

Activity of Economic Interest Groups in the EU Institutions

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An economic subject participating in the activity of economic groups and supplying access goods can choose one of the strategies that could influence the institutions of the European Union. The choice of strategies is conditioned by the participation of the subject in economic activity and the comparative analysis of the results of the economic costs and benefit obtained. The economic costs of the access goods supplied by economic interest groups and the impact goods supplied by the European Union administration institutions and the comparison of their profitability precondition the rationality of the strategy choice of an economic subject.

The results of the analysis of economic costs allow to more exactly evaluate access goods supply considering the main three access goods types and four types of the main suppliers of access goods. The function of the supply of access goods by economic interest groups is defined as the dependence of impact goods quantity on the quantity of access goods. This function is dependent on the kind of an economic interest group. The article presents the main four types of economic interest groups, that allows to more precisely evaluate the supplied impact goods with respect to economic and social costs.

The article presents the analysis of the results of foreign and Lithuanian researchers as well as the activity of economic interest groups and the evaluation of the benefits of the access goods supplied by different EU administration institutions. Distinguishing the European Union Parliament, Commission and the Board as the main governing institutions as well as taking into account decision making algorithm, it has been possible to more precisely evaluate the profitability of the commodities supplied by economic interest groups. The analysis results obtained by the authors of this article in the field of interrelationship of the European Parliament and national groups of economic interests have revealed the influence of these two groups in representing national and common European economic interest.

Keywords: *economic interest groups, commodity supply and demand function, lobbyism commodities.*

Introduction

Work actuality. In profit seeking business enterprises priority is given to the economic interests of individuals. A business enterprise is influenced by the external environment which in its turn is influenced by the enterprise itself. The enterprise is especially influenced

by legislative environment. An economic subject can influence business environment very insignificantly, however, the unity of economic subjects, i. e. economic interest groups can increase their power and their influence on strategic decisions made and realized by economic subjects. Economic interest groups are treated as a mediating chain between policy and economy. It is under its influence that business enterprise benefit is increased.

After having entered the EU, the functions of the national legislative and law implementing government have changed on both national and international scale. The EU managing institutions become the object of economic interest groups and their lobbyist activity. In the EU economic interest groups are under study in both theoretical and practical level.

During the recent 40 years the influence made by economic interest groups on the country's economic environment has been in the focus of attention. In the 6th decade the formation of economic interest groups was analysed (Olson, 1965; Buchanan, Tullock, 1962), in the eighth decade rent seeking theories made their influence (Colander, 1984; Moe, 1980). Rent seeking theory includes the analysis of interest representation effectiveness and resource distribution. In the 9th decade research included the influence of interest groups on nation growth and recession (Olson, 1982; Elster, 1989; Holmstrom, Tirole, 1989; Morris, 1999). Van Schendelen (1994), Bennett (1997) carried out empiric research of the European Union interest policy. Later research embraced the influence of economic interest groups on the regional development of countries as well as on the policy of European environmental safety and on the economic growth of developing countries (Pletcher).

The issue. Participating in a collective activity and seeking to influence the EU administration institutions as well as basing on the analysis of the benefit obtained and costs, an economic subject has to choose one of the strategies having influence on the EU administration institutions and evaluate commodity supply and to forecast their demand.

Aim of the research is to generalize the functions of the supply and demand of commodities supplied by economic interest groups.

Research tasks:

- To present the process of the economic subject's

strategies influencing the EU administration institutions;

- To formulate the function of the commodities supplied by economic interest groups;
- To generalize the demand of the commodities supplied by economic interest groups.

Research object – economic interest groups.

Research methods – the comparative and structural as well as the qualitative and quantitative analysis of scientific economic literature, graphical modelling and logical analysis.

The choice of the strategy of an economic subject

Every enterprise is to understand the following aspects: at what level it is going to seek to influence the EU decisions, i. e. at national or the EU level; whether it is going to act alone or through the association; whether it is going to act itself or through the mediation of the third persons; i. e. political consultants or legislative enterprises. This depends on the enterprise size and financial capacity, enterprise market strategy and on the national legislation conjuncture, i. e. the state influence.

