graph 12 the respondents were asked indirectly which channels they preferred to use to influence EU politics or policy. Two of the respondents pressed the 'other' option, but none used the other option to state that they do not conduct such activities. Though many of the given alternatives in graph 12 were linked to indirect access to the EU system via national structures, this can also be categorized as a lobbying activity. The definition of lobbying activity in the Inter-Institutional Agreement[12] also covers indirect

[12] "Activities carried out with the objective of directly or indirectly influencing the formulation or implementation of policy and decision-making processes of the EU institutions (…) irrespective of where they are undertaken and the channel or medium of communication used" (as cited in Greenwood, 2019, p. 26)

actions, whether this is through the regional representation, permanent representation of their country or national research networks. It is conceivable that some of the non-registered offices have decent representation via other networks or structures. Thus, they are not lured in by the benefits of being registered and because registration is not required, they simply have not done so. It could also be because they disagree with, or are not familiar with, what activities classifies as lobbying. It can also be as simple as they have not considered it because of the recent opening of their office. What these offices explanations are, more precisely, is not clear.

Table 5: Q6: Is your office registered in the Lobbying Register?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	75,00 %	12
No (why?)	25,00 %	4

Source: author's own compilation based on the questionnaire's response.

The majority of the respondents, however, are registered in the Transparency Register. These 12 offices on the contrary do recognize their activities to overlap the description in the Inter-Institutional Agreement. The registration of these offices in the EU Transparency Register might also be incentivized by the benefits of being registered, that allows them to take part in EU structures like: Parliamentary intergroups, Commission expert groups and stakeholder consultations. More precisely, the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament, Rule 34, on Parliamentary Intergroups states that:

> Only interest representatives who are registered in the Transparency register may participate in intergroup or other unofficial grouping activities organised on Parliament's premises, for instance by attending meetings or events of the intergroup or other unofficial grouping, by offering support to it, or by co-hosting its events (European Parliament, 2019, p. 30).

This shows that it is not only formal participation in the settings that requires an entity to be registered, but furthermore, to attend meetings and participate at events within the European Parliament. The offices that are not registered are thus quite restricted when it comes to access and should be thought to have less incentive for influence and monitoring the EU. Though the analysis has revealed that all of the respondent's institutions to some degree have political interests behind their Brussels office, some offices are clearly less actively pursuing to influence policy than others.

The university offices that are registered are also bound by the Code of Conduct, which states that:

> The parties hereto consider that all interest representatives interacting with them, whether on a single occasion or more frequently, registered or not, should behave in conformity with this Code of Conduct (Transparency Register, 2019c)

Thus, organisations that are registered have a duty of ensuring that the entities with which they collaborate, follow the Code of Conduct. In this way, if the four non-registered offices wish to interact or collaborate with these offices with regards to EU matters, it is the responsibility of the registered offices that the Code of Conduct is followed. The same goes for regional offices or registered networks which are bound to the Code of Conduct and have to ensure that in a collaborating setting, these four offices work in conformity with the Code of Conduct.

It should however be stressed again that the EU Transparency Register is not a mandatory register and though organisations will be restricted in their work in Brussels if they are not registered, they are not bound to register. However, through interaction with other entitles in Brussels on matters relation to their interests in EU matters, they will be connected to the code of conduct if the entity they seek to interreact is registered. A question mark will conversely remain to why two or more of the four non-registered offices categorize their work differently that the other university offices.

The fact that the EU lobbying scene is quite complex and difficult to explain systematically is thus also evident in this study. The priorities of the various offices are different, and although there are some obvious trends in the various graphs, these trends are not applicable for all. The offices have not been asked to classify themselves, but rather to respond to some questions that allows me to place them in the literature. Their description of themselves can be assumed to be different than this study provides. The emphasis here is that all of the registered offices does in fact reverberate as interest organisations that work to influence and gain insight to processes in the EU through various strategies. It is, however, more than one level to this statement.

This chapter has first analysed the questionnaire results that relates to the university Brussels offices' collaboration via networks. This chapter discovered that informal networks which facilitates the exchange of information seem more important for these offices than more politically oriented networks. It is likely that informal networks are thus viewed as a helpful instrument for these offices to deliver on their office' goals which most often regards obtaining information on EU funding opportunities and gaining more EU funding. Furthermore, the universities also seek to influence EU policy and it has been established that, although it seems that the offices vary in how politically oriented they are, they all define that they do in fact position their views in some way. Universities' interests mainly concern research and innovation which is a highly specialized field and it was expected that access strategies would thus stick out as the preferred communication route. Indeed, access strategies seem to be much more relevant than voice strategies for these offices, and the analysis shows that the majority of these offices certainly have access to the EU institutions and officials in several ways. The majority of these offices do classify themselves as lobbyists, as 75% are registered in the lobbying register. This chapter has nonetheless argued that the last 25% of the offices, those who are not registered, do, on the basis of the analysis and definition, classify as lobbyists. The fact that they are not registered does, however, imply that these offices do not expect or pursue to have access in the same degree as those registered in the EU Transparency register.

6 The Case of Horizon Europe

Thus far, the many facets of this study's aim and research question have been explored, but this study has not fully explained in what ways these offices represent their home institutions. Therefore, this section will use a concrete case to discuss the ways in which these offices represent their institutions. Specific focus will be given to the EU's next framework programme for research and innovation, Horizon Europe.

On 2 May 2018, the European Commission adopted its proposal for the next long-term EU budget and the following month the Commission put forward a proposal with the structure and priorities for Horizon Europe (European Commission, 2018b). Because the Commission plays a huge role in proposing both the budget, structure and priorities of the framework, one can assume that this institution is targeted by many stakeholders, especially in the time leading up to their final proposal. After their proposal was launched, between 2019 and 2020 the Council and European Parliament will negotiate and subsequently adopt the programme which will launch on 1 January 2021 and will run out 2027 (European Commission, n.d.b). In this study, the respondents were posed with a few questions with regards to their work in relation to Horizon Europe, and specifically on how they evaluate their influence on the final proposal posed by the European Commission.

Horizon Europe, as proposed, is the most ambitious research and innovation funding programme to date. The Commission proposes a budget of €100 billion for 2021-2027 for Horizon Europe and the Euratom Research and Training Programme in which €97,6 billion is allocated Horizon Europe (European Commission, 2018a). Like Horizon 2020, the next framework programme will include a three-pillar structure. The pillar with the largest budgetary post is that of global (former: societal) challenges, which has a budget of €52,7 billion out of the €97,6 billion budget (ibid.). This pillar seeks to address similar challenges to Horizon Europe. These challenges are: health; inclusive and secure society; digital and industry; climate, energy and mobility; and food and natural resources (European Commission, 2018b, p. 42). The priorities named above were also research priorities of some of the respondents in this study.

In the framing of a new programme, it will be of interest for the stakeholders that the suggested structure focuses on areas where they can contribute and seek EU funding. Especially for those respondents who has set research priorities. However, whether the universities research priorities are a result of the programme and EU focus, or whether the EU focus is a result of successful lobbying of the universities, is not clear. What will become clearer, however, is how the offices have worked to represent their home institutions to gain information or position their views in the new framework programme. The next section will analyse whether the university offices feel they have had a say in the structure of the framework programme, and whether they view themselves as influential or not.

6.1 How are the HES Interests Represented and are they Listened to?

In the questionnaire, respondents were asked to tick a box for the activities related to Horizon Europe they have conducted. Graph 13 gives an overview of the activities the offices say that they conducted alone. These will be analysed first. Graph 14 will, thereafter, show the activities completed with other university offices in Brussels or within a specific network. All of the offices state that they have participated to events hosted by other university representations regarding to Horizon Europe. This illustrates that all of the offices have some interest in the upcoming framework programme. 14 of the offices state that they have reported back to their home institution on this topic, showing that this upcoming framework programme is of interest to the vast majority of the universities represented as well. The two mentioned activities have more to do with monitoring and being the eyes and ears of the home institution rather than seeking influence and was the most recognized alternatives.

However, participating in events opens the opportunity for networking which was previously shown to one of the main tasks of the offices. As for seeking information on the programme, eight of the respondents have taken part in working groups on the topic, which are a popular venue for information sharing and to discussion about common areas of interest. Furthermore, 11 of the 16 respondents say that they, alone, have had meetings with EU officials on the topic. This shows that these respondents indeed have direct access to EU officials that they view to have relevant positions in relation to research and innovation policy. The activities conducted alone by the Brussels offices to a large degree seem to revolve around information gathering and sharing. However, meetings with EU officials as an access strategy also sticks out as a popular activity to be conducted alone when representing their institutions. Whether these meetings function as a platform for university input, or functions as another channel to retrieve information on related developments, is not specified here. Therefore, it is difficult to determine to what degree these activates have aimed at influencing the upcoming framework programme.

Although, by looking at some of the other alternatives it becomes clearer that at least a minority of the offices has positioned themselves with regards to Horizon Europe. Five of the offices affirmed that they had hosted at least one event in Brussels; uttered their position on social media; and/or written and circulated a position paper on the topic. Another two respondents have also been part of a commission expert group or stakeholder consultation. These graph 13 show that access and voice strategies have been relevant for these offices when representing their home institutions interests. Thus, highlighting the channels for interest representation discussed in section 5.2 as relevant for this particular policy field as well.

