

Cooperation and Communication Patterns

In the Working Groups of the Council of Ministers:

Introducing a new dataset.

Daniel Naurin, Göteborg University¹

September 2006

(PRELIMINARY DRAFT!)

Abstract

The paper presents a new data collection on cooperation and communication patterns in the working groups of the Council of the European Union and some preliminary descriptive analyse. Two successive rounds of telephone interviews with Council working group representatives from all member states were conducted in 2003 and 2006. Continuous future data collections will be made in order to achieve time-series. The core question concerns the choices of cooperation partners in the negotiation process. Furthermore, the 2003 survey included a special feature on cooperation in the face of flexible integration, while the 2006 survey contained questions concerning the mode of communication (arguing vs. bargaining).

Some preliminary findings are the following: 1) Some member states are more popular as cooperation partners than others and the ranking seems to be stable over time. 2) There are strong geographical patterns in the choices of cooperation partners, both before and after the 2004 enlargement. 3) In the negotiation process positions are almost always justified with reasons. However, only in about half of the cases, maximally, does that mean that “arguing” (attempts at changing the preferences of others by means of reason) is going on. 4) Unanimity promotes arguing rather than bargaining. 5) Small member states and new member states try less frequently to convince their counterparts to change their minds, compared to big and old member states.

¹ To be presented at the ECPR Third Pan-European Conference on EU Politics, 21 to 23 September 2006, Istanbul, Turkey. A previous version was given at the workshop *Who Governs in the Council of the European Union?* At the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute, Florence, 19/20 May 2006.

Author's Email: daniel.naurin@pol.gu.se

INTRODUCTION

This paper presents a new data collection on cooperation and communication patterns in the working groups of the Council of the European Union (Council of Ministers).² The project is a response to the poor data situation concerning coalition-building and negotiation processes in the Council. “There is surprisingly little clear evidence of coalition formation in the EU”, one scholar complained in 1998 (Winkler 1998). “Most of the suggestions made in the literature seem to be based on anecdotal evidence, rather than on structured documentation”, said another group of scholars some years later (Elgström et.al. 2001). More has been done in recent years to open up the EUs most important legislative black box. The present project is a further effort towards that goal.

Two rounds of short telephone interviews have been completed so far, the first in February-March 2003 and the second in February-March 2006. This paper gives a first preview into what these two data sets contain and some preliminary descriptive findings. More theoretically developed papers will come later! Nothing has been published so far.

The project’s main research questions are two:

1. What do the cooperation/coalition-patterns within the Council look like and how can these patterns be explained?
2. Are some MS more successful networkers/coalition-builders than others? If so, who is in which category, and why?

Variations on these two themes include: How do enlargements affect existing coalition patterns? Can we speak of core and peripheral countries? Are coalition-patterns the same in different policy areas? How does “flexible integration”—the fact that some member states do not participate in all policy fields (most notably EMU)—affect the cooperation patterns - will coalitions be based on ‘ins’ and ‘outs’?

² Responsible for the project are Dr. Daniel Naurin and Prof. Rutger Lindahl at the Political Science Department, Göteborg University.

Ultimately, questions of power and influence will be raised. Successful networking skills – being a part of the core networks of Brussels – are often considered an important source of power (see for example Hayes-Renshaw and Wallace 2006). Further questions in connection to this are: What is the bargaining currency in the Council – how do you get people to be on your side? How strong is the connection between successful coalition-building and power over outcomes?

The long-term aim is to continue with subsequent data collections in the future in order to achieve time-series. The core questions on cooperation behavior will be supplemented with one or two extra questions in order to be able to look into a special question. In 2003 we included a question on flexible integration, in 2006 we had a package of questions concerning communication patterns (“arguing” vs “bargaining”).

The data

Short (10-15 minutes) telephone interviews were conducted with representatives from all member states in 11 working groups to the Council. Higher (including COREPER I and II) and lower level groups were included, dealing with economic policy, internal market issues, agriculture, foreign and security policy, environment and justice and home affairs (figure 1). 9 of 11 working groups were the same in 2006 and 2003.

The response rate was a success in both interview rounds – 81 percent in 2003 and 84 percent in 2006, making it 130 and 231 respondents respectively. The response rate is also fairly evenly distributed between the member states. We had at least 73 percent of the respondents from all member states, except for Spain and Italy in 2003 (64%) and Cyprus and Greece in 2006 (55% and 45% respectively). There is a small bias towards northern Europeans, but it is so small that it should make no difference to the analyses.

The interviews were conducted by PhD and Master students in political science. Names and contact details were collected from websites and in contacts with permanent representations in Brussels. The selected interview persons were first approached with a letter, explaining broadly the purpose of the project and the types of questions addressed. For the 2006 survey the letter also included more specific information on the extra

questions concerning communication patterns, as these were more complicated and would benefit from some preparatory thoughts. The respondents were then contacted by telephone and asked if they were able to give an interview. Since these are very busy people, usually several phone calls were needed before the person would be able to set of some time by the phone. With a few exceptions the interviews were conducted in English.

In 2003 all interviews were made from Göteborg University, Sweden, and the project was described as being conducted by the Centre for European Research at Göteborg University. In 2006, in order to test for potential interviewer effects on Sweden's position in the cooperation networks - Sweden were surprisingly highly ranked in the 2003 survey - a third of the interviews were made from the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies at the European University Institute in Florence. The remaining two thirds of the interviews were made from Göteborg. No interviewer effect giving rise to biased results were detected (Sweden came out equally well as a relatively popular cooperation partner in the Florence interviews as in the Göteborg interviews).

Most frequently mentioned cooperation partners

In both surveys, 2003 and 2006, the following question was asked:

Which member states do you most often cooperate with within your working group, in order to develop a common position?

From this single question we can draw inferences on both cooperation patterns – who cooperate with whom – and the degree of networking success of particular member states. We find it reasonable to assume that if a member state is seldom mentioned as a cooperation partner by other member states it has a weaker position in the negotiation processes in the Council. Being part of cooperation and coalition-formation processes should, *ceteris paribus*, increase one's chances of influencing others.

The respondents were only asked to mention the member states he or she cooperated most often with, not to give them points or rank them in anyway. It would have been much more difficult to obtain answers if we had asked for rankings and points, since this is rather sensitive information. Depending on the order in which they mentioned the countries, we transformed their answers into figures, by the following formula

1st mentioned = 10 points

2nd mentioned = 9 points

etc...

10 mentioned = 1 point

< 10th = 0 points

The idea is that the countries that you cooperate most often with are the ones which come first to your mind.³ From these figures we were able to calculate a ranking of the most frequently mentioned cooperation partners. The results with respect to the 2003 data were the following:

[Figure 2]

In top are the big three (the differences between them is very small). Size is clearly a factor, as one would have expected. The bigger the more often consulted as a cooperation partner. Looking at the upper part of the list we have all the big states on this half (being generous with Italy and considering 8th place as part of the upper half).