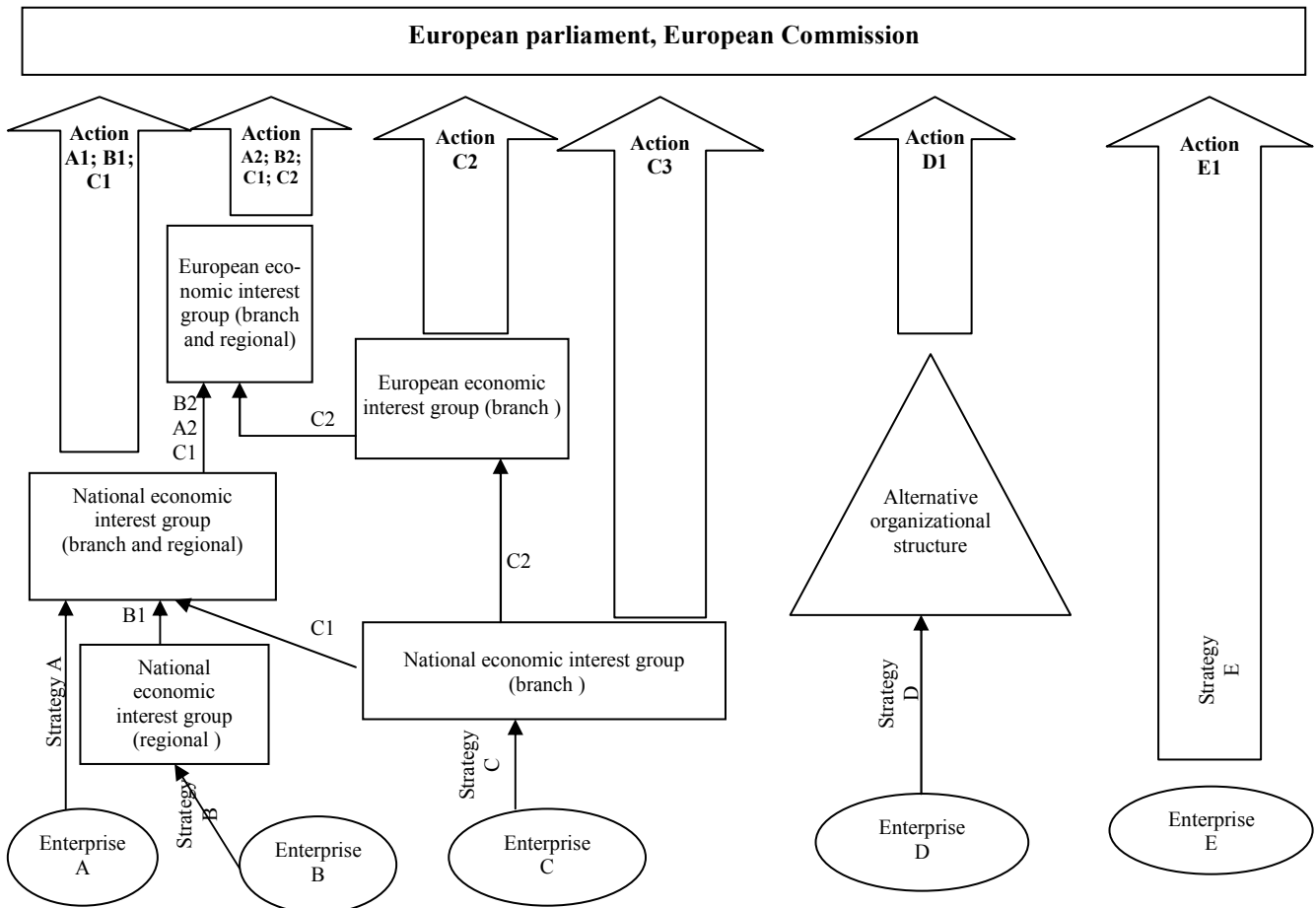


Figure 1. Economic interest groups influence on the EU administration institutions

The enterprise choosing different lobbistic strategies gets different benefit and undergoes different costs. Evaluating the benefit obtained and costs under gone, the enterprise can choose the following strategies (Figure 1):

- Strategy A. The enterprise belongs directly to a national economic interest group which in its turn directly influences the EU administration institutions (influence A) or under the mediation of a European economic interest group (influence A2).
- Strategy B. The enterprise is taking part in the activity of a national economic interest group. Enterprise interests are represented by one, two or three mediators (influence B1 or B2, mediating institutions – national economic interest group and European economic interest group).