Graph 13: Activities conducted alone with regards to Horizon Europe

Q17: With regards to FP9/Horizon Europe which of the activities listed below has your office done ALONE?
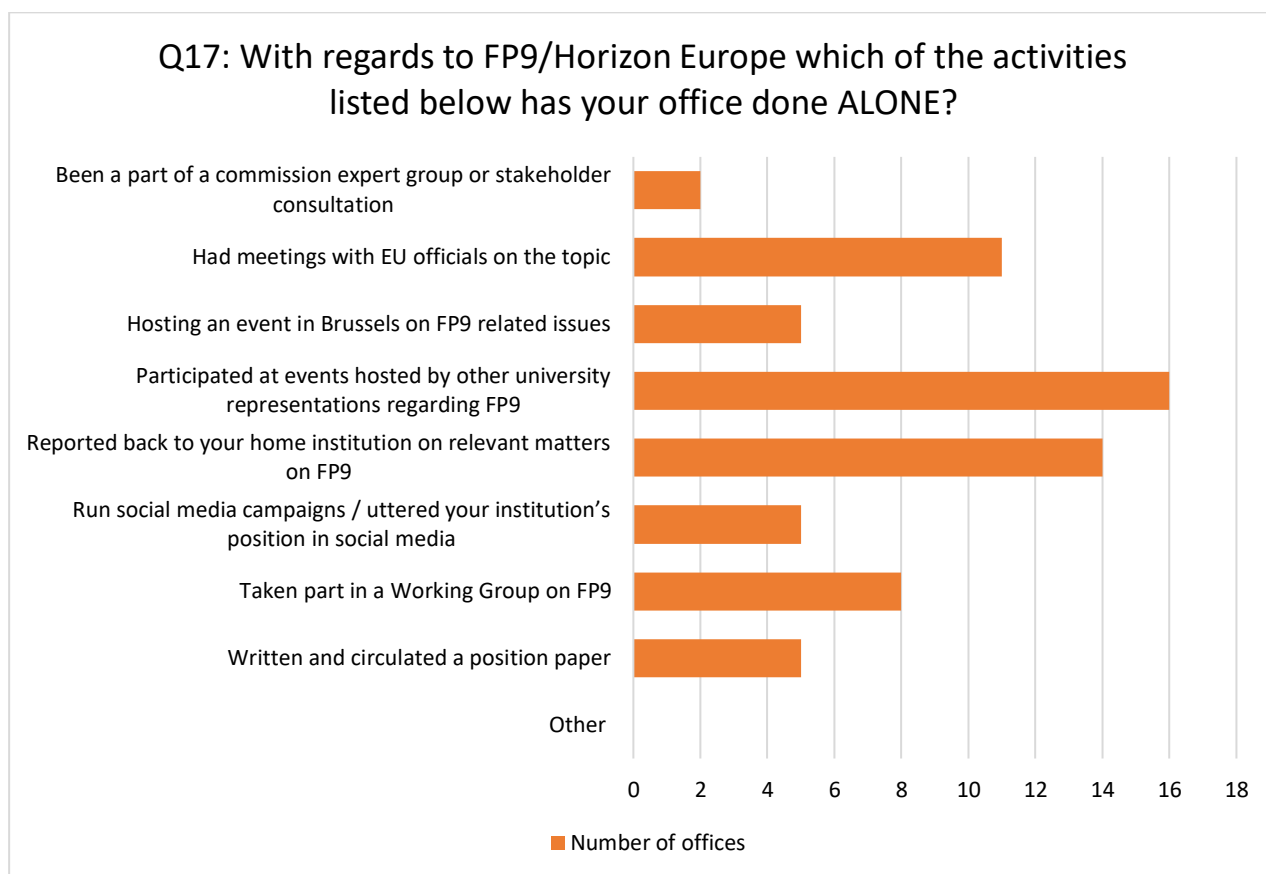
Source: author's own compilation based on the questionnaire's response.

Keeping in mind that the offices stated they prefer to state their view via networks, rather than acting alone implies that the analysis below on activities conducted with others should be given more emphasis. In collaboration with other university offices or via specific networks, the most recognized activity regarding Horizon Europe was 'had meetings with EU officials on the topic'. This shows that such meetings are also quite relevant in collaboration with others. Again, it is not specified what these meetings entail, and whether they are a way of seeking influence, information or both. Nevertheless, it is possible that it might be easier to meet with more influential or high-level EU officials if the meeting presents the official with someone representing a larger group with similar interests rather than a single actor. Thus, one could assume that the meetings referred to in graph 14 could be of a different kind than those reflected in graph 13.

Monitoring and information sharing on the topic of Horizon Europe is also highly valued. Half of the offices states that they have created a working group with others on the topic. This number correlates with the number of offices that say that they take part in a working group, making it highly likely that these are the same offices. Thus, eight of the respondents find Horizon Europe to be of such relevance that they have taken the initiative to form their own group or groups on the issue. How many working groups these offices take part in or if they speak of the same working group cannot be stipulated from the collected data. Nevertheless, the fact that many of the university offices systematically exchange information and discuss the upcoming framework programme is quite clear.

Regarding influence, half of the offices have written and circulated a position paper with other Brussels-based actors or networks. Position papers again are shown to be a popular, but also collaborative way to bring forward the home institution's interests. Collective effort intensifies the opportunity for impact, and thus writing position papers with others could be thought of as more impactful. If democracy is regarded, position papers provided to the EU by a vast network of stakeholders, should be more heavily considered, because they do represent a larger group of society.

Furthermore, half of the offices stated that they have hosted an event in Brussels on the topic of Horizon Europe. The details to these events are not specified, and as the discussion above noted, events do not automatically echo voice strategy. This depends on the target group, the topic and technicality of the topic discussed. Events could thus be a form of voice or mixed strategy, or it could be held for networking purposes. However, events held in collaboration with others must be conducted with some sort of aim, more specifically they must be connected to the main goals of the offices. Moreover, to secure an audience – the event must be advertised in a way that the audience feels they receive something from participating at the event. By having an EU official participating for instance, you provide the EU official the opportunity to speak on new developments and spread new ideas to the relevant pool of stakeholders. The hosting institutions and networks gains visibility, and at the same time, the audience gains more information, but also the opportunity to give their input and network with relevant people. This type of event will thus be a case of access strategy.

To exemplify; event on various topics have been held inside the European Parliament by university offices[13]. These events are hosted by a Member of the European Parliament, and frequently include a high-level speaker from the European Commission, often Heads of Unit. Such events are clear examples of the degree of access some offices have which allows them to host an event with representation from both the European Parliament and the European Commission.

Inside strategies, like taking part in a commission expert group or stakeholder consultation are also relevant for three of the respondents, who state that they have taken part in such structure via a network or together with other offices. These three have thus had another access opportunity to the processes directed at the framework programme than other offices. The question does not clarify whether their institutions have been directly represented in these settings or if their interest were represented via a third party on their behalf.

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[13] Programme and more information about the White Rose Brussels Office event: https://brussels.whiterose.ac.uk/events/adapting-to-climate-change-are-our-solutions-working/ . University of Helsinki, University of Turku and Tampere University of Technology together with the Universities Finland UNIFI. Programme and more information about the event: https://www.errin.eu/events/moonshots-2020s-how-make-most-missions-horizon-europe-climate-food-and-natural-resources

Graph 14: Activities conducted in collaboration with other universities Brussels offices or specific networks with regards to Horizon Europe
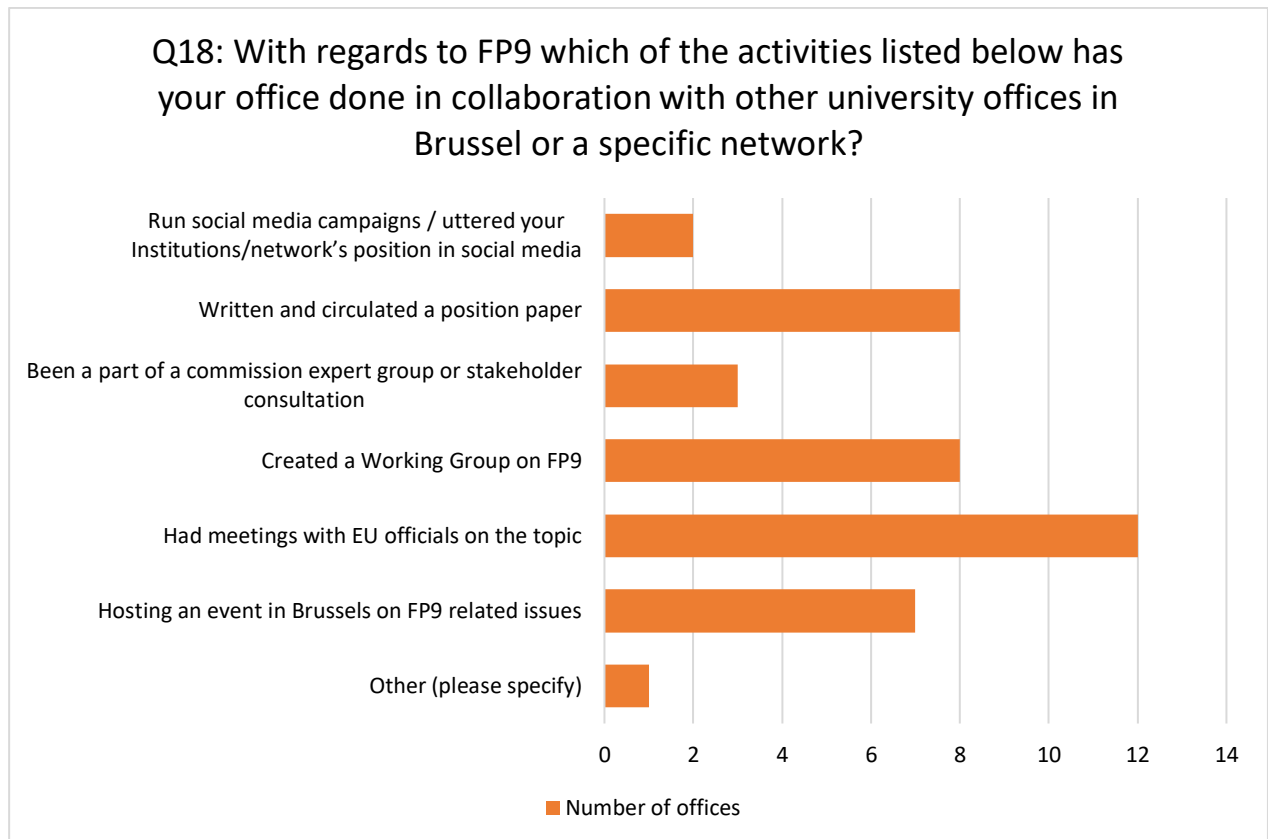
Source: author's own compilation based on the questionnaire's response.

As for voice strategies, only two of the respondents say that their universities' positions have been uttered in a social media campaign in collaboration with others or via a network. The use of voice strategies thus seems to be less relevant than access strategies when the offices represent their home institutions both alone, and in collaboration with others.

Graph 13 and 14 enhance our understanding of how the universities have been triggered by the research and innovation developments within the European system. They illustrate that several activities and interests are set in motion with regards to Horizon Europe. For one of the offices, however, none of the alternatives in relation to the question presented in graph 14 were fitting to describe their activity, illustrating that research and innovation is not prioritised to the same degree by this office as it is by the others.

Thus far, the analysis has illustrated ways in which the institutions' interests are being represented at the EU level. For the offices that, to a larger degree, worked to influence the Commission proposal on Horizon Europe it is also interesting to understand whether these interests are taken into account and listened to by the EU officials. Graph 15 showcase how the respondents perceive their level of influence on the final Horizon Europe proposal. Half of the respondents in this study feel that they had an 'intermediate' degree of influence on the final Horizon Europe proposal. Although one respondent felt they had a 'high' level of influence, none viewed their influence as 'very high'. The lower end of the scale is heavier than the upper end, depending on where you include the 'intermediate' variable. Seven of the offices believes their influence to be 'low', 'very low' and 'none'.