On the other hand, size is not all. Three small northern European countries - Sweden, Netherlands and Denmark enter before Spain and Italy on the list. Why are Sweden and Holland (with 4 and 5 votes respectively) more often mentioned as cooperation partners than Spain (8 votes) and Italy (10 votes)? Geographical patterns are part of the answer. As we will see later northern and central European countries tend to cooperate less often with southern European countries. Since there are fewer southern European countries

³ We have also tested some alternative ways of calculating - giving weighted points to the six first countries, the three first, or giving just one point to all countries mentioned - the result, with respect to the ranking, being more or less the same.

(depending on where you draw the line of course) this is one part of the explanation for why Northern European countries are generally higher ranked than southern European countries.

But still, geography can not explain, for instance, why the Netherlands are doing much better than Belgium in the ranking. Neither can it explain why Austria is so much further down on the list compared to Sweden (both countries joined 1995 and have the same amount of votes). And what about Italy? Equally many votes as the top three - why is Italy behind three small states and Spain? There seems to be room for actor-based factors here. Successful networking and coalition-building is not just about size and geographical location, but also about strategy, capacity or some other actor characteristic.

Three years later in 2006, after the enlargement of 10 new member states, the same question was asked again in the second interview round. How did the enlargement affect the ranking of most frequently mentioned cooperation partners?

[Figure 3]

Clearly, most striking here are the similarities with the 2003 ranking. In fact, what the enlargement did to this ranking was basically nothing, except introducing a new block of countries in the middle, and some at the back. The nine first countries are the same, and the order between them is almost exactly the same. Germany jumps to the top, but that does not really mean anything because the differences between the big three are so small. Denmark shifts place with Spain. The same countries are in the bottom half, with Greece and Portugal doing a little better now than before. The ranking that we found in 2003 thus seems to be stable over time.

On the other hand, so far we only have three years to compare, maybe this apparent stability is just a coincidence? Fortunately, we have the opportunity to compare our rankings with another data set, collected by Beyers and Diereckx (Beyers and Diereckx 1998). To my knowledge, this is the only previous attempt at compiling a similar ranking. Their data is from the Belgian presidency of 1993. They surveyed representatives of lower level Council working groups on how often they had consulted and exchanged information with the Commission, the General Secretariat, the presidency and the other

member states delegations. The question is not explicitly “cooperation”, but clearly Beyers and Diereckx are looking at something very similar. They also compiled a ranking from their data and found the following:

[Figure 4]

Belgium is excluded in Beyers and Diereckx ranking because the question was linked explicitly to their presidency, and Sweden, Finland and Austria had not yet become members. But still, again, clearly most striking here are the similarities between the rankings. Compared with 2003 the 1993 ranking is exactly the same for the 11 countries included in 1993, except that Denmark and Spain (again) shifts place.

Thus it seems that Holland and Denmark are doing something right, which Italy and Greece (for instance) are doing wrong. And they have been doing it for years!⁴ Assuming a correlation between being an attractive cooperation partner and being able to exercise influence in the negotiation processes in the Council – something which could be discussed of course but *ceteris paribus* seems reasonable - this should be worrying for the later countries.

Furthermore, at least for the 2003 data the ranking is also stable across policy areas (I have not had time to check the 2006 data on this point yet). With very few exceptions the ranking is the same regardless of whether it is economic policy, foreign and security policy or agricultural policy.

Coalition patterns in theory...

Are there any recurrent patterns in the MS’s choices of cooperation partners, or do alliances “shift from issue to issue”, as one scholar stated some years ago (Spence (1995))

⁴ Note that Denmark’s high ranking in 1993 was before Sweden, Finland and the Baltic states – today frequent cooperation partners to Denmark – became members.

and which has become part of conventional wisdom. Up till now there have been three ways in which EU-scholars have approached this question.

First, a range of studies have calculated the theoretical power of different hypothetical coalitions, based on member states' voting weights (c.f. Hosli 1996, 1999, Sutter 2000, Aleskerov et.al. 2002, Hosli and van Deemen 2002). For example the Shapley-Shubik index is a voting power index which is based on the number of times a particular actor is "pivotal" in a coalition, i.e. has a sufficient number of votes to turn a losing coalition into a winning one. The voting power indexes may be used to estimate the voting power of an exogenously specified coalition. For example, Hosli (1999) calculates the voting power of the Benelux countries and the Nordic countries acting as "blocs" in the Council. But the indexes can not be used for identifying existing coalitions. In practice Hosli, in this case, is merely guessing that the Benelux and the Nordic countries are acting in blocs - which usually they are not according to the data below.

Secondly, some scholars have looked at voting patterns (Mattila & Lane 2001, Mattila 2004, Hayes-Renshaw, Wallace & van Aken 2005). Data on the explicit votes given by member states in the Council are available from 1994 and can be used to analyse who tends to vote together with whom. The main problem with this approach is that the ministers only vote explicitly in about 20 percent of the cases, and in a large part of those cases there is only one member state opposing the decision. It is obviously difficult to draw general conclusions on coalition-patterns from such data. Still, as we will see, there are some interesting findings coming out of these analyses.

A third way to capture coalition patterns is to look at the expressed positions of MS. An important effort at gathering data on the negotiation processes in the Council has been made by the "Decision-Making in the EU" (DEU) project (see, for instance, the special issue of *European Union Politics* 2004, 5 (1), and Thomson et.al. forthcoming). Using expert interviews this research group has been able to collect data on the positions of the member states on 70 Commission proposals (including 174 issues), thereby opening up for analyses of position patterns. One of the main critiques towards the voting power indexes has been that they fail to consider the preferences of the actors, which condition which coalitions that are feasible in practise. Analysing how far and how close the

member states position themselves in relation to each other makes it possible to detect potential conflict dimensions in the Council.

Empirical data on position patterns is certainly a big step forward. But position patterns, I would argue, are still not the same as coalition patterns. The fact that Ireland, Greece and Portugal take a similar position on an issue is not enough to conclude that they have as a coalition, as they may have formulated and promoted their positions independently. This objection raises the question of what a coalition really is. I will explain shortly how the present project differs from the DEU project with respect to this question.

I have used the term “position patterns” here when describing the DEU data, even though the DEU participants themselves prefer to think of their data as “preferences”. It is a bit problematic to treat positions as preferences. Member states’ initially expressed positions to Commission proposals are probably better understood as strategic bargaining offers than genuine expressions of wants. But if we accept the theoretical notion of preference patterns, this seems to be an even less reasonable approximation of coalition-building than position patterns. A coalition, in that case, would simply be a group of countries who happen to want the same thing, which is a very thin definition.

For example, if coalitions are just expressions of preferences it is difficult to see what role they play for the actors in the process. Surely, there may still be functional motivations at a system level for why coalition-building is important, such as complexity reduction. But in order to explain the activity of coalition-building we need to consider the motives of the actors. The Netherlands does not seek to cooperate with the UK in order to increase decision-making effectiveness in the Council, but because it is in their interest somehow or because they believe it is the right thing to do.