- Strategy C. Using this strategy the enterprise realizes its economic interests through one or two mediators (influence C2 and C3, mediating institutions – national branch economic interest group and European economic interest group).
- Strategy D. the enterprise cooperates with alternative organizational structures (influence D1).
- Strategy E. the enterprise directly influences the EU administration institutions (influence E1). The most effective influence could be produced by big enterprises able to mobilize resources (financial, human, decision making) and to directly influence the EU administration structures separately. This could be witnessed by the examples of the companies “Philips”, “Unilever”, “Fiat”, “Volvo”.

Function of access goods supplied by economic interest groups

The EU governing institutions and their effective functioning are ensured by economic information dealing with both national and European problems. Solving some specific problems of an industry branch, the EU bureaucrats become dependable on expert information supplied by business structures. The demand function of the EU governing institutions is defined as a demand of some access goods. According to Broscheid and Coen, 2003; Crombez 2002, access goods supplied by an economic interest group can be distributed into (Figure 2):

- experts information, especially preparing legislative regulation means of the EU economic sector;

- information dealing with European economic problems and the demand as well as interests of the economic sector in the EU domestic market;
- information related to national economic problems and the needs and interests of the economic sector in the national market.

The supply function of access goods is defined as the dependence of impact goods on access goods. The suppliers of access goods could be distributed into the following classes according to business economic information resources:

- European economic interest groups;
- national economic interest groups;
- business enterprises;
- alternative organizational structures.