Graph 15: Offices' perceived degree of influence on the final Horizon Europe proposal

Q19: in your opinion, to what degree did your office have any influence on the final FP9 proposals?
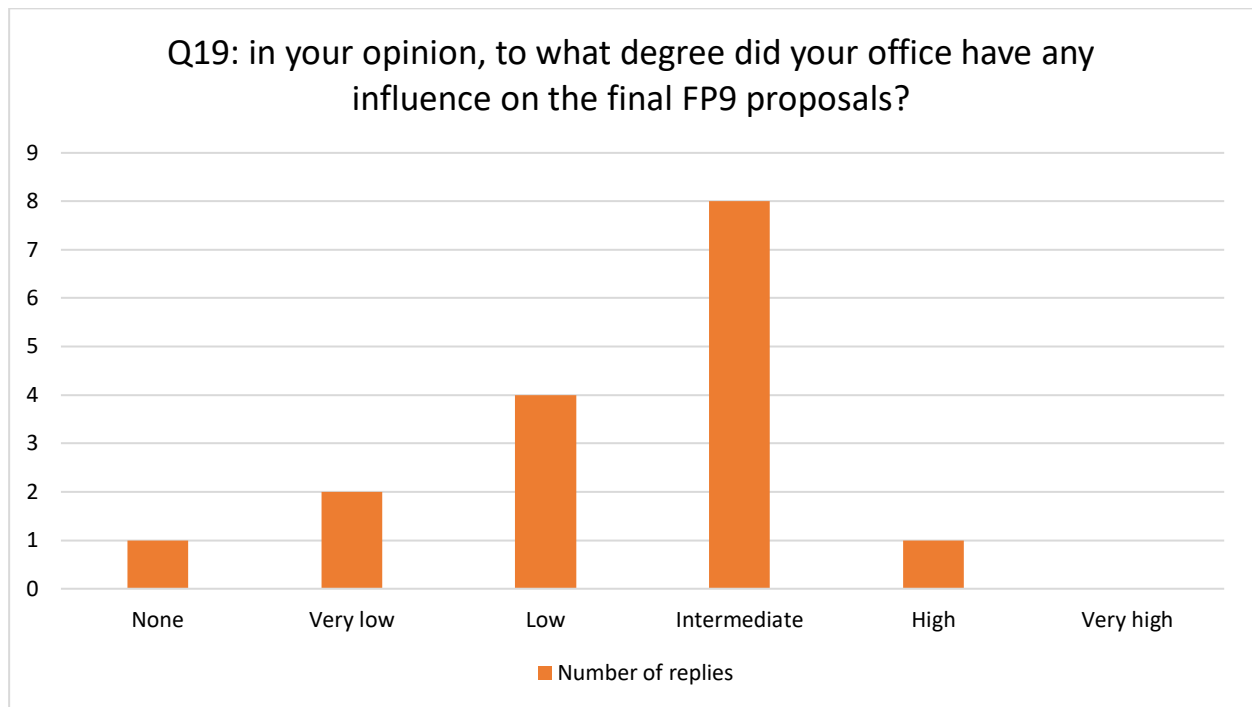
Source: author's own compilation based on the questionnaire's response.

The fact that this scale is split in two can be related to the level of influence these offices seek to have as well as lower efforts of influence the Commission's proposal. Not all the offices agreed that influencing EU policy was to a large degree a goal of their office which could explain to the lower end of this scale.

Furthermore, the respondents were asked whether they thought that EU officials have been open to listening to the universities in Brussels. The answers to the question are represented in Graph 16. Although 13 of the respondents agree that that their input is welcomed by the EU officials, it is clear through graph 15 that they still do not feel that they have had a great deal of impact on the final Commission proposal. Also, this of course depends on the level of input they desire to pursue.

Graph 16: How the offices' perceive EU officials openness to listen to the university offices'

Q20: In your opinion, have EU officials been open to listen to the universities in Brussels with regards to FP9?
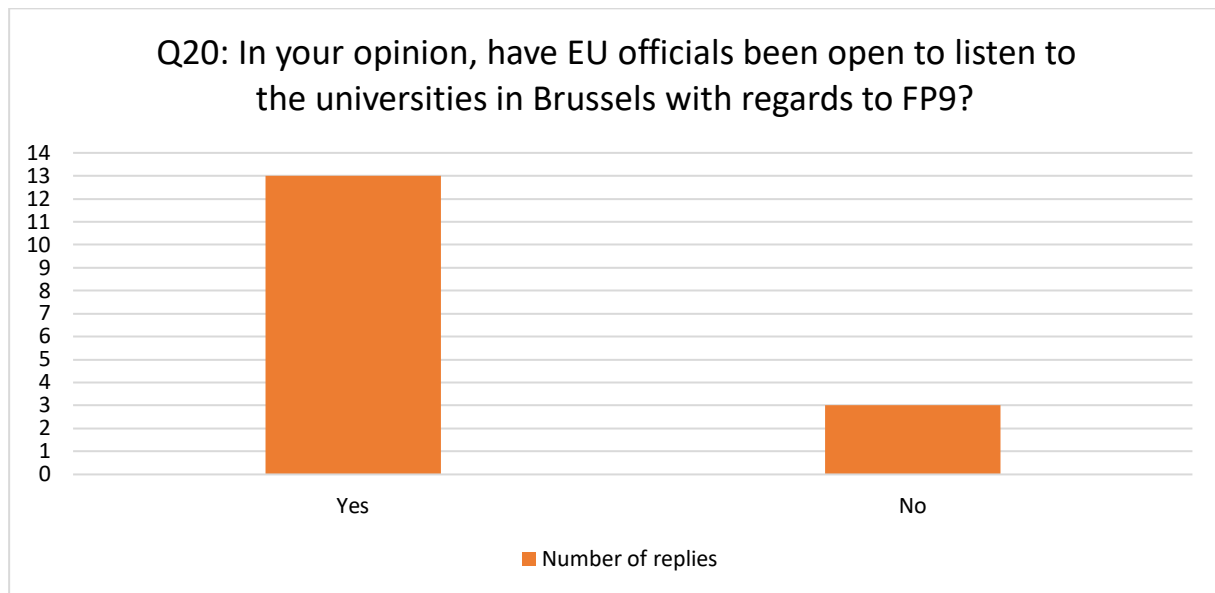
Source: author's own compilation based on the questionnaire's response.

Regardless of whether the respondents think the EU is open, or closed to input from the university Brussels offices, they were asked to elaborate on their answer. The question was not mandatory but collected replies from eight of the offices. One of the offices believed that the EU was more closed for input because they worked very urgently on the Horizon Europe proposal. This urgency led to the use of more traditional methods where already established networks and associations were considered for input. Another respondent agreed that longstanding European networks like the EUA are in a better position to influence the upcoming proposal, however this respondent also note that their Brussels office has worked as a link between the home institution and their national government and the European Parliament to promote their views. In that way their position was rather promoted through 'back-door' methods rather than promoting them on their own. In other words, the office has worked around the fact that the EU was more closed to wider input.

One can also assume that many of the newly established Brussels offices have not had the time to mobilize their interests and establish a tight network in Brussels through which they could promote their interests. The process of defining Horizon Europe as it is confirmed in these responses was an urgent matter of the Commission and thus, collaboration via the networks the offices take part in could have been important. However, one of the offices states that 'there are new dynamics amongst universities/university groups other than the usual EUA etc.' (see Annex 3, question 20). The comment does not imply what this new dynamic means regarding the EU's openness but it can be assumed that this office feels that the EU is open to listen to these new university clusters and disagrees that the EU has only been open to the longstanding, already existing associations and networks.

Another respondent points out that they see some of the requests answered through the programmes which shows that they have been listened to, without giving specific examples. Moreover, one respondent agrees that the European Commission indeed listened to the universities but adds a question mark to how much of the information is really taken into account. This illustrates the fact that though an office has access and are

able to position themselves on a given issue, access strategies as is stated by Bouwen & McCown (2007, p. 425) does not automatically produce changes. Whether the Commission listens can rather be related to the information the stakeholder provides. Another respondent highlights this by saying: 'the Commission is always interested in getting good ideas. if you have one that is to the benefit of the European Commission as well, it is quite easy to reach out'. Thus, emphasising that the quality of information is perceived as more important than the access itself.

Another respondent also recognizes that the Commission listens, as they need the stakeholders to agree with their final proposal and thus actively looks for support. This points to the fact that the Commission proposal is only a proposal and has to be accepted by the European Parliament and Council. If the stakeholders strongly disagree with the Commission's final proposal, this could lead the stakeholders to largely mobilize towards the other two EU institutions to ensure that the proposal is amended. Naturally, the Commission would rather want the stakeholders to stand by the proposal and promoting that the Parliament and Council accept it. Another reason for why the EU has been open to listen to the university offices, is said to be because the Commission seeks examples and practical experience in addition to input on the particular programme. Though only eighth of the respondents chose to leave a comment as of why the commission was open or not, the ones who did provides a broad reflection as to why they think the Commission listens to the stakeholders. These reasons are in short, because they need expert knowledge, they need the stakeholders to agree with their proposal, and to get examples from practitioners. Other respondents, however, were not as positive, and believes that the European Commission in the process of designing Horizon Europe were too short of time to listen to the wider pool of stakeholders. Nevertheless, in sum, most offices do feel that the Commission overall have been quite open to their input.

This chapter has given insight into how the universities interests are represented via the university offices in the case of Horizon Europe. It is clear that the upcoming framework programme is an area of interest to the offices' home institutions. Moreover, the analysis of the questionnaire responses has shown that the offices have indeed represented their institutions in various ways with regards to Horizon Europe. The offices have for the most part participated to events, had meetings with EU officials (both alone and with others) and reported back to their home institution on relevant matters. These activities largely relate to monitoring and information exchange, but also influence strategies, like writing position papers and having meetings with EU officials. Almost all of the offices named their goals to include both seeking information on and gaining more funding as well as influencing and reporting on relevant EU policy. Which coincides with the finding in this chapter. Altogether, the offices have conducted a wide range of activities with regards to Horizon Europe. Whether these offices activity has caused any changes is however difficult to say. Although the European Commission has been open to listen to the university offices not all are sure their input is taken into consideration.

7 Conclusion

The aim of this study was to gain insight into how universities are represented in Brussels and furthermore to classify what the main type of university office is. The study was conducted to cover a gap in the EU lobbing literature on universities as interest organisations. By addressing the research question '*how are universities represented in Brussels?'* this study concludes that universities are usually represented in Brussels via their own office, which often takes part in a larger network.

The first sub research question to this study was: *what are the main characteristics of the university offices?* The analysis characterized the university offices to usually be quite small and focused on the EU's research and innovation policy. The statement that these offices are small rests on the findings that they usually have very few employees and represent quite few universities. Moreover, the offices' goals typically concern to seeking information about, and heightening their institutions take-back, from the EU funding schemes. Furthermore, to influence EU policy and report back to the home institutions on policy changes were regarded as a second priority, but still to be relevant for the university offices.

The second sub research question was: *How are the universities interest represented through these offices?* This question was addressed with the finding that universities prefer to represent their interests via networks, rather than acting alone. Further analysis into the offices preferred channels for communication and activities showed that the university offices usually utilized access strategies when communicating their positions or views. The three most distinct activities were to organise events, have informal meetings with EU policy makers and write position papers. Because the universities have specialized and unique interests voice strategies seems to be a lower priority and is largely restricted to social media. Moreover, universities seek information. Therefore, the offices largely focus their work on monitoring and find it valuable to take part in the information exchange inside various networks.

The third sub research question was: *What is the main type of university office in Brussels?* After exploring these offices' main goals, activities and ways of communicating with the EU, these offices are classified as lobbying offices. There are many players in the EU framework programme competing for research funding. Consequently, as this thesis has illustrated, some universities have opened an office in Brussels to seek more information on and access to EU funding opportunities. Secondly, these offices also work to skew related EU initiatives and policy in their institutions favour.

