

Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen



# **The strategies used by German local authorities in the Rhine-Ruhr metropolitan area to present their interests to the European Union**

Master Thesis

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## **Table of Contents**

List of acronyms and abbreviations.....	5
List of figures.....	6
List of tables.....	6
Summary .....	7
1 Introduction.....	8
1.1 Problem statement, research objectives and research questions.....	8
1.2 Contribution to societal and scientific relevance .....	9
1.3 Structure of the thesis.....	10
2 Interest representation and lobbying in the multi-level system of the European Union.....	12
2.1 The concept of multi-level governance and the role of the local level..	13
2.1.1 The horizontal and vertical structure of the European Union.....	14
2.1.2 The principle of subsidiarity and proportionality .....	15
2.1.3 The recognition of the local level in the Treaty of Lisbon.....	16
2.2 Lobbying .....	17
2.2.1 The history and the significance of lobbying.....	17
2.2.2 The lobbyists on the different levels .....	19
2.3 Reasons for interest representation.....	19
2.4 Strategies for interest representation .....	22
3 Research design .....	29
3.1 Research strategy.....	30
3.2 Research methods.....	30
3.3 Approach to data collection.....	32
3.3.1 Research interviews with