Furthermore, the rankings of more and less frequently consulted cooperation partners in figures 2-4 suggest that there are reasons for looking more at the activity of coalition-building. If some countries are persistently more attractive as cooperation partners than others – across issues and over time - studying preference patterns cannot be enough to capture actual coalition-behaviour. As discussed before successful networking skills are often considered an important source of power in Brussels (see, for example Hayes-Renshaw & Wallace, 2006).

This is the point where the present project hopefully will be able to contribute with value added on this question, focusing on actual cooperation behaviour. “Who do you most often cooperate with”, is the question here. Thus, rather than voting patterns or position patterns we will be investigating cooperation patterns.

... and in practice

Following here are some examples of multidimensional scaling (MDS) plots, using the different types of data just described – voting, positions and cooperation. MDS is a statistical technique which uses the countries pair-wise relationships (the number of times they vote together or against each other, or the distances between each others policy positions, or the number of times they have been mentioned as cooperation partners, in the present examples) to derive different dimensions on which the countries align. Usually the outcome is presented in a 2-dimensional space since this is the easiest way to interpret the findings. The closer the countries are to each other in this 2-dimensional space the more they cooperate, vote together or have similar positions.

[Figure 5]

Starting with voting behaviour, figure 5 shows a plot from Mattila & Lane (2001). It is based on the voting records from the years 1995-1998, including 78 cases where at least two member states decided to signal their discontent with the majority decision by putting an explicit no-vote to the record. This is just a fraction of the bargaining processes in the Council during those years, but still there is a pattern here which is worth noting: There seems to be a North-South dimension, as Sweden, Denmark, Netherlands and the UK are situated at the upper part of the plot, while Spain and Italy are at the other end. Note also that Finland seems to be a little bit apart from the North group and that there is no sign of any Benelux cooperation. The big three states are far apart from each other in this picture, which in practice only means that France, Germany and the UK do not loose together, which is natural considering their voting strength.

Next, consider another MDS-plot, this time based on the positions data of the DEU-project (Thomson et.al. 2004).

[Figure 6]

The positioning of the countries in this plot is determined by the aggregated distances between the countries positions on 174 policy issues. Included here are not only the 15 MS but also the Commission and the EP. The horizontal dimension is interpreted by the authors as the degree of policy change. The Commission and the EP generally want to go further from status quo (reference point) compared to the member states.

But the more interesting dimension here is the second one, on which the member states spread out. What we see here, again, is a North-group, a Centre-group and a South-group. Again Netherlands aligns with the North rather than its Benelux neighbours and Finland is close to the Centre-group. Germany is now squarely placed in the North-group, France in the South. This time the large distance between France and Germany indicates something more substantially interesting than when looking at the voting data. Here it means that Germany and France often take different positions on the issues on the agenda. One article concluded on the basis of this data that “the historically important Franco-German axis, if it ever existed in the real world of EU policy making, seems to have lost momentum” (Kaeding & Selck 2005).

The next figure shows the MDS-plot for our 2003 interview data, based on the “*Who do you most often cooperate with...*” question:

[Figure 7]

The connecting lines in this picture indicate which countries that have a particularly close cooperation, defined as being on each others top-three lists. For example, the Swedish respondents on average ranked the UK as the country with which they most often cooperated. The UK representatives ranked Sweden on third place, so there is a connecting line there. Ireland, on the other hand, also ranked the UK on first place, but

the UK interviewees on average only placed Ireland on 7th place, which means there is no connecting line between those two countries.

What does this picture say? While the Y-axis lacks a clear interpretation we have on the X-axis, again, a clear North-South dimension. In this respect the answer is the same as before; the dominating cleavage is geographical rather than ideological. At least this is so in the narrow sense of left-right or pro-anti integration. There seem to very little explanatory power in those dimensions, comparing parties in government, party manifesto data, degree of EU-scepticism in the public opinions etc, (see Thomson et. al. 2004). Whatever it stands for—which is an important issue not addressed in this paper—the North-South dimension clearly has been central feature of the politics of the Council. It is the most striking dimension in all three empirical ways of capturing coalition-patterns—voting, positions and cooperation.

In another respect, however, this picture is different—and more reasonable—compared to the previous ones based on voting and positions data. It gives a fuller description of the coalition-patterns in the sense that it includes a centre-periphery perspective. This is especially visible after the connecting lines of special relationships have been added: The big three are at the centre of the picture. There is a northern triangle including the UK, Netherlands and Sweden, and a southern triangle with France, Spain, Italy. We know from the previous ranking that these are the most often mentioned cooperation partners. Visibly holding the two triangles together—right at the centre, with one arm in both camps—is Germany.

The Franco-German axis does not seem to have lost momentum at all when looking at cooperation patterns. In fact Germany is number one on the French list, and France is number one on the German list. One interpretation of the difference on this point, compared to the positions data, could be that *because* Germany and France often take different stands they cooperate closely in order to manage these differences.

That was EU15, three years ago. What did the enlargements do to these patterns? Zimmer, Schneider & Dobbins have argued that the new states would line up with the South, giving a North vs SouthEast pattern. The new MS would be net-receivers from the budget and thus support the south with respect to agriculture and cohesion policy. They

would also have a similar stand on environmental policy and on market regulations, northern states being greener and more liberal (Zimmer, Schneider & Dobbins 2005).

These were intelligent speculations, now we have data:

[Figure 8]

The picture is actually very similar to the 2003 data. The only substantial difference is that we have two new blocks of countries, the Baltic states and the Visegrad states, and that Cyprus and Malta (the latter a bit more off) have joined up on the South side. In this sense, enlargement did not change anything. The relations between the old member states have not changed, the big three are in the centre, the geographical patterns still dominate totally. Germany's central bridge-building role is even more striking now as Germany connects not only North and South but also East via its relatively close ties to Poland.

North-South has become North-South-East. However, there is not one eastern bloc but two blocs, as there is a clear distance between the Baltic and the Visegrad states. Although not shown here, the Nordic countries and the UK are ranked higher than Poland and the other Visegrad countries on the Baltic states' own ranking. Slovenia, on the other hand, has no strong connection to any of these groups. There is definitely no North vs Southeast conflict pattern, as Zimmer et al predicted. The new economically less developed eastern European MS have lined up closer to the market liberal, green and net-contributing north than to the market regulating, polluting, net-receivers of the south (to use Zimmer et. al.'s distinguishing characteristics). This can be illustrated also by looking at the rankings of most frequently mentioned cooperation partners for the East and the South group respectively. The new eastern European countries are at the bottom of the South groups' ranking and vice versa:

[Figure 9]

How can we explain the geographical patterns? Rationalists would say it is because neighbouring countries usually have similar interests. Constructivists would point at cultural identity factors—it is easier to cooperate with people who are more like yourself.