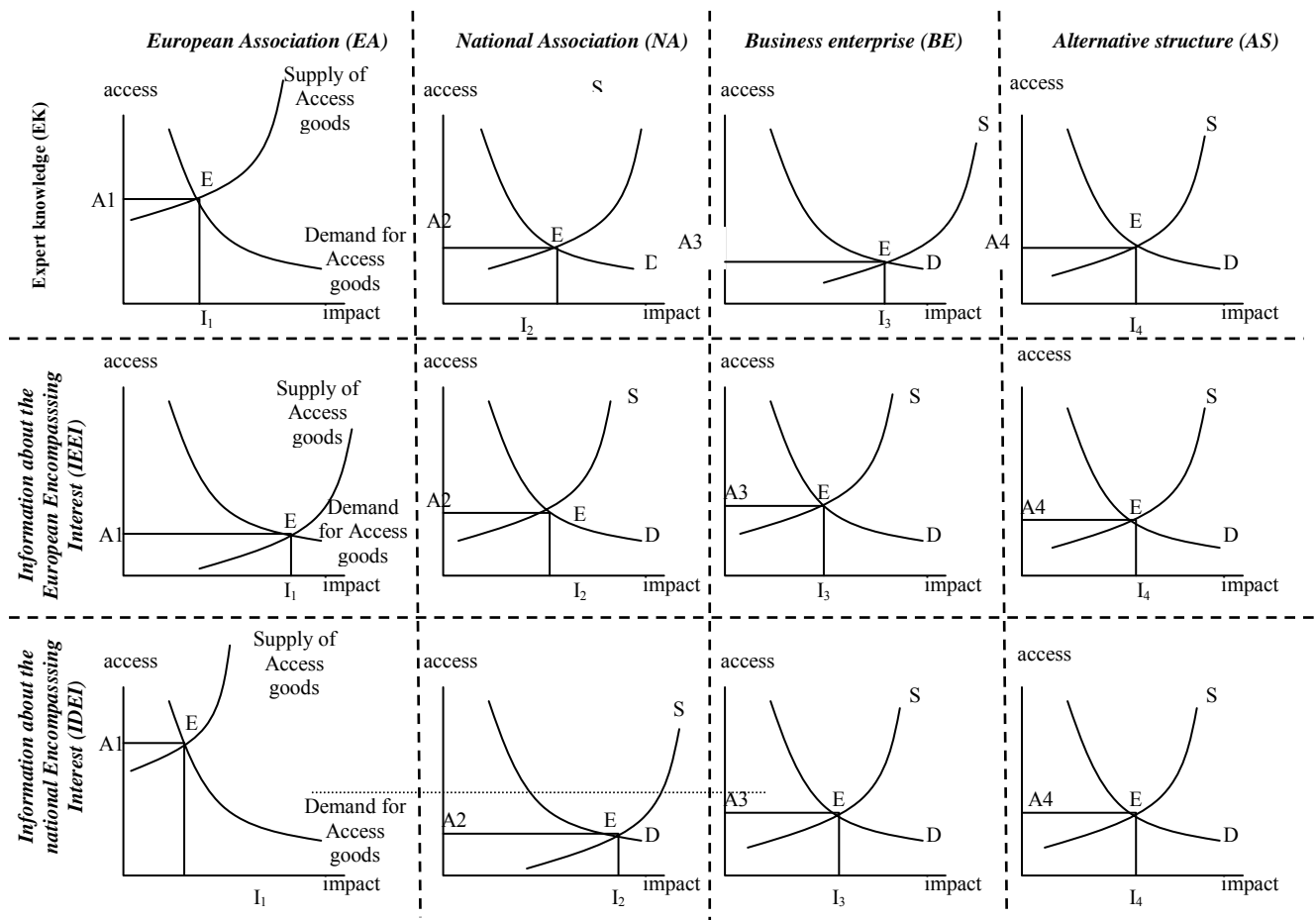


Figure 2. Demand and supply of access goods in European administration

The difference between the resources possessed by small and big firms allows the latter firms to supply quality access goods presenting expert information. If the firms activity is more oriented to the domestic market, it can supply objective information related to national problems. Big firms functioning in the international market can supply information dealing with European economic problems. On the other hand, it is difficult for them to supply information because the part of the market taken by those firms in European market is rather small. Economic interest groups cannot supply qualitative expert information because their resources are lim-

ited and the range of the problems to be solved is much more wider (Greenwood, Webster, 2000). European economic interest groups because of their multifunctionality can be far from the real situation in the market with respect to an individual market. On the other hand, European economic interest groups uniting a large number of business enterprises have a rather objective information about common European economic problems. Alternative organizational structures having limited resources at their disposal and mediating while representing foreign interests can supply a limited amount of access goods.

Demand of access goods supplied by economic interest groups

The activity of economic interest groups in the European Union is regulated by laws issued by the people working in the Parliament Board and Commission which should have closer relation with the economic situation in all the countries members. The EU institutions and their relationship with economic interest groups is vitally important in order to increase the EU laws effectiveness in the market. Seeking for more precise definition of economic interest groups and their influence mechanism, there are presented the main solutions taken according to the EU managerial principles:

1. Work groups, commission expert committees prepare suggestions. Working out these prepositions, economic interest groups take an active part. Thus it is important for the commission and its committees to get the expert information supplied by the enterprises belonging to economic interest groups.
2. Suggestions are sent to Commission, then the directorates and later the Commission collegiate level where there are presented already worked out official communiqués of the Commission, i. e. legislation acts presented to the Board and all the member countries. At this stage of decision making an important role is played by the information given by national associations and related to the national economic problems and to the interests and demands of economic sectors in the national market.
3. If the procedure requires, the Communiqué is also presented to the Parliament. The Board invites the work groups of member countries and they can introduce changes. Work groups discuss the suggestion for several times, then the legislation act is

passed to the Committee of Board representatives which deals only with practical interior questions. When everything is agreed, legislation act is moved to the ministers' Board for the acceptance. Usually the legislative act comes into power on the 20th day after its announcement. If the legislation act states that the Commission is to accept a regulation or directive for the implementation of the act, the Commission issues the act which explains how the legislation act is to be realized. The essence of this document is to specify the ways of its implementation in member countries in order not to realize it in some different ways. The questions dealing with financial problems are to be solved through specially established committee.