Horizon Europe was presented as a case and example of how the offices represented their universities' interests. The case showed that the offices in many ways worked to obtain information about the upcoming framework programme and reported back to their home institutions. Furthermore, the case illustrated that these offices have functioned as a reference point for communication with other stakeholders in Brussels and the EU. Both with regards to informational and political lobbying.

The conclusions of this study are based on a small sample of 16 university offices in Brussels, all of which takes part in the same network. The 16 offices make up a 36% response rate of the offices that were asked to participate in the study. Thus, the conclusions neither provide a complete picture of neither the university landscape in Brussels in total, nor of the UnILiON network. Because of formal restrictions with regards to time and scope, this study was limited to a more general questionnaire-format rather than larger statistical or in-depth analysis. Although only 16 offices were studied, these offices do represent 72 universities, from 12 different countries, including EU member states, associated countries and third countries. This thesis is therefore an initial investigation to a field in which literature had not yet been conducted. This study draws attention to a new and growing body of interest in Brussels and presents findings that future researchers can draw from and use as inspiration to ask new questions.

The offices responding to this study largely agree and it would be interesting to see if these findings hold up in a larger study. Even though the analysis discovered some main trends, there were variation in the answers. Much focus has not been drawn to the exceptions. To address the variation, a study of a larger scale needs to be conducted. The small sample of this study is insufficient to present a nuanced and statistically significant picture of how universities are represented in Brussels. Future research could thus seek to more fully understand the differences between the university offices. Furthermore, it could be interesting to seek more in-depth insight to the work of these offices and target a wider group of universities with representation in Brussels.

The conclusions presented above should be discussed in relation to *validity* which refers to whether a study has a logical connection between the project's design and findings and the questions it seeks to answer (*my emphasis:* Tjora, 2012, p. 207). Indicators that strengthen a study's validity in addition to transparency, is that the research is conducted professionally and is anchored in relevant and other research (ibid., p. 207). The university landscape in Brussels has been established as a quite new and currently expanding field. Because this is a preliminary study, directly related research could not be retrieved. However, the results of the questionnaire have been discussed through some key concepts in the EU lobbying literature and furthermore, discussed the findings on university interests against relevant literature. The fact that new offices are popping up, also sets restrictions to the validity and replicability of this study as the characteristics of the offices and main type could change when the pool of university interest grows. The validity and replicability of this study is additionally dependent on academic developments. As this is an initial study, the conclusions which at this stage are uncontested, can, and should be expanded upon through future research.

If one wished to replicate this study, the theoretical backing, and methodological considerations are presented in the thesis. Moreover, the questionnaire outline and findings are attached in the annex. Transparency of a study strengthens the study's validity and replicability (*my emphasis:* Tjora, 2012, p. 202). There are also limits to the replicability of the study, due to the changing character of the issue at hand, even if the same questions are used and the same networks are targeted, another study might collect information on a whole different sample of university offices. This could result in different conclusions.

This study has exposed a gap in the literature on EU lobbying and made an initial contribution to the literature on university representation in Brussels. What becomes clear throughout this study is that universities are very much more than merely institutions for higher education. Universities make a substantial contribution to research and innovation

at the EU level and are consequently relevant and important stakeholders to the EUs research and innovation policy. Moreover, it is clear that the enlarged EU budget, and focus on research and innovation drew universities to Brussels. These developments should be further addressed by researchers as we still have much to learn about 'the new kids on the block'.

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Annex

Annex 1: Questionnaire outline

Annex 2: Questionnaire responses illustrated in figures and tables

Annex 3: Cover-letter sent by email with questionnaire

Annex 1: Questionnaire outline

1. When did your Brussels office open? *[14]
    a. Year _____

2. How many universities does your office represent? *
    a. 1
    b. 2
    c. 3
    d. 4
    e. 5
    f. More than five

3. Country of origin: *
    -   Open question

4. Which type(s) of university do your office represent? *
    a. University
    b. University of applied sciences
    c. Both
    d. Other
        i. Specify

5. The office is affiliated with *
    a. The rector or rectorate and represent the whole university
    b. The university administration or management and represent the whole university
    c. A certain faculty / faculties
    d. A certain department / departments
    e. Other

6. Is your office registered in the Lobbying register? *
    a. Yes
    b. No
        i. If no, why not

7. How many full-time employees work at your office? *
    a. 1
    b. 2
    c. 3
    d. 4
    e. 5
    f. More than five

8. Does the university you represent have set research priorities? *
    a. Yes

---

[14] * = Mandatory

i. If yes, what are the priorities?
                - Open answer.
        b. No

9. What best characterizes the goals of the office? *
    (rank in prioritized order 1-3, where 1 is most, tick off all relevant)
        a. Get more EU funding
        b. Seek information on future funding opportunities
        c. Report on EU policy changes relevant for your institution(s)
        d. Influence EU policy in your areas of interest
        e. Other
                i. Please specify

10. Rank the following activities according to what best characterizes your office tasks (1 is most, tick off all relevant) *
        a. Gather information on EU policies
        b. Gather information about EU funding opportunities
        c. Lobbying
        d. Networking
        e. Host events or seminars
        f. Receiving visits from home institution
        g. Project management
        h. Write proposals for funding opportunities
        i. Arrange meetings for representatives from home institution with EU officials
        j. Arrange meeting for representatives from home institution with potential partners
        k. Collaborate with other universities to influence EU policy
        l. Other
                i. Please specify

11. Which EU policy field is/are the most relevant for your office? *
        - Open question

12. Name the networks your office works with or take part in *
    (tick off all relevant)

        a. UnILiON
        b. ERRIN
        c. IGLO
        d. Russel Group
        e. Caesar
        f. EUA
        g. None
        h. Other
                i. Specify (add all other)

13. Out of these networks which ones do you work most actively with? *
    (top three)
        a. UnILiON

b. ERRIN
c. IGLO
d. Russel Group
e. Caesar
f. EUA
g. None
h. Other
    i. Specify (add all other)

14. How does your university usually represent its positions and interests? *
Rank the following options
    a. Through organized networks working on specific policy areas
    b. Through networks comprising universities/actors from the same country
    c. By acting alone
    d. Other
        i. Please specify

15. Which channels does your office most often use when communicating your position or view on new or existing EU policy? *
    a. Position papers
    b. Social media
    c. Informal meetings with EU policy makers
    d. Organizing events with participation of EU Officials
    e. Open consultations
    f. Council preparatory bodies through Permanent Representation (or EU delegation)
    g. Commission comitology
    h. European Commission Expert groups
    i. European Parliament intergroups
    j. Other

16. Which of the following statements fits the institution/s you represent? *
    a. My institution is represented via a regional office
    b. My institution was represented through a regional office prior to having our own office
    c. We did not have any representation in Brussels before opening our own office.
    d. Other
        i. Please specify

17. With regards to FP9 which of the activities listed below has your office done ALONE? *
(tick off all relevant)
    a. Hosting an event in Brussels on FP9 related issues
    b. Written and circulated a position paper
    c. Taken part in a Working Group on FP9
    d. Had meetings with EU officials on the topic
    e. Run social media campaigns / uttered your institution's position in social media
    f. Reported back to your home institution on relevant matters on FP9

g. Participated at events hosted by other university representations regarding FP9
h. Been a part of a commission expert group or stakeholder consultation

18. With regards to FP9 which of the activities listed below has your office done in collaboration with other university offices in Brussel or a specific network? *
(tick off all relevant)
    a. Hosting an event in Brussels on FP9 related issues
    b. Written and circulated a position paper
    c. Taken part in a Working Group on FP9
    d. Had meetings with EU officials on the topic
    e. Run social media campaigns / uttered your institution/network's position in social media
    f. Reported back to your home institution on relevant matters on FP9
    g. Participated at events hosted by other university representations regarding FP9
    h. Been a part of a commission expert group or stakeholder consultation

19. in your opinion, to what extent did your office have any influence on the final FP9 proposals? *
    a. very high
    b. high
    c. intermediate
    d. low
    e. very low
    f. none

20. in your opinion, have EU officials been open to listen to the universities in Brussels with regards to FP9? *
    a. yes
    b. no

    Open question: why do you think that is? comment? (not mandatory)

Annex 2: Questionnaire responses illustrated in figures and tables

Q1: When did your Brussels office open?

Number of offices opening (by year)

Year	1999	2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Number	1	2	3	1			1			5	2	1

Q2: How many universities does your office represent?

Number of universities represented by the offices

	Represents 1	Represents 2	Represents 3	Represents 4	Represents 5	other
Number of offices	7	2	2	2	0	3
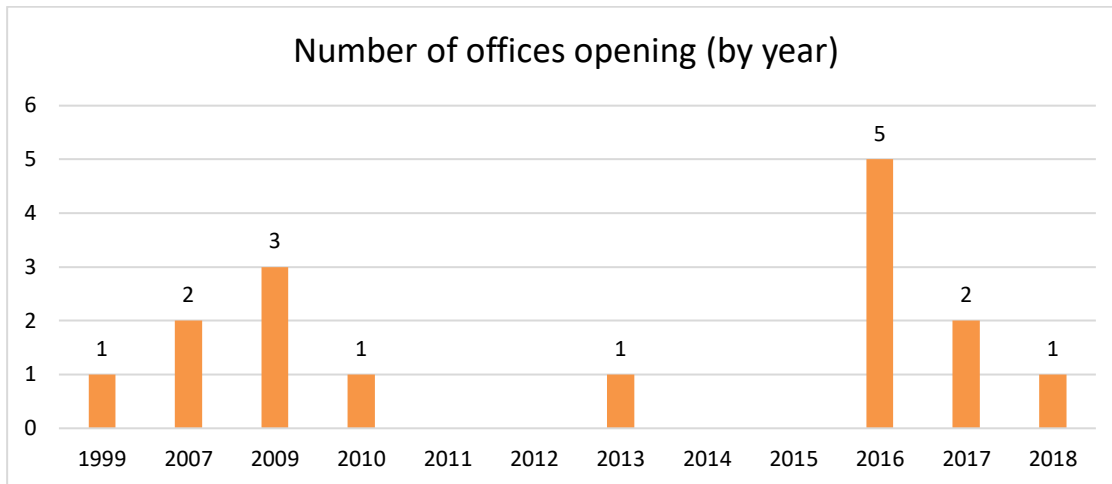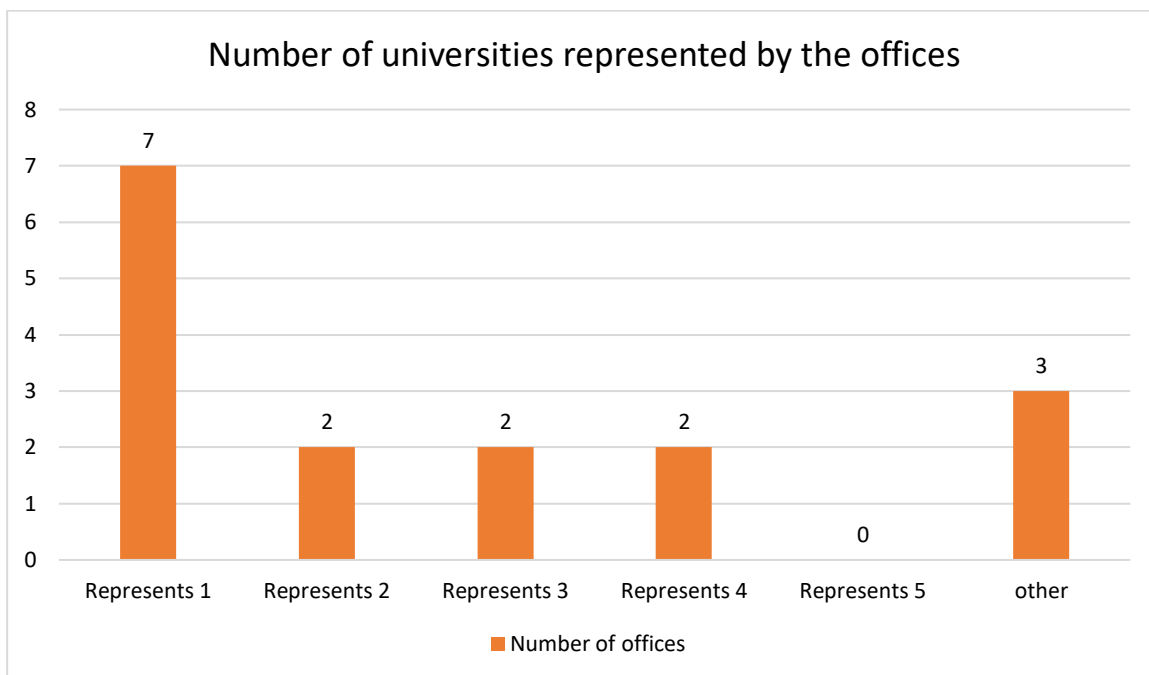
Other answers were: 31, 11 and 6