I will not say anything on this point before I have started working more systematically with this question.

Special feature 2003: Flexible integration

Does flexible integration affect cooperation patterns in the Council? A common argument in the pro-EMU camps in the three member states which have voluntarily chosen not to join the euro – Denmark, Sweden and the UK – has been that loss of influence would be an effect of standing outside. The loss of influence is not limited to economic policy issues, but affects all policy issues it is argued. The argument assumes that refusing to join the other states in the project of creating a common currency would be a violation of the norms of European integration. The euro-outsiders would be pictured as free-riders and therefore less attractive cooperation-partners (see for instance Gidlund & Jerneck 1996 and Laursen 2003).

The evidence given in both the 2003 and 2006 rankings indicate that this potential free-rider effect is very weak or non-existing. There is no sign here that the three EMU-outsiders have been left out in the cold by the insiders. To the contrary, Denmark and Sweden are unexpectedly highly ranked compared to their size, and the UK is in the top along with France and Germany.

There was also a direct question on the effect of EMU-outsider status in the 2003 survey. An overwhelming majority of the respondents indicated that the fact that UK, Denmark were outside the Euro did not make any difference what so ever to the cooperation patterns in their working groups.

[Table 1]

In those groups that were dealing with economic policy issues some respondents said that EMU-membership did have an effect on euro-related issues. But even in those groups which had euro-related issues on their agendas a clear majority (65 percent) said it made no difference at all. In the other policy fields (agriculture, foreign and security policy, environment), which according to the free-rider argument should be affected by a normative spill-over effect, 91 percent said it made no difference.

Special feature 2006: Arguing vs. bargaining in the Council working groups

A strong trend in political theory during the last two decades has been to emphasise the normative importance for democracy of "deliberation". Politics, according to this view, should be—and can be—more about giving good reasons than forcing or striking deals. *Arguing*, rather than bargaining or voting, is at the heart of democracy. Deliberative theorists often position themselves in contrast to economic conceptions of democracy, where politics is "understood mainly in terms of conflict of competing interests—and thus more in terms of bargaining than of public reason" (Bohman & Rehg 1997, p. xii).

The argument of deliberative theorists concerning how democratic politics best should be 'understood' is both a normative and an empirical one. Although the distinction is often blurred in the literature deliberative theorists argue against the perception of politics as being 'just like a market' both on normative and empirical grounds. While empirical research cannot be used to "test" the validity of normative propositions, it can, and should, test the relevance of normative theories to the real world of politics. An increasing amount of empirical studies of deliberation, also within the EU studies field, have taken this as their task (see, for instance, Naurin forthcoming, Steenbergen et. al. 2005, Jacobsson, K. & Vifell, Å. 2005, Pollack 2003, and the special issues of *Acta Politica* 2005 40:2-3 and *IO* 2005 59:4)

The 2006 survey to representatives in the Council of Minister working groups described here included an effort along this research track. Two points in particular are raised here. First, a common approach in the empirical research on deliberation has been to emphasise the importance of studying the conditions under which deliberation may be more or less likely to occur. What circumstances are conducive to a decision-making process based on a discussion on the merits of different proposals, rather than "threats and promises"? Surely this is the right way to go for the field, but it is a bit problematic that we still do not have an answer to what normally should have been the first question—how much variation is there to explain? When investigating the conditions for deliberation in the Council of Ministers, are we looking at something marginal or at a large part of what is going on in and around the meetings? While qualitative studies are superior in terms of

capturing the nuanced distinctions between arguing and bargaining discussed below, quantitative studies are needed when we want to answer the “how-often” question.

Secondly, a central problem facing researchers who wish to contribute to this field is the question of how to operationalise and measure deliberation empirically, without making assumptions that are simplified to the extent that normative theorists no longer recognize the concept. I wanted to point at, and propose a solution to, one particular problem with respect to operationalisation, namely the distinction between arguing and problem-solving forms of bargaining.

Deliberative theorists usually define bargaining as “a form of interest-aggregation that builds on the exchange of threats and promises”, while arguing “is based on claims of validity” (Zurn, p. 192). An actor who aims at convincing others of the value of a certain policy option is arguing. Barry called this mode of communication “discussion on merits”: “If agreement is reached by means of discussion on merits, the parties to the dispute have changed their minds about what they want (Barry 1965/1990, p. 87).” The purpose of arguing, therefore, is the transformation of preferences, the method is giving convincing reasons concerning the merits of the proposal. If the communication is focused on reaching a common decision, but includes no efforts at changing the minds of the other parties about what they want or what they perceive to be right, then bargaining is occurring.

Bargaining, on the other hand, takes two basic different forms. The cooperative version, which presumably is what deliberative theorists have in mind when referring to “promises”, is known in negotiation theory as “integrative bargaining” (Walton & McKersie 1965, chap. 4). This involves efforts at reaching agreements by comparing and matching fixed preferences, searching for solutions which will satisfy all participants *given* their existing preferences. The goal in an integrative bargaining game is not to transform preferences, but to clarify them, put them on the table and in a common effort among the participants seek to maximise preference-satisfaction for all present at the table. For integrative bargaining to occur the participants should perceive the situation as variable-sum, including opportunities for package-deals and log-rolling. Communication is characterised by a cooperative attitude, brainstorming, rich information-sharing and participants candidly speaking their minds about what they want.

“Distributive bargaining” denotes a conflict-based bargaining game, where actors try to solve the conflict by pressuring the other participants to make concessions. The goal is neither to transform preferences, nor to search for compromise solutions, but to make the others comply with one’s demands. The term “distributive” comes from the notion of having a fixed sum of utilities to allocate, making one participant’s gain a loss to the others. A distributive bargaining process involves manipulating information about the utilities and costs of policy alternatives, making strong commitments and using threats.⁵

Few studies so far have tried to distinguish between arguing and bargaining behaviour in real world politics. A problem with some of those that have is that they fail to make the distinction between integrative bargaining and arguing/deliberation. Steenbergen et. al., for instance, in their “Deliberative Quality Index”, include “constructive politics”—putting mediating proposals on the agenda—as a criteria for deliberation (Steenbergen et.al. 2005). But a cooperative and constructive behaviour is as equally compatible with integrative bargaining (‘if you give us X, we’ll give you Y’) as with arguing (‘X is the best alternative, because of argument Z’). A highly cooperative attitude by the parties does not in itself indicate whether they are arguing or bargaining. Similarly, Öberg includes in his operationalisation of deliberation transformations of opinions in response to arguments (which indicates that arguing is present) and accepting compromises (which is rather a feature of integrative bargaining) (Öberg 2002).

Theoretically, the distinction between integrative bargaining and arguing should be clear: The distinguishing feature is that the purpose of the latter is to transform preferences, while the former seeks compromise agreements based on given preferences. In practice, in real decision-making situations, the distinction is often blurred by the fact that both modes of communication may occur side by side. It is therefore difficult to separate the two empirically, but hardly impossible. Here I will describe very briefly how we tried to deal with this in the 2006 survey, and show some preliminary findings.