4. Although the Commission is given the right to initiate legislative acts, the European Parliament gets more and more rights and powers in the field of legislation acts. At this stage of decision making economic interest groups can have the greatest influence on presenting the information related to European economic problems and the needs and interests in the EU market. On the other hand, at this stage of legislation issues the need for information is not large. The Parliament needs only business information which could make the suggestions more accurate and which helps to evaluate the necessity of these proposals for the EU economy (Kohler-Koch, 1997).
5. The representatives of the states have the final say, i. e. Minister Board consisting of the ministers of all countries. 10 – 20 percent of the EU legislation acts are being voted, others are accepted according to a common agreement. Legislation act is corrected as long as the decision which suits all the member countries is achieved, although the act could be accepted by the majority of votes.

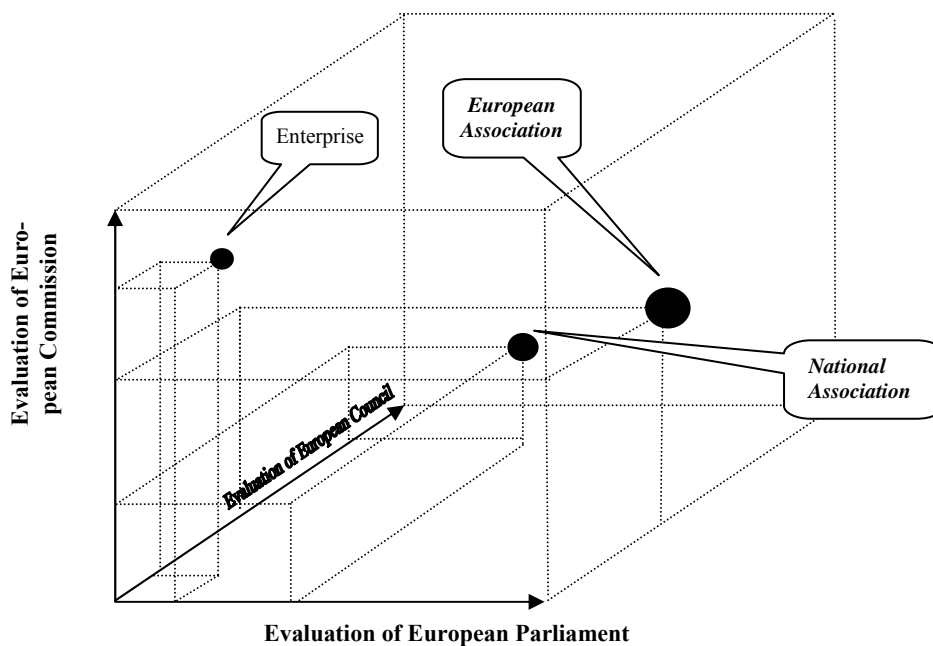


Figure 3. Evaluation of economic interest group activity

The difference of access goods depends on the demand of the EU administration institutions (Figure 3). The EU Commission values the information presented by experts while the Board needs the information related to national economic problems and the demands and interests in the national market. The European Parliament because of its multinational composition has to accept compromise decisions useful to all the EU members, therefore in this case the most necessary is the information related to European economic problems, interests and demands in the EU domestic market. On the other hand, the European Parliament members are delegated EU Parliament differ from country to country (Bowler, Farrell, 1993), however, in all cases there exists a very close link with national voters (Hansen, 1991). Thus the European Parliament needs the information related to national economic problems as well as to the demands and interests in the national market (Bouwen, 2002). There are some researches which express a negative approach to the existence of strong links between national economic interest groups and the European Parliament members (Antina, 1990; Raiuno, 1997; Kreppel, 1999; Hix, 2001). There even exists the view that the members of the European Parliament pay their attention to the decisions of the same ideological party. On the other hand, the elections to the European Parliament are held in the member countries, therefore the political support of economic interest groups during elections is very important.