Represents more than one:	56,25 %
Represents One	43,75 %

Q3: Country of origin for universities represented

Map showcasing the geographic representation of the questionnaire in Europe. (missing: Japan).

Q4: How would you classify your university? Example: (public/private) AND (applied science/technical/general)

12	Represents public universities
2	Represents private
1	Represents both public and private universities
1	Too many to classify = N/A[15]

---

[15] N/A = No answer

General:	13
Too many to classify = N/A	1
Technical	3
Applied sciences	3
Research intensive	1

Q5: The office is affiliated with:
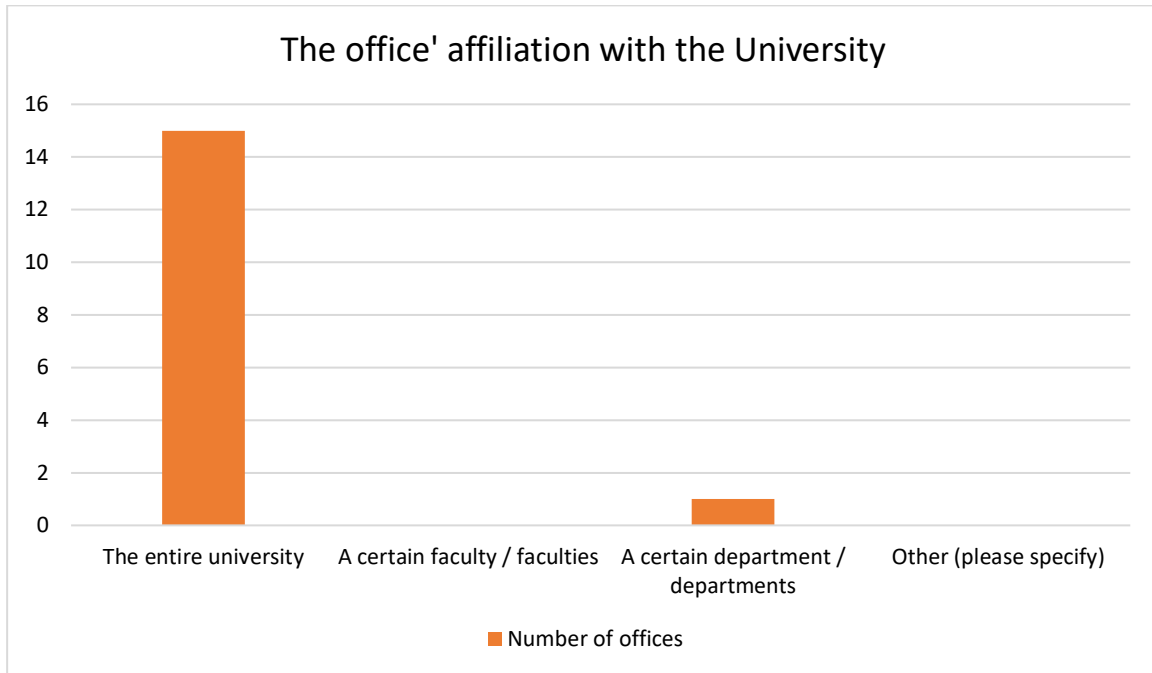
The office' affiliation with the University

Q6: Is your office registered in the Lobbying register?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	75,00 %	12
No (why?)	25,00 %	4

Rasons why not:
Do not need for our activity
Don't know why
No comment
Lobbying is not as part as the goals and objectives of the office.

Q7: How many full-time employees work at your office?

Answer Choices	Responses	
1	68,75 %	11
2	6,25 %	1
3	6,25 %	1
4	6,25 %	1
5	6,25 %	1
More than five	6,25 %	1

Q8: Does the university you represent have set research priorities?

Answer Choices	Responses	
No	56,25 %	9
Yes (which?)	43,75 %	7

Respondents	Yes(which?)
1	Climate Change, Food Security, Health
2	ICT, Excellence, SC 3,4,5,6
3	(University 1) ICT, SSH and Bio/Medicine; (University 2) ICT, Engineering, SSH; 3 and 4 no specific priorities
4	We are representing 11 universities (Cyprus and Greece) and each university has a different set of priorities
5	My university network has selected sustainable urban development and health innovation as our prioritized research areas for the purpose of our collaboration efforts at European level.
6	Robotics, Sport sciences, Regional-Interregional studies, Migration
7	Climate and energy transition, marine research and Global challenges

Question 9: What best characterizes the goals of the office? (rank in prioritised order, where 1 is most, tick off all relevant)
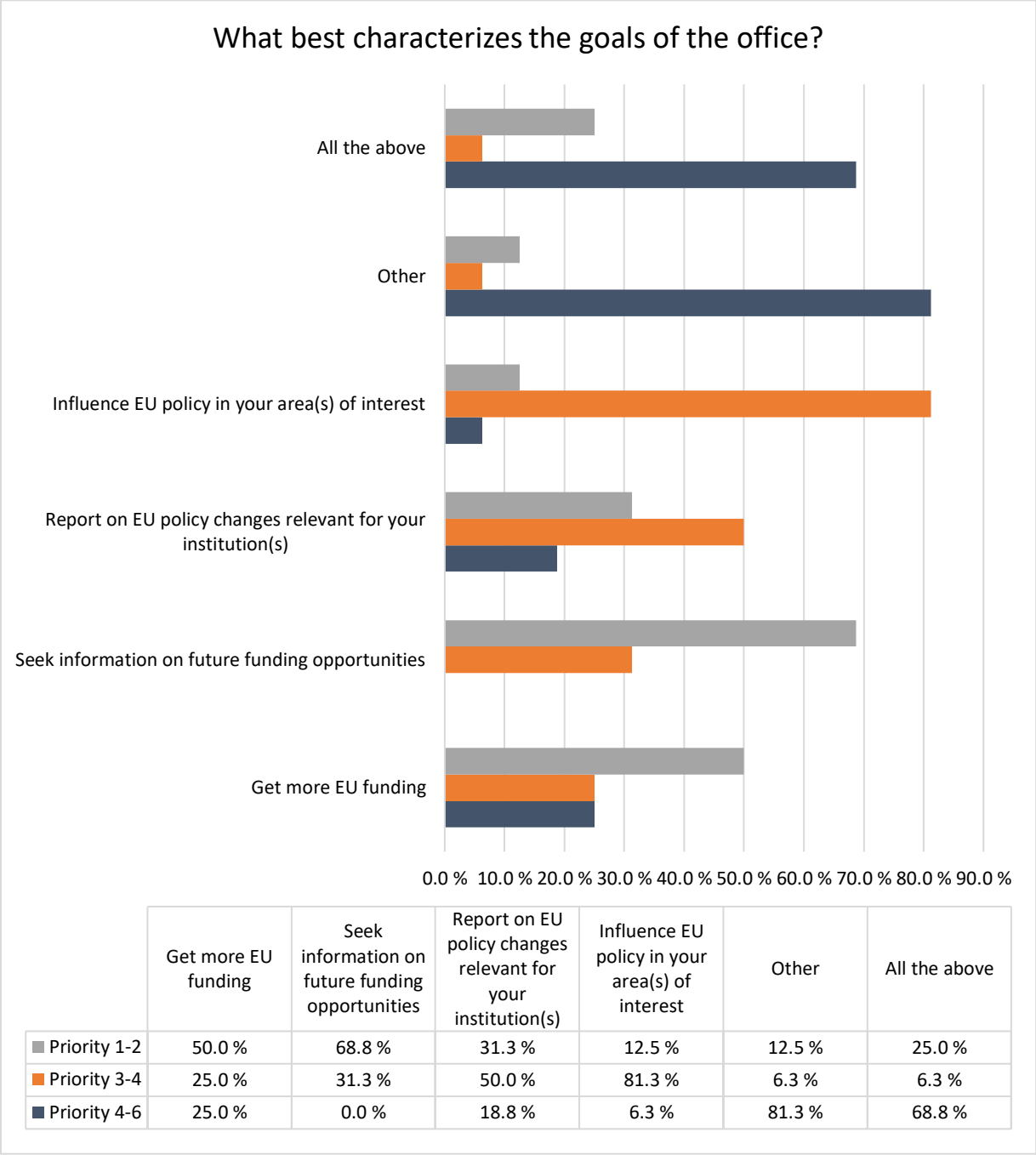
What best characterizes the goals of the office?