Basically the idea was to ask the respondents not only if they gave reasons for their positions but also why. Giving reasons is as equally compatible with integrative

⁵ “Integrative” and “distributive bargaining” is the terminology used by Walton and McKersie. See Walton & McKersie 1965. Other terms used in the negotiation literature for basically the same distinction are “creating value” and “claiming value” (Lax & Sebenius 1986) and “problem-solving and “bargaining” (Elgström & Jönsson 2000). Cf. Schelling, who speaks of the “efficiency” and the “distributional” “aspects of bargaining”. Schelling 1960, p. 21.

bargaining as with arguing, the difference lies in the motive. We also asked the respondents both about communications at the formal meetings and informal communications before the meetings, to make sure that we did not miss out any of these two arenas.

First we asked the respondents to think of a particular issue:

Now we have some questions concerning communication within your working group. We would like you to think of one particular issue that was discussed in a recent meeting which you participated in, where you were holding a certain position which you communicated to the other delegates. Preferably it should be an issue where there was some controversy, i.e. on which there was no agreement right from the start. We don't need to know which issue it was, but we want you to keep this issue in mind for our questions.

Then the first question was the following:

During the discussions on this particular issue: At the meeting, did you find it necessary to explain why your country was holding this particular position, or was it sufficient for you to communicate which position you were holding? (Clarification if necessary: Did you explain the reasons for your position or was that not necessary?)

If the answer was “yes” we followed up by asking the respondents to distinguish between two different motives for giving reasons. We wanted to know if the purpose was to clarify their own position in order to make it easier to find a compromise, or to convince the others to change their minds about their position:

A follow up on this question, concerning why you gave reasons for your position: There may be different motivations for outlining the reasons behind a particular position. One motivation may be to clarify one's position – to

make the others understand why you are in favour of this position. Another reason may be that one wants to convince other delegates to change their minds and to come to realize that this is actually a good position.

(Clarification if necessary: To clarify your own position or to make other delegates change their minds about their position.)

In this particular case that we are discussing, which of these two motivations was most important for you?

These questions were subsequently repeated for “the preparatory phase before the meeting”. Generally, our judgment after having completed the survey is that the questions worked out very well. None of the respondents refused to answer the first question, and only 5 percent indicated that they found the distinction between “clarifying” and “convincing” impossible to answer. Still, this is a relatively crude measure and should be interpreted carefully. The main risk that we see is that the respondents include elements of integrative bargaining in their interpretation of “convince other delegates to change their minds”. The amount of arguing that comes out of this should therefore be considered the maximum level.

Below is a rough bullet-pointing of some of the preliminary findings, mainly to illustrate what kind of conclusions we may be able to draw from these questions.

1. Positions are very rarely stated without being justified with reasons. 91% of the respondents indicated that they had communicated reasons to back up their position during the formal meeting.
2. In 55% of the cases during formal working group meetings to convince others to change their minds was the main motive for giving reasons. Maximally, therefore, arguing may be the dominant mode of communication in about half of the cases.
3. Arguing is more common in working groups which work with unanimity, compared to groups which have QMV (and the difference is larger at formal meetings than in informal communications before meetings) (table 6). This is in line with previous arguments made by deliberative theorists that consensus

requirements promote deliberation (see for instance Eriksen & Fossum 2000, Steiner et.al. 2005).

4. Big states and old (EU15) member states tend to argue more in order to convince others to change their minds, compared to small states and new member states (also when controlling for the fact that 9 of 10 new member states are small) (tables 7 and 8). (The major differences between old and new member states is found at the formal meetings, while the difference between big and small states is mainly found in the informal contacts before meetings.)

5. There were no significant differences with respect to arguing and bargaining
- i. in communications taking place at formal meetings compared to informal communications before meetings (at an aggregate level, though see point 4 above).
 - ii. between men and women
 - iii. between higher (Coreper, SCA, PSC, EPC, Art 36) and lower working group levels

Looking forward to your comments!

References

- Aleskerov, F. et.al. 2002. "European Union Enlargement: Power distribution implications of the new institutional arrangements", *European Journal of Political Research*, 41:3
- Barry, B. 1965/1990. *Political argument*. Berkeley, LA: University of California Press
- Beyers, J and Dierickx, G. 1998. "The Working Groups of the Council of the European Union: Supranational or Intergovernmental Negotiations?", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 36:3
- Bohman, J. and Rehg, W. 1997. "Introduction", in Bohman, J. and Rehg, W. (eds), *Deliberative Democracy: Essays on Reason and Politics*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press
- Elgström, O. and Jönsson, C. 2000. "Negotiating in the European Union." *Journal of European Public Policy*. 7:5
- Elgström, O et.al. 2001. "Coalitions in European Union Negotiations", *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 24:2.
- Eriksen, E.O. & Fossum J.E. 2000. *Democracy in the European Union. Integration through deliberation?* London: Routledge.
- Gidlund, J. & Jerneck, M. 1996. *Svenskt EMU-medlemskap som proaktiv strategi och integrationsdilemma*, SOU 1996:158, Bilaga 17
- Hayes-Renshaw, F and Wallace, H. 2006, 2nd ed, *The Council of Ministers*, London: Macmillan
- Hayes-Renshaw, F., Wallace, H. & van Aken, W. 2005. "When and why the EU Council of Ministers votes explicitly", *RCSAS Working Papers*, 25.
- Hosli, M. 1996. "Coalitions and Power: Effects of Qualified Majority Voting in the Council of the European Union", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 34:2
- Hosli, M. 1999. "Power, Connected Coalitions, and Efficiency: Challenges to the Council of the European Union, *International Political Science Review*, 20:4
- Hosli, M and van Deemen, A. 2002. "Effects of enlargement on efficiency and coalition formation in the Council of the European Union" in Hosli, van Deemen and Widgrén *Institutional Challenges in the European Union*, London: Routledge

Jacobsson, K. & Vifell, Å. 2005. "Deliberative Transnationalism? Analysing the role of committee interaction in soft co-ordination", in Linsenmann I., Meyer Christoph O, Wessels Wolfgang, (eds) "Economic Governance in the EU" Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

Kaeding, M. and Selck, T.J. 2005. "Mapping out political Europe: Coalition patterns in EU decision-making", *International Political Science Review*, 26:1.

Laursen, F. 2003. "The Danish 'No' to the Euro and its implications: Towards more Variable Geometry?" *CFES Working Paper* (Odense) No 9/2003.

Lax, D.A. and Sebenius, J.K. 1986. *The Manager as Negotiator: bargaining for cooperation and competitive gain*. New York: Free Press

Mattila, M. and Lane, J-E. 2001. "Why Unanimity in the Council? A Roll Call Analysis of Council Voting", *European Union Politics*, 2:1

Mattila, M. 2004. "Contested decisions. Empirical analysis of voting in the EU Council of Ministers", *European Journal of Political Research*, 43, pp. 29-50.