Conclusions

1. A business enterprise seeking its economic interests realization can choose one out of five authors strategies influencing the European Union governing institutions.
2. The choice of the strategies influencing the European Union governing institutions is conditioned by access goods economic and social costs and the comparison of benefit from impact goods.
3. The supply function of economic interest groups and their access goods delivery are defined as the dependence of the quantity of impact goods on the amount of access goods.
4. The function of access goods supply depends on the type of an economic interest group and is differently valued by the EU governing institutions.
5. This research singles out four types of the main economic interest groups. This allows to more precisely evaluate impact goods with respect to their economic and social costs.
6. The demand of the European Union governing institutions for access goods supplied by economic interest groups in different and is differentiated according to the benefit for the EU institutions.
7. The analysis results of the European Parliament, Commission and Board as the main governing institutions as well as decision making algorithm study has made it possible to more exactly evaluate the benefit of access goods supplied by economic interest groups.

8. The analysis of the European parliament and national interest groups and their interactions in supplying access goods has revealed the influence of national economic interest groups and the European parliament when the Parliament members represent national or common European economic interests.

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Ekonominių interesų grupių veikla ES institucijose

Santrauka

Pelno siekiančioje verslo įmonėje prioritetas teikiamas ekonominiams individų interesams. Verslo įmonę veikia išorinė aplinka, kuriai savo ruožtu įtaką daro ir pati verslo įmonė. Ypač įmonė veikia teisinė aplinka. Tiesiogiai šią verslo aplinką ekonominis subjektas gali paveikti nežymiai, tačiau, ekonominiams subjektams susijungus į ekonominę interesų grupę, gerokai išauga galia jų daromos įtakos strateginius ekonominius sprendimus priimančioms ir juos įgyvendinantiems ekonominiams subjektams. Ekonominės interesų grupės traktuojamos kaip tarpinė grandis tarp politikos ir ekonomikos. Jos dėka didinama verslo įmonių gerovė.

Lietuvai įstojus į ES, pasikeitė ir nacionalinės įstatymų leidžiamosios bei įstatymų vykdančiosios valdžios funkcijos ir nacionaliniu, ir tarptautiniu mastu. ES valdančiosios institucijos tampa ekonominių interesų grupių lobistinės veiklos objektu. ES šalyse senbuvėse ekonominių interesų atstovavimo problemos tiriamos teoriniu ir praktiniu lygmeniu.

Per pastaruosius 40 metų ekonominių interesų grupių daroma įtaka šalies ekonominei aplinkai sulaukė didelio dėmesio. 20 a. 6-tajame dešimtmetyje pradėti ekonominių interesų grupių formavimosi logikos teoriniai tyrimai 8-ajame dešimtmetyje lėmė rentos siekimo teorijos sukūrimą, apimančią interesų atstovavimo efektyvumo ir resursų paskirstymo analizę. Vėlesni tyrimai apėmė ekonominių interesų grupių daromą įtaką šalių regioniniam vystymuisi, Europos aplinkosaugos politikai bei besivystančių šalių ekonominei plėtrai.

Ekonominis subjektas, dalyvaudamas ekonominės interesų gru-

pės veikloje ir teikdamas prieigos prekę, gali pasirinkti vieną iš poveikio darymo Europos Sąjungos valdymo institucijoms strategijų. Strategijos pasirinkimą sąlygoja subjekto dalyvavimo kolektyvinėje veikloje ekonominių kaštų ir gaunamos naudos palyginamosios analizės rezultatai. Ekonominių interesų grupių teikiamų prieigos prekių ekonominių kaštų ir Europos Sąjungos valdančiųjų institucijų teikiamų lobizmo prekių naudingumo palyginimas lemia ekonominio subjekto strategijos pasirinkimo racionalumą.

Kiekviena įmonė turi nuspręsti, kokių lygmeniu sieks paveikti ES priimamus sprendimus – nacionaliniu ar ES; veiks viena ar per asociaciją; veiks pati ar tarpininkaujant tretiesiems asmenims – politikos konsultantams ar teisininkų įmonėms. Tai priklauso nuo įmonės dydžio ir finansinio pajėgumo, įmonės strategijos rinkoje ir nuo nacionalinės teisėkūros konjunktūros – valstybės daromos įtakos.