	Get more EU funding	Seek information on future funding opportunities	Report on EU policy changes relevant for your institution(s)	Influence EU policy in your area(s) of interest	Other	All the above
▉ Priority 1-2	50.0 %	68.8 %	31.3 %	12.5 %	12.5 %	25.0 %
▉ Priority 3-4	25.0 %	31.3 %	50.0 %	81.3 %	6.3 %	6.3 %
▉ Priority 4-6	25.0 %	0.0 %	18.8 %	6.3 %	81.3 %	68.8 %

Q10: Rank the following activities according to what best characterizes your office tasks (1 is most, tick off all relevant)

Rank the following activities according to what best characterizes your office tasks
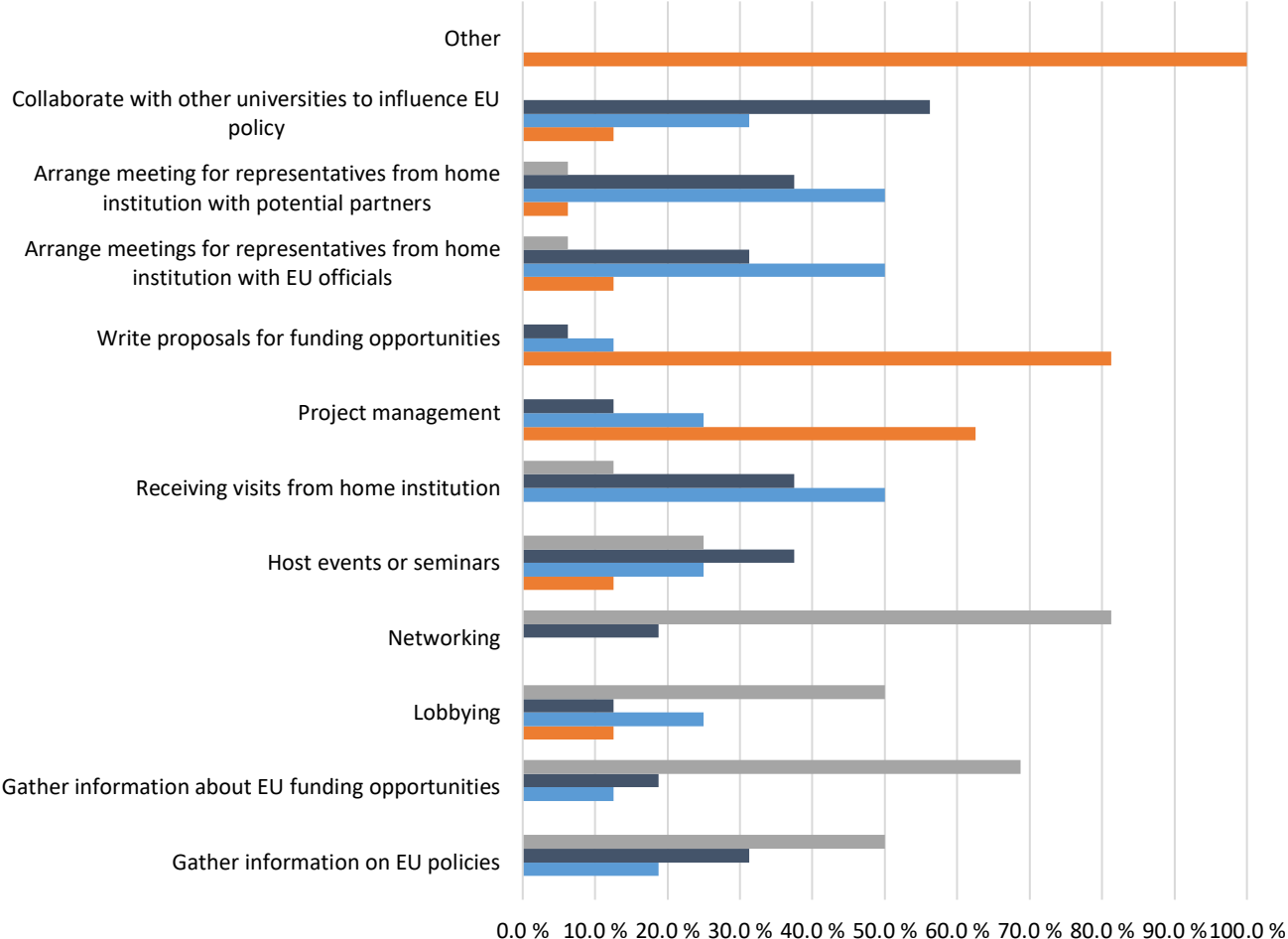
	Gather information on EU policies	Gather information about EU funding opportunities	Lobbying	Networking	Host events or seminars	Receiving visits from home institution	Project management	Write proposals for funding opportunities	Arrange meetings for representatives from home institution with EU officials	Arrange meeting for representatives from home institution with potential partners	Collaborate with other universities to influence EU policy	Other
■ Priority 1-3	50.0 %	68.8 %	50.0 %	81.3 %	25.0 %	12.5 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	6.3 %	6.3 %	0.0 %	0.0 %
■ Priority 4-6	31.3 %	18.8 %	12.5 %	18.8 %	37.5 %	37.5 %	12.5 %	6.3 %	31.3 %	37.5 %	56.3 %	0.0 %
■ Priority 7-9	18.8 %	12.5 %	25.0 %	0.0 %	25.0 %	50.0 %	25.0 %	12.5 %	50.0 %	50.0 %	31.3 %	0.0 %
■ Priority 10-12	0.0 %	0.0 %	12.5 %	0.0 %	12.5 %	0.0 %	62.5 %	81.3 %	12.5 %	6.3 %	12.5 %	100.0 %

Q: 11 Which EU policy field(s) is/are the most relevant for your office? (in prioritized order)

| Respondents	Responses	Coded as:
1	Research and Innovation Framework Programme Erasmus+ ERDF DigitalEU InvestEU	R&I HE/Erasmus+ Regional Policy DigitalEU (R&I) InvestEU (R&I)
2	Research; Education; Multiculturel; Innovation; Development; Culture; Tourism	R&I HE/Erasmus+ Regional policy?
3	Internships	Internships
4	European university network, EU2020, HEU, ERC	HE/Erasmus+ R&I
5	Horizon 2020/Europe Erasmus+	R&I HE/Erasmus+
6	Research and education	R&I HE/Erasmus+
7	1. R&i 2. Education 3. Regional policy	1. R&I 2. HE/Erasmus+ 3. Regional Policy
8	Research policy, health, climate & environment, bioeconomy, digital (not prioritised order, focus areas are equally important)	R&I (all the underneath as priorities within the EU R&I policy?)
9	Medical and Dental Sciences Engineering and Physical Sciences Life and Environmental Sciences Social Science and Humanities / Arts and Law	R&I
10	Research and Innovation (renewable, energy, health, agriculture, ICT, SSH) education, cultural heritage, regional policy, tourism, SMES	R&I HE/Erasmus+ Cultural Heritage Regional Policy
11	Energy, ICT, health, SSH	R&I
12	research and innovation education climate, environment and circular economy health	R&I HE/Erasmus+
13	Research and Education	R&I HE/Erasmus+
14	European Commission European Parliament	N/A
15	Research and Innovation, Higher Education	R&I HE/Erasmus+
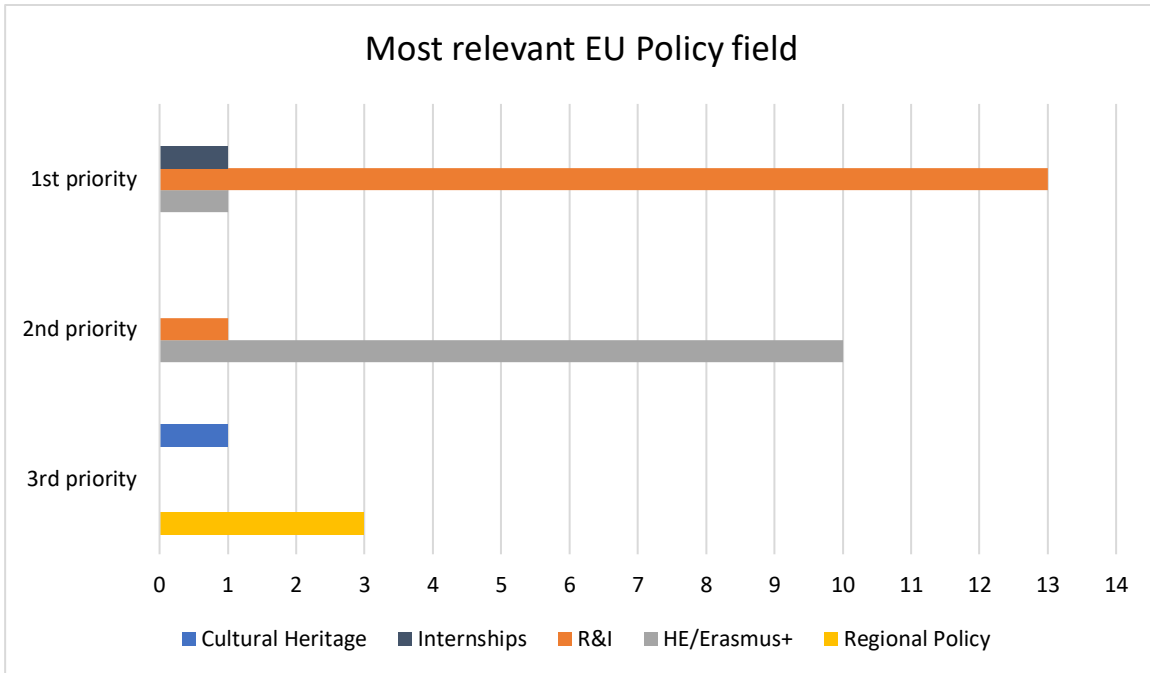
16	Research and Innovation	R&I
	Education	HE/Erasmus+

Most relevant EU Policy field

Q12: Name the networks your office works with or take part in (tick off all relevant)

Participation in networks
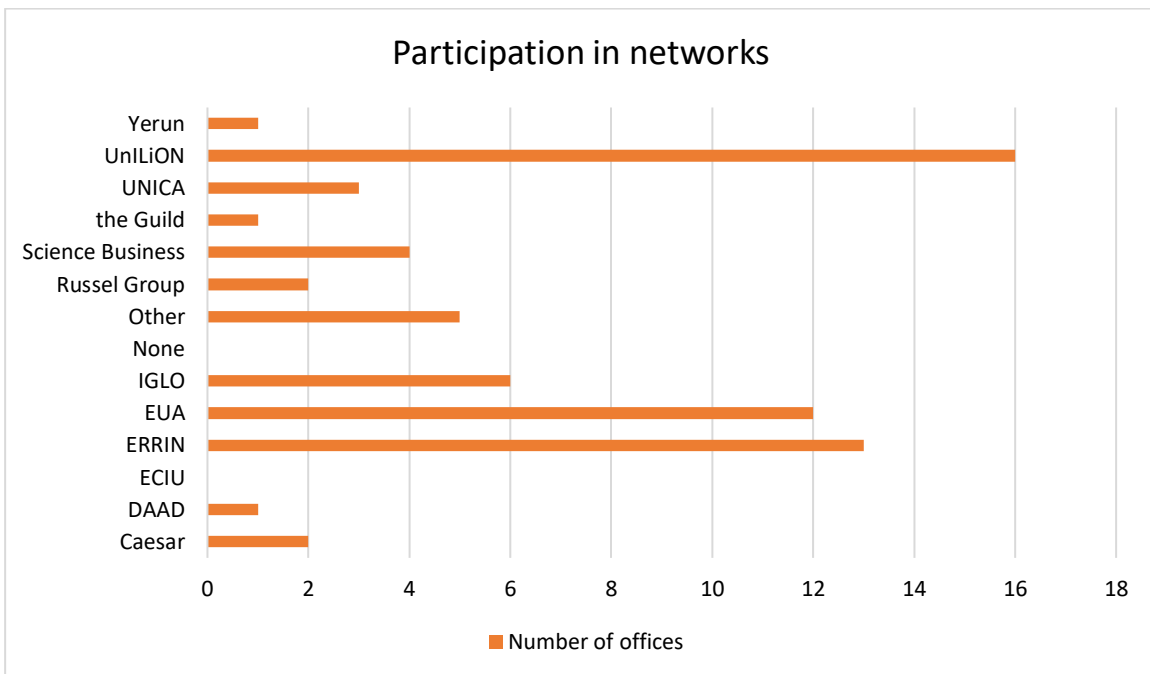
Other networks added by the respondents: CLORA (French Research Centres Office in Brussels), Univrsitas 21, Swedish Fol-network in Brussels, Academic Cooperation Assosiation, UAS4EUROPE, HRK.