Naurin, Daniel. "Backstage Behaviour? Lobbyists in Public and Private Settings in Sweden and the European Union " *Comparative Politics* (Forthcoming).

Pollack, M. A. "Control Mechanism or Deliberative Democracy? Two Images of Comitology." *Comparative Political Studies* 36, no. 1-2 (2003): 125-55.

Schelling, T. C. 1960. *The Strategy of Conflict*, Harvard UP: Cambridge Mass.

Spence, D. 1995. "Negotiations, Coalitions and the resolution of Inter-State Conflicts" in Westlake, M *The Council of the European Union*, London: Cartermill.

Sutter, M. 2000. "Flexible integration, EMU and relative voting power in the EU", *Public Choice*, 104

Thomson, R., Boerefijn, J., Stokman, F. 2004. "Actor Alignments in European Union Decision Making", *European Journal of Political Research* 43, 237-61.

Thomson, R., Stokman, F.N., Achen, C.H. and König, T. Forthcoming. *The European Union Decides*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Walton, R.E. and McKersie, R.B. 1965. *A behavioural theory of Labor Negotiations. An analysis of a social interaction system*. Ithaka, NY: ILR Press

Winkler 1998 "Coalition-Sensitive Voting Power in the Council of Ministers", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 36:3

Zimmer, C., Schneider, G. & Dobbins, M. 2005. "The Contested Council: The Conflict Dimensions of an Intergovernmental Institution", *Political Studies*.

Zurn, M. 2000. "Democratic Governance Beyond the Nation-State: The EU and Other International Institutions." *European Journal of International Relations*. 6:2

Öberg, P. 2002. "Does Administrative Corporatism Promote Trust and Deliberation?" *Governance*. 15:4

Figure 1

**WORKING GROUPS INCLUDED
IN THE SAMPLES**



PSC = Political Security Committee
 SCA = Special Committee on Agriculture
 EPC = Economic Policy Committee
 B2 = Enlargement Committee
 Art. 36 = Justice and Home Affairs Committee

Response rate
 2003 = 81%
 2006 = 84%

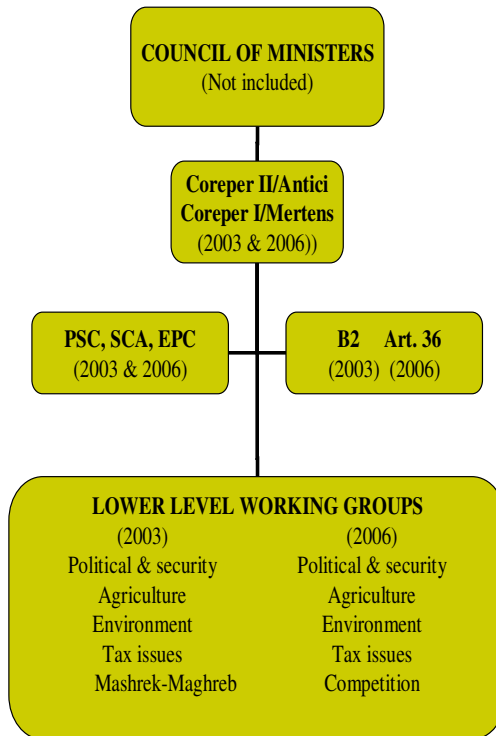


Table 1

MOST FREQUENT COOPERATION PARTNERS



1. SIZE MATTERS

2. GEOGRAPHY MATTERS

3. ACTORS MATTER

2003 (Lindahl & Naurin)

1. UK 2,05
2. FRANCE 2,00
3. GERMANY 1,97
4. SWEDEN 1,67
5. NETHERLANDS 1,35
6. SPAIN 0,91
7. DENMARK 0,87
8. ITALY 0,66
9. FINLAND 0,63
10. BELGIUM 0,52
11. AUSTRIA 0,45
12. PORTUGAL 0,44
13. IRELAND 0,39
14. GREECE 0,31
15. LUXEMBURG 0,28

Table 2

MOST FREQUENTLY MENTIONED COOPERATION PARTNERS

2003 (Lindahl & Naurin) 2006 (Lindahl & Naurin)

1. UK 2,05	1. GERMANY 3,52
2. FRANCE 2,00	2. UK 3,46
3. GERMANY 1,97	3. FRANCE 3,31
4. SWEDEN 1,67	4. SWEDEN 2,58
5. NETHERLANDS 1,35	5. NETHERLANDS 2,31
6. SPAIN 0,91	6. DENMARK 2,14
7. DENMARK 0,87	7. SPAIN 1,79
8. ITALY 0,66	8. ITALY 1,71
9. FINLAND 0,63	9. FINLAND 1,61
	10. POLAND 1,56
	11. CZEK REP. 1,46
	12. ESTONIA 1,33
	13. HUNGARY 1,17
	14. LITHUANIA 1,14
	15. SLOVAKIA 1,10
10. BELGIUM 0,52	GREECE 1,10
	17. LATVIA 1,04
11. AUSTRIA 0,45	18. PORTUGAL 1,00
12. PORTUGAL 0,44	19. BELGIUM 0,94
13. IRELAND 0,39	20. AUSTRIA 0,83
14. GREECE 0,31	21. IRELAND 0,82
15. LUXEMBURG 0,28	22. LUXEMBURG 0,72
	23. SLOVENIA 0,56
	24. CYPRUS 0,46
	25. MALTA 0,44