Darbe pateikiami ekonominių kaštų analizės rezultatai leidžia tiksliau įvertinti prieigos prekių pasiūlą atsižvelgiant į tris pagrindinius prieigos prekių tipus bei keturis pagrindinius prieigos prekių teikėjų tipus. Ekonominių interesų grupių teikiamų prieigos prekių pasiūlos funkcija apibrėžiama kaip lobizmo prekių kiekio priklausomybė nuo prieigos prekių kiekio, ši funkcija priklauso nuo ekonominės interesų grupės rūšies. Darbe išskiriami keturi pagrindiniai ekonominių interesų grupių tipai leidžia tiksliau įvertinti siūlomas lobizmo prekes ekonominių bei socialinių kaštų atžvilgiu.

Turimų išteklių skirtumas tarp smulkių ir stambių firmų pastarosioms leidžia teikti kokybiškas prieigos prekes pateikiant ekspertinę informaciją. Jei firmos veikla labiau orientuota į vidaus rinką, ji gali teikti objektyvią informaciją, susijusią su nacionalinėmis problemomis. Didelės firmos, veikiančios tarptautinėje rinkoje, gali teikti informaciją, susijusią su europinėmis ekonominėmis problemomis; kita vertus, teikti objektyvią informaciją joms sudėtinga, nes firmų užimama rinkos dalis bendroje Europos rinkoje dažnai nėra didelė. Ekonominės interesų grupės negali pateikti kokybiškos ekspertinės informacijos, nes jų ištekliai yra riboti bei spęstinių problemų ratas kur kas platesnis nei stambios įmonės. Europinės ekonominės interesų grupės dėl savo daugiafunkciškumo gali būti nutolusios nuo realios situacijos rinkoje individualios firmos atžvilgiu. Kita vertus, europinės ekonominės interesų grupės, apimdamos gausias verslo įmones, turi pakankamai objektyvią informaciją apie bendrus Europos ekonominius reikalus. Alternatyvios organizacinės struktūros, disponuodamos ribotais ištekliais bei tarpininkaudamos atstovaujant svetimiems interesams, skirtingai nei įmonės ar ekonominės interesų grupės, prieigos prekių gali pateikti ribotai.

Šiame straipsnyje, vadovaujantis užsienio ekonomistų moksliniais darbais bei Lietuvos ekonominių interesų grupių pateiktais duomenimis, apibendrinami prieigos prekių paklausos analizės rezultatai, remiantis skirtingų ES valdančiųjų institucijų prieigos prekių teikiamo naudingumo įvertinimu.

Ekonominių interesų grupių veikla Europos Sąjungoje reglamentuojama įstatymais, leidžiama ir skatinama, kad žmonės, dirbantys Parlamente, Taryboje ir Komisijoje, būtų kuo artimiau susiję su realia ekonomine situacija visose šalyse narėse. ES institucijoms ryšys su ekonominėmis interesų grupėmis yra gyvybiškai svarbus, kad ES įstatymai didintų efektyvumą rinkoje. Pateikiamų prieigos prekių skirtingumas priklauso nuo ES valdančiųjų institucijų paklausos. Siekiant tiksliau apibrėžti ekonominės interesų grupės daromos įtakos mechanizmą, pateikiami pagrindiniai sprendimų priėmimo ES valdymo organuose principai:

1. Darbo grupės, Komisijos ekspertų komitetai parengia siūlymus. Rengiant šiuos siūlymus, aktyviai dalyvauja ir ekonominės interesų grupės; šiuo atveju Komisijai bei jos komitetams ypač svarbi ekonominėms interesų grupėms priklausančių įmonių teikiama ekspertinė informacija. Siūlymai patenka į Komisiją, o ten nukreipiami į atitinkamus direktoratus, vėliau pakyla į Komisijos kolegijos lygį, kur pateikiami jau parengti oficialūs Komisijos komunikatai – teisės aktų pasiūlymai; šie įteikiami Tarybai ir visoms šalims narėms. Šiame sprendimų priėmimo etape svarbų vaidmenį atlieka nacionalinių asociacijų teikiama informacija, susijusi su nacionalinėmis ekonominėmis problemomis bei ekonominių sektorių nacionalinėje rinkoje poreikiais ir interesais. Taryba sukviečia šalių narių darbo grupes, ir siūloma