Q13: Out of these networks which ones do you work most actively with
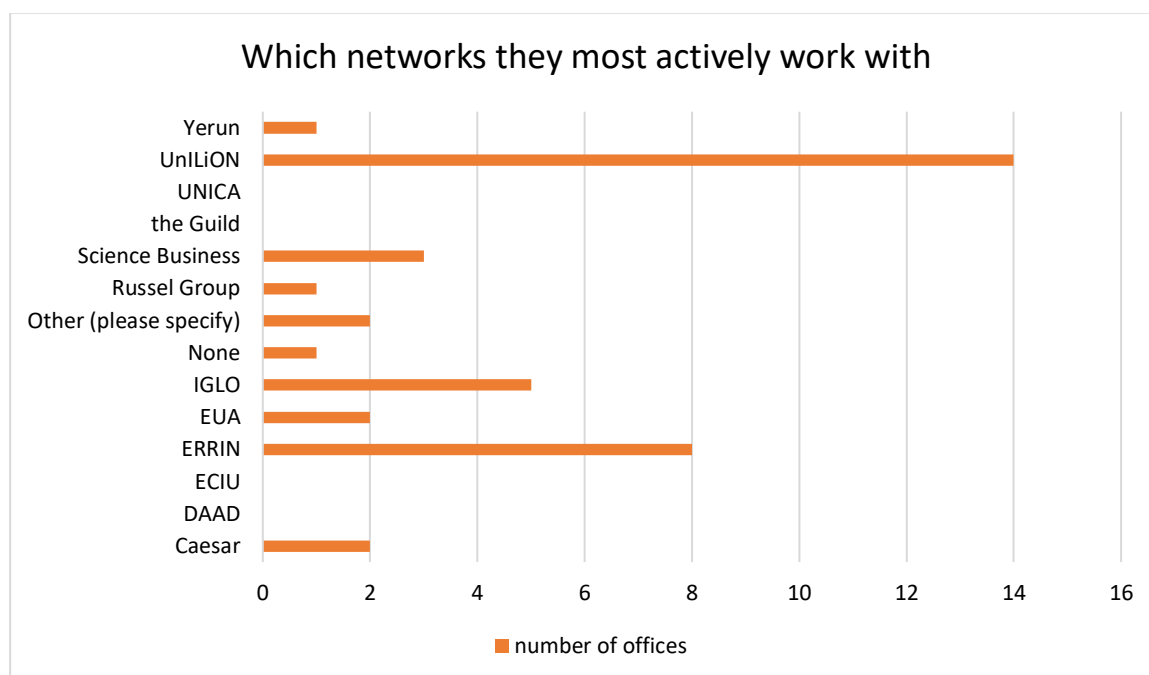
Other answers were: CLORA (French Research Centre's Office in Brussels) and UAS4EUROPE

Q14: How does your university usually represent its positions and interests? (Rank the following options)

How does your university usually represent its positions and interests?	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Through organised networks working on specific policy areas	50%	18,75 %	31,25 %	0,00 %
Through networks comprising universities/actors from the same country	43,75 %	56,25 %	0,00 %	0,00 %
By acting alone	6,25 %	25,00 %	68,75 %	0,00 %
Other	0,00 %	0,00 %	0,00 %	100%

Q15: Which channels does your office most often use when communicating your position or view on new or existing EU policy? (tick of all relevant)

Channels for communication

Channel	Series 1
Other	2
European Parliament intergroups	5
European Commission Expert groups	3
Commission comitology	2
Council preparatory bodies through Permanent…	4
Open consultations	7
Organizing events with participation of EU Officials	12
Informal meetings with EU policy makers	10
Social media	3
Position papers	9
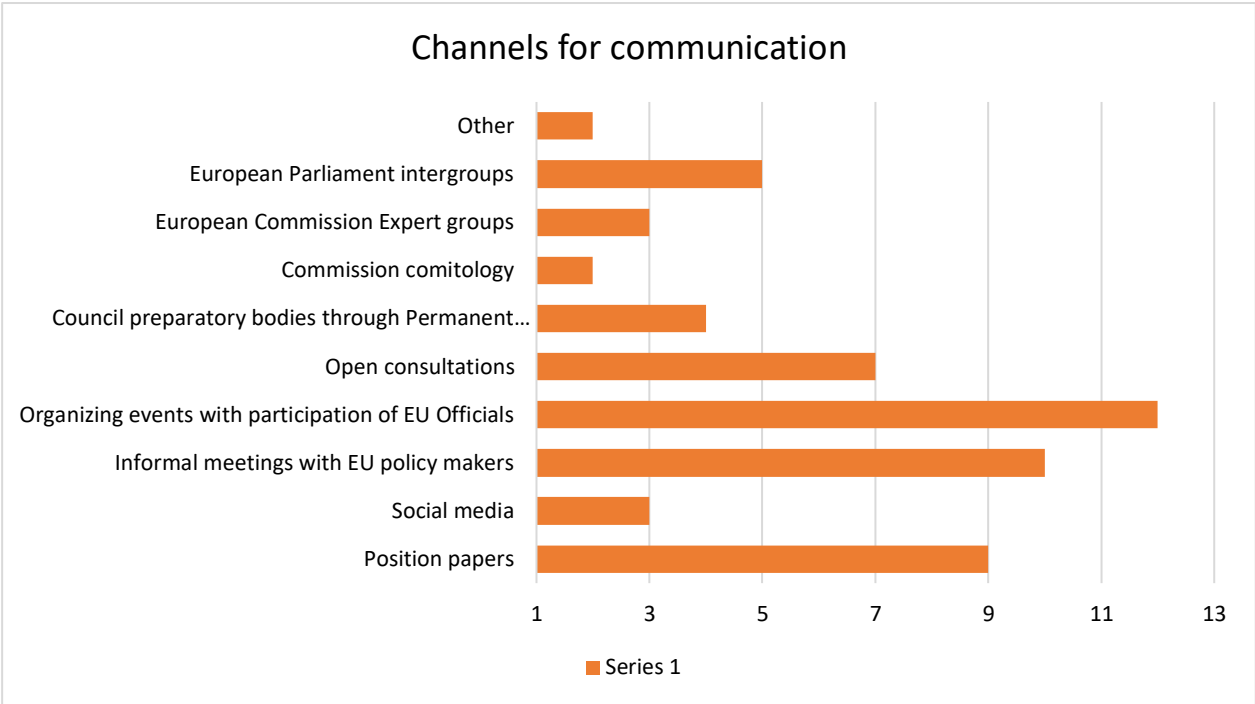
Other answers were: (1) 'French networks involved in EU programmes'. (2) 'Regional Representation in the Council Working Groups'

Q16: Which of the following statements fits the institution(s) you represent?

Office history

Statement	Number of offices
My institution is represented via a regional office	3
My institution was represented through a regional office prior to having our own office	4
We did not have any representation in Brussels before opening our own office.	7
Other	2
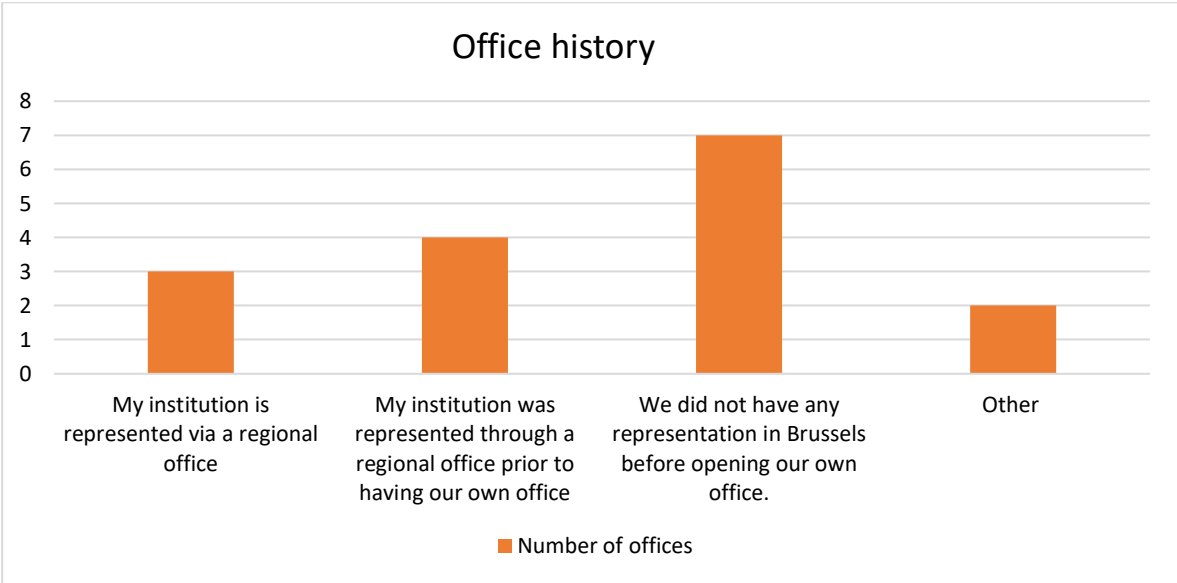
Other answers were: (1) we received ad hoc support (non formalized) from the regional office prior to us setting up our own presence, which is based in the regional office. (2) We have a Representation of our region, but universities wanted to have their own supporter in Brussels

Q17: With regards to FP9/Horizon Europe which of the activities listed below has your office done ALONE? (tick off all relevant)