Table 3

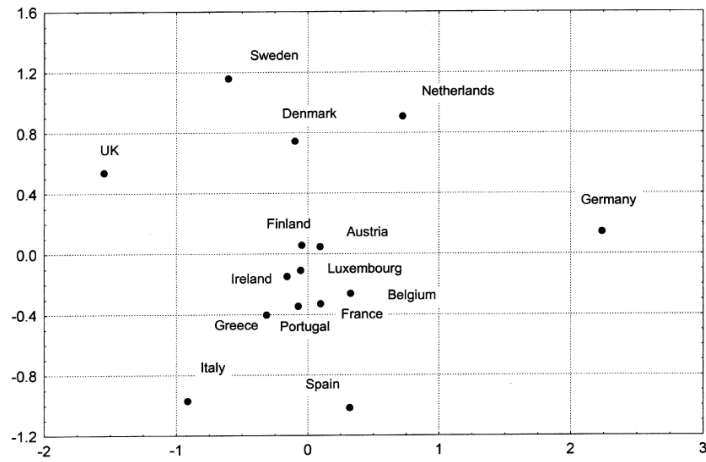
MOST FREQUENTLY MENTIONED COOPERATION PARTNERS

1993 (Beyers & Dierickx)	2003 (Lindahl & Naurin)	2006 (Lindahl & Naurin)
1. UK 2,20	1. UK 2,05	1. GERMANY 3,52
2. FRANCE 2,13	2. FRANCE 2,00	2. UK 3,46
3. GERMANY 2,00	3. GERMANY 1,97	3. FRANCE 3,31
	4. SWEDEN 1,67	4. SWEDEN 2,58
4. NETHERLANDS 1, 77	5. NETHERLANDS 1,35	5. NETHERLANDS 2,31
5. DENMARK 1,61	6. SPAIN 0,91	6. DENMARK 2,14
6. SPAIN 1,59	7. DENMARK 0,87	7. SPAIN 1,79
7. ITALY 1,24	8. ITALY 0,66	8. ITALY 1,71
	9. FINLAND 0,63	9. FINLAND 1,61
		10. POLAND 1,56
		11. CZEK REP. 1,46
		12. ESTONIA 1,33
		13. HUNGARY 1,17
		14. LITHUANIA 1,14
		15. SLOVAKIA 1,10
	10. BELGIUM 0,52	GREECE 1,10
		17. LATVIA 1,04
	11. AUSTRIA 0,45	18. PORTUGAL 1,00
8. PORTUGAL 1,15	12. PORTUGAL 0,44	19. BELGIUM 0,94
9. IRELAND 1,10	13. IRELAND 0,39	20. AUSTRIA 0,83
10. GREECE 1,08	14. GREECE 0,31	21. IRELAND 0,82
11. LUXEMBURG 0,71	15. LUXEMBURG 0,28	22. LUXEMBURG 0,72
		23. SLOVENIA 0,56
		24. CYPRUS 0,46
		25. MALTA 0,44



Figure 2

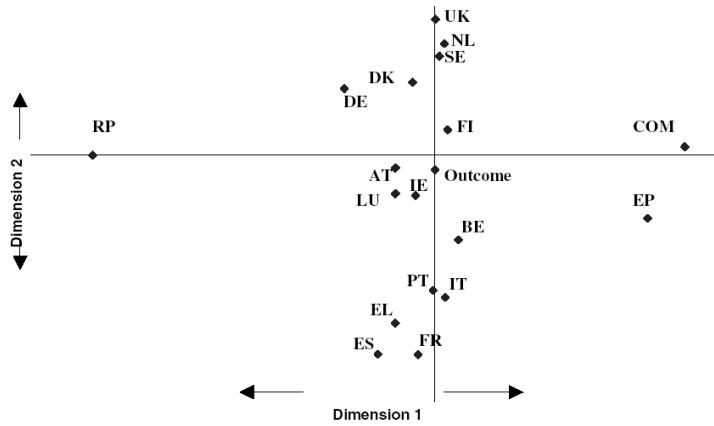
COALITION PATTERNS BASED ON EXPLICIT VOTING
(Mattila & Lane 2001)



Source: Mattila & Lane 2001, p. 45. MDS plot of coalition patterns in Council voting, 1995–8 (stress = 0.12).

Figure 3

COALITION PATTERNS BASED ON POSITIONS
(Thomson et. al. 2004)

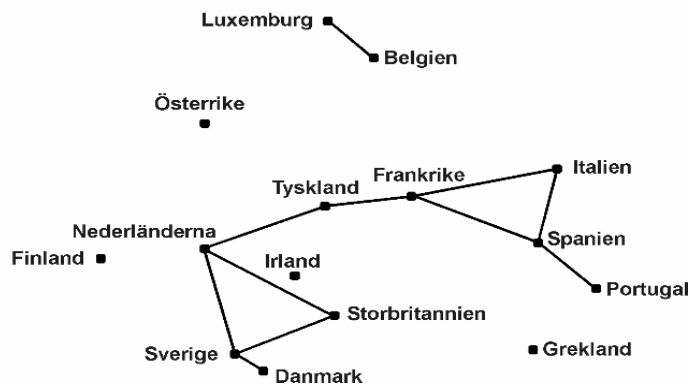


Source: Thomson, Boerefijn & Stokman 2004, p. 250. Multi-dimensional scaling solution in two dimensions. 174 policy issues, ordinal level analysis. Kruskal's stress: 0.14; R2 0.92 (COM: Commission; EP: European Parliament; RP: Reference point; BE: Belgium; DK: Denmark; DE: Germany; EL: Greece; ES: Spain; FR: France; IE: Ireland; IT: Italy; LU: Luxembourg; NL: The Netherlands; AT: Austria; PT: Portugal; FI: Finland; SE: Sweden; UK: United Kingdom).

Figure 4



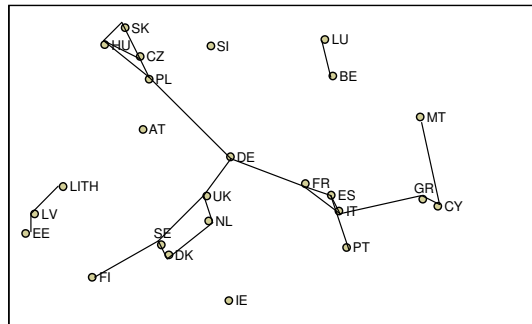
**COALITION PATTERNS BASED ON COOPERATION
(Lindahl & Naurin 2003)**



Note: (The country names are in Swedish.) The multidimensional scaling is based on the "cooperation points" given to each MS from the other MS, which in turn were calculated from the question "Which member states do you most often cooperate with within your working group?" The lines connecting some of the countries indicate that they have a particularly close relationship, defined as being top-three on each others' rankings. (Stress-I 0,176)

Figure 5

**COALITION PATTERNS BASED ON "COOPERATION"
(Lindahl & Naurin 2006)**



Note: The multidimensional scaling is based on the "cooperation points" given to each MS from the other MS, which in turn were calculated from the question "Which member states do you most often cooperate with within your working group?" The lines connecting some of the countries indicate that they have a particularly close relationship, defined as being top-three on each others rankings. (Stress-I 0,195)

Table 4

MOST FREQUENT COOPERATION PARTNERS IN THE SOUTH AND EAST GROUPS



SOUTH (FR, ES, IT, PT, EL, CY, MT)	EAST (PL, CZ, SK, HU, SI, EE, LV, LT)
1. FRANCE 5,00	1. POLAND 3,49
2. ITALY 4,68	2. CZEK REP. 3,36
3. SPAIN 4,52	3. ESTONIA 2,92
4. GREECE 3,89	4. SLOVAKIA 2,61
5. UK 3,12	5. LITHUANIA 2,65
6. PORTUGAL 2,95	6. SWEDEN 2,56
7. GERMANY 2,85	7. HUNGARY 2,50
8. CYPRUS 1,66	8. GERMANY 2,47
9. MALTA 1,52	9. UK 2,224
10. BELGIUM 1,45	10. LATVIA 2,22
11. LUXEMBURG 0,96	11. FINLAND 1,82
12. DENMARK 0,71	12. DENMARK 1,69
13. IRELAND 0,69	13. AUSTRIA 1,33
14. SWEDEN 0,64	14. NETHERLANDS 1,11
15. NETHERLANDS 0,58	15. IRELAND 0,93
16. SLOVENIA 0,51	16. SLOVENIA 0,78
17. HUNGARY 0,22	17. FRANCE 0,64
18. SLOVAKIA 0,20	18. SPAIN 0,55
19. FINLAND 0,18	19. BELGIUM 0,22
20. LATVIA 0,15	20. ITALY 0,18
21. CZEK REP. 0,11	PORTUGAL 0,18
POLAND 0,11	22. MALTA 0,16
23. AUSTRIA 0	23. LUXEMBURG 0,16
ESTONIA 0	24. CYPRUS 0,11
LITHUANIA 0	25. GREECE 0,07

Table 5. Does euro-outsider status affect the cooperation patterns?