pakeisti tam tikrą teisės akto formuluotę; darbo grupėse šis pasiūlymas svarstomas kelis kartus, tada teisės aktas patenka į nuolatinį Tarybos atstovų komitetą, kuriame sprendžiami daugiau praktiniai, vidaus rinkos klausimai. Kai viskas suderinama, teisės aktas pakeliamas į Ministrų Tarybos lygį ir čia priimamas. ES Komisija labiau vertina ekspertų teikiamą informaciją, tuo tarpu Tarybai reikalingesnė informacija, susijusi su nacionalinėmis ekonominėmis problemomis bei ekonominio sektoriaus nacionalinėje rinkoje poreikiais ir interesais.

2. Nors ES pagrindinę įstatymų leidybos iniciatyvos teisę turi Komisija, Europos Parlamentui palaipsniui suteikiama vis daugiau teisės aktų leidybos galių. Šiame sprendimų priėmimų etape ekonominės interesų grupės didžiausią įtaką gali daryti pateikdamos informaciją, susijusią su europinėmis ekonominėmis problemomis bei ekonominio sektoriaus ES vidaus rinkoje poreikiais ir interesais. Kita vertus, šiame įstatymų leidybos proceso etape ekspertų teikiamos informacijos poreikis nėra didelis. Parlamentui reikalinga tik dalykinė informacija, patikslinanti Komisijos teikiamus teisėkūros pasiūlymus bei padedanti įvertinti šių pasiūlymų naudingumą ir reikalingumą ES ūkiui. Europos Parlamentas dėl savo multinacionalinės sudėties turi priimti visai ES naudingus kompromisinius sprendimus, todėl šiuo atveju reikalingiausia yra informacija, susijusi su europinėmis ekonominėmis problemomis bei ekonominio sektoriaus ES vidaus rinkoje poreikiais ir interesais. Kita vertus, Europos Parlamento

nariai deleguojami iš skirtingų ES valstybių. Skirtingose ES valstybėse ES parlamentarų išrinkimo schemas skiriasi, bet visada išlieka glaudus ryšys su nacionaliniais rinkėjais. Tokie atveju Europos Parlamentui reikalinga ir informacija, susijusi su nacionalinėmis ekonominėmis problemomis bei ekonominio sektoriaus nacionalinėje rinkoje poreikiais ir interesais. Stipraus ryšio buvimą tarp nacionalinių ekonominių interesų grupių ir Europos Parlamento narių iš dalies paneigia užsienio autorių darbuose pasitaikanti nuomonė, kad Europos Parlamento nariai, darydami politinius sprendimus, atsižvelgia į panašios politinės ideologijos partijos interesus. Kita vertus, rinkimai į Europos Parlamentą vykdomi valstybėse narėse, todėl nacionalinių ekonominių interesų grupių politinė parama rinkimuose yra labai svarbi.

Europos Sąjungos Parlamento, Komisijos bei Tarybos kaip pagrindinių valdančiųjų institucijų išskyrimas bei sprendimų priėmimo algoritmo Europos Sąjungos valdančiosiose institucijose analizės rezultatai leido tiksliau įvertinti ekonominių interesų grupių teikiamų prieigos prekių naudingumą. Darbo autorių atliktos Europos Parlamento ir nacionalinių ekonominių interesų grupių sąveikos teikiant prieigos prekes analizės rezultatai atskleidė nacionalinių ekonominių interesų grupių daromos įtakos Europos Parlamentui nevi-enareikšmiškumą, Parlamento nariams atstovaujant nacionaliniams ar bendriems Europos ekonominiams interesams.

Raktažodžiai: *ekonominės interesų grupės, prieigos prekės pasiūlos ir paklausos funkcija, lobizmo prekės.*

The article has been reviewed.

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