Activities conducted alone with regard to FP9

- Been a part of a commission expert group or stakeholder…
- Had meetings with EU officials on the topic
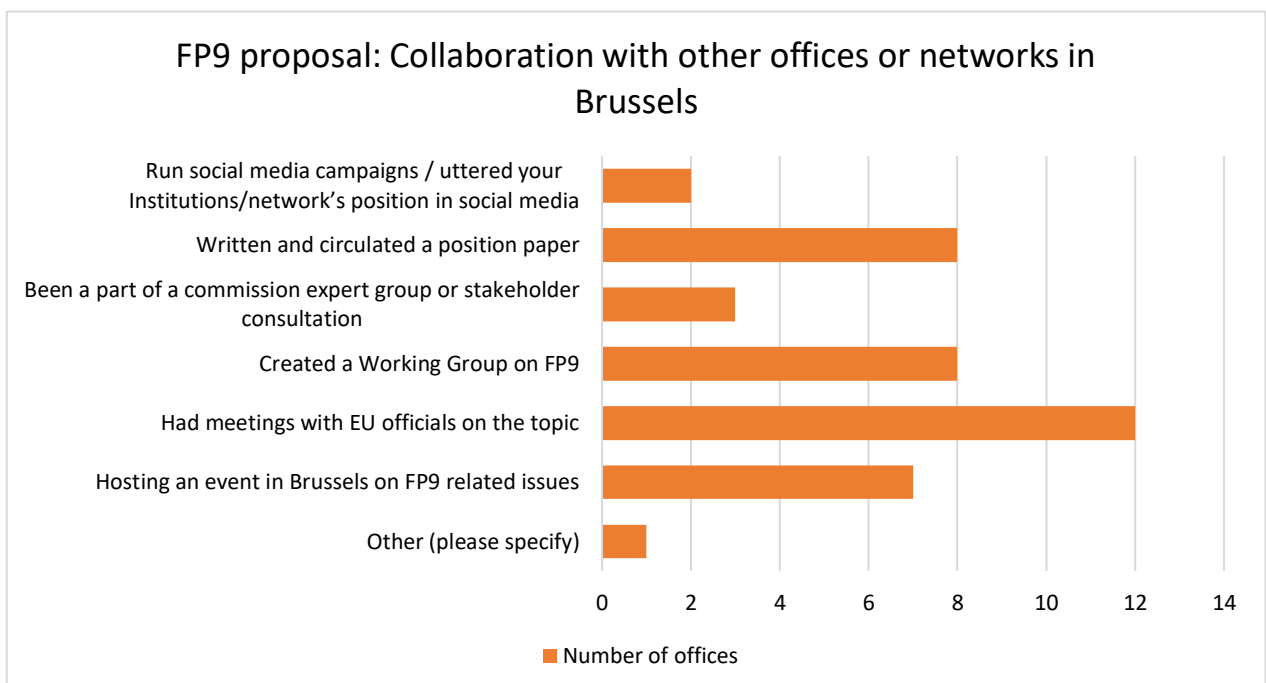- Hosting an event in Brussels on FP9 related issues
- Participated at events hosted by other university…
- Reported back to your home institution on relevant…
- Run social media campaigns / uttered your institution's…
- Taken part in a Working Group on FP9
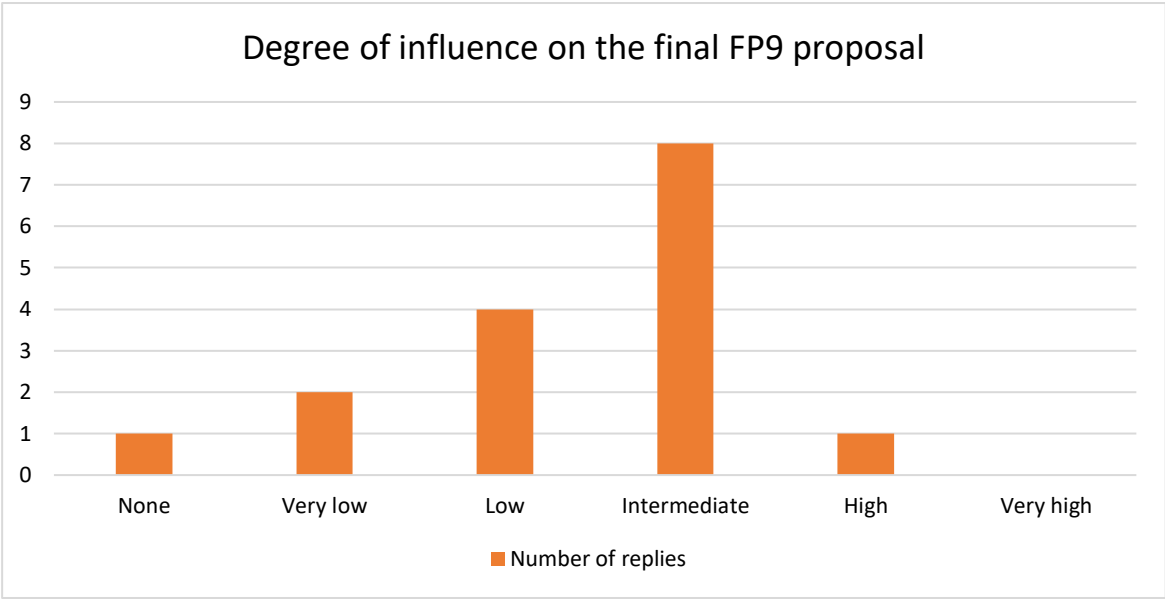- Written and circulated a position paper
- Other

■ Number of offices

Q18: With regards to FP9 which of the activities listed below has your office done in collaboration with other university offices in Brussel or a specific network?

FP9 proposal: Collaboration with other offices or networks in Brussels

- Run social media campaigns / uttered your Institutions/network's position in social media
- Written and circulated a position paper
- Been a part of a commission expert group or stakeholder consultation
- Created a Working Group on FP9
- Had meetings with EU officials on the topic
- Hosting an event in Brussels on FP9 related issues
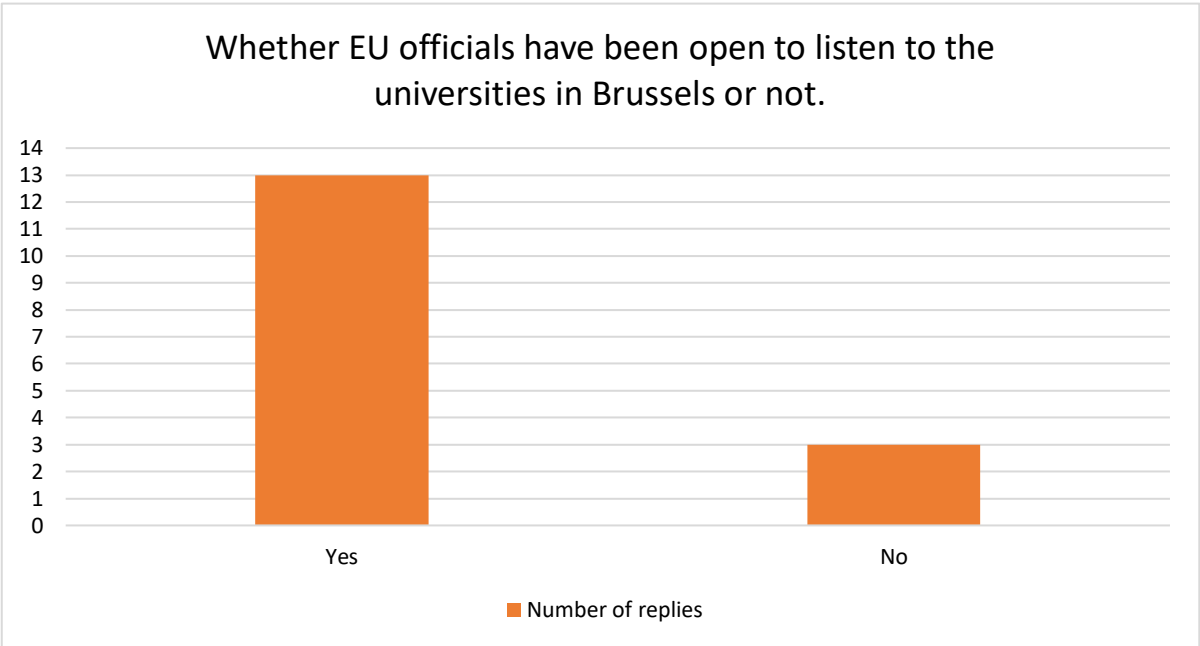- Other (please specify)

■ Number of offices

Other answers were: (1) 'none'.

Q19: in your opinion, to what degree did your office have any influence on the final FP9 proposals?

Degree of influence on the final FP9 proposal

Category	Number of replies
None	1
Very low	2
Low	4
Intermediate	8
High	1
Very high	0

■ Number of replies

Q20: In your opinion, have EU officials been open to listen to the universities in Brussels with regards to FP9?

Whether EU officials have been open to listen to the universities in Brussels or not.

Category	Number of replies
Yes	13
No	3

■ Number of replies

Nr.	Why do you think that is? Optional question
1	They worked urgently on the FP9 and used the traditional method consisting in listening to LERU, EUA, Guild,... and all the already established, however not original networks
2	My real answer is in the middle, on the one hand European networks like EUA, they can modify the FP9 proposal by sending position papers to the Commission or the European Parliament. Because it is a great European network, accredited for many years in Brussels. On the other hand, (…) Our offices working with Professors should make governments aware of sensitive points requested by researchers. The Brussels offices act as a link between university and government to arrive at a good compromise. The Brussels offices act as a link between the university and the European Parliament for the same reason. This is the added value that these offices want to achieve by working in Brussels with EU policies.
3	It is a tricky question. All is relative. EC listens but how much of that takes into account is very relative.
4	They need stakeholders to agree with their proposals so are actively looking for support
5	They seek examples and practical experience as well as recommendations to improve the future programme.
6	You can see some of the requests answered through the programmes
7	There are new dynamics amongst universities/university groups other than the usual EUA etc.
8	The EC is always interested in getting good ideas. If you have one that is to the benefit of the EC as well, it is quite easy to reach out.

Annex 3: Cover-letter sent by email with questionnaire

To whom it may concern,
My name is Charlotte Eide (25y), I have been studying European Studies at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) since 2014, and am currently writing my Master thesis. Last spring I worked as a Trainee at the NTNU Brussels Office. Through the work at the NTNU Office and the work I did with UnILiON, I was inspired to write my MA on University representation in Brussels.

Since there is currently very little to no research done on university representation in Brussels, I am dependent on primary sources. I have thus developed a questionnaire, the results of which will function as my empirical baseline. I would very much appreciate your response to this questionnaire.

In this survey, you will be given some questions about your office. The questions are non-personal and generally focus on your work methods. The preferred target group are heads of offices or equivalent, as they know the office best.

Please read through the following terms before answering this questionnaire. You may ask any questions before taking part. My contact information is at the bottom of this email.

What is the Thesis about
The responses will be used in my Master thesis at European Studies, NTNU.
Tentative title: "University Representation in Brussels".
The thesis will contribute in filling a research gap in the literature on Interest Representation in the EU and make way for future research through this initial mapping of the University landscape in Brussels.
Case: How are the universities interests represented in the case of Horizon Europe (FP9).

Do I have to participate?
Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. You may withdraw at any point during the questionnaire for any reason by closing the browser. You will receive no direct benefits from participating in this research study.

How will I ensure the confidentiality of your data?
The questionnaire will not collect *IP-addresses*, *personal information* or *name of your office*. Your answers will be analysed statistically. The data will be removed from the survey site within 30 April 2019 and stored on secure drives: (1) USB stick and (2) External hard drive. After the thesis is graded the data will be sent to the Norwegian Centre for Data Research (NSD) https://nsd.no/nsd/english/index.html for storage and to make the data citable for future research. NSD is a certified infrastructure for archiving and sharing data. NSD is built to store data well into the future and have an agreement with The National Archives of Norway on long-term storage of research data. The archive is integrated with data protection and data management services and interacts with other systems in the sector through APIs. All data archived and published by NSD will be assigned a permanent citable address (DOI). NSD ensures that data meets the FAIR principles and will check data integrity and anonymity.

Link to the survey: XX

The thesis will be available online come June

Thank you for your contribution!
Kind regards,
Charlotte Eide, MA student, European Studies
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Charlotte.eide@ntnu.no