Answer	Freq.	Percent
Yes, it matters	9	7
Yes, but only on euro-related issues	8	6
Yes, but only on issues concerning economic policy	6	5
Yes, but only marginally	4	3
No, it makes no difference	102	79
N	129	
Sum percentage		100

Note: The question read: “Some member states – Sweden, Denmark and the UK – do not participate in the third phase of the Economic and Monetary Union. Do you think that fact in any way affects the cooperation patterns within your policy field?” This was an open question and we received three types of answers: “Yes, it matters”, “no, it does not matter” and “yes, but...”. Seventy-nine percent believed that EMU-outsider status makes no difference for the cooperation patterns in their policy field. Excluding those working groups which have economic policy issues on their agenda this figure is 91 percent.

Table 6. Does voting rule affect the mode of communication?

Mode of communication	Voting rule	
	QMV	Unanimity
Bargaining	43	31
Arguing	57	69
Total (percent)	100	100

Note: Percent. Cramers V 0,13, Sig. 0,074

Table 7. Does size affect the mode of communication?

Mode of communication	Size of Member State	
	Small	Big
Bargaining	43	21
Arguing	57	79
Total (percent)	100	100

Note: Percent. Cramers V 0,19, Sig. 0,008. Big states = DE, FR, IT, UK, ES, PL. Small = the rest.

Table 8. Does years of membership affect the mode of communication?

Mode of communication	Years of Membership	
	Old	New
Bargaining	29	51
Arguing	71	49
Total (percent)	100	100

Note: Percent. Cramers V 0,23, Sig. 0,001. Old member states = pre 2004. New = post 2004.

APPENDIX

Interview guide 2003 & 2006

Name of Interview Person (IP): Dr./Ms./Mr.

Sex: Male Female

Working group:

Member State (MS):

Date of interview: (Date) (Month) 2006 (Year)

Time of interview: :

Place of interviewer: Gothenburg, Sweden
 Florence, Italy

Name of interviewer: XX
 XX
 XX

Question 1. Cooperation partners

Which Member-States do you in the (Spanish etc...) delegation most often cooperate with within your working group, in order to develop a common position? We are aware that this may vary depending on the issue, but there may be some countries with which you co-operate more frequently than with others. (Take note of the order in which the IP mentions the countries.)

Member State	Comment (if any)
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Comments

Baltic states = Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania

Nordic states = Sweden, Denmark, Finland

Visegrad states = Poland, Czech Rep., Slovakia, Hungary

Scandinavian states = Sweden, Denmark

Mediterranean = Greece, Cyprus, Italy, Malta, France, Spain, Portugal

BENELUX = Bel, Neth, Lux

Question 2. Factors influencing choice of co-operation partners

We would like you to evaluate five factors which may or may not be of importance for your choice of cooperation partners within your working group. We are using a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 is “of no importance at all” and 5 is “of great importance”.

The first factor is the common interests in the specific issue at hand.

The second factor is common cultural values (e.g. language, geographical proximity, or other cultural identity factors).

The third factor is size. (small and large Member States).

The fourth factor is political-ideological proximity (for instance left-wing or right-wing governments).

The fifth factor is degree of support for further European integration (i.e. whether a Member State is generally supportive of European integration).

Factor 1-5 Comment (if any)

1. Common interests
2. Common cultural values
3. Size of Member State
4. Political-ideological proximity
5. Support for further European integr.

Additional question 2003

3. Flexible integration - EMU

Some member states – Sweden, Denmark and the UK – do not participate in the third phase of the Economic and Monetary Union. Do you think that fact in any way affects the cooperation patterns within your policy field?

Comments:

Additional questions 2006

(Respondents had access to these questions in written form before the interview.)

Now we have a few questions concerning communication within your working group. We would like you to think of one particular issue that was discussed in a recent meeting which you participated in, where you were holding a certain position which you communicated to the other delegates. Preferably it should be an issue where there was some controversy, i.e. on which there was no agreement right from the start. We don't need to know which issue it was, but we want you to keep this issue in mind for our questions.

Question 3a. Communication during the meeting

During the discussions on this particular issue: At the meeting, did you find it necessary to explain why your country was holding this particular position, or was it sufficient for you to communicate which position you were holding? (Clarification if necessary: Did you explain the reasons for your position or was that not necessary?)

- Yes, did give reasons.
 No, did not give reasons.

Comment (if any):

If yes

*A follow up on this question, concerning why you gave reasons for your position: There may be different motivations for outlining the reasons behind a particular position. One motivation may be to clarify one's position – to make the others understand why one is in favor of this position. Another reason may be that one wants to convince other delegates to change their minds and to come to realize that this is actually a good position. (Clarification if necessary: To clarify your own position or to make other delegates change their minds about their position.)
In the particular case that we are discussing, which of these two motivations was most important for you?*

- It was most important to clarify and make others understand
 It was most important to convince others to change their minds

Comment (if any):

Question 3b. Communication before the meeting

Let's turn now to the time before the meeting took place. Did you communicate your position, and the reasons for your position, to other delegations in the preparatory phase before the meeting?

- Yes
 No

Comment (if any):

If yes

Which motivation was most important - to clarify the position or to convince others to change their minds?

- Clarify and make others understand.
 Convince others to change their minds.

Comment (if any):

Question 4a. Communicating salience

*During the discussions on the particular issue that you are thinking of: At the meeting, did you communicate how important this issue was for your country, or was that unnecessary in this case?
(Clarification if necessary: I.e. not what you wanted, or why you wanted it, but how much you wanted it.)*

Yes

No

And, again, let's turn to the time before the meeting. Did you communicate the importance of this particular issue for your country to other delegations in the preparatory phase before the meeting?

Yes

No

Question 4b. Comparing reasons and salience

(Only if yes on both 3a and 4a)

Comparing the last two questions: Which was most important in this particular case that you are thinking of – to explain the reasons why you were holding this position or to explain how important the issue was for your country?

It was most important to explain the reason(s) for the position of my country

It was most important to explain the importance of the issue for my country

End comments (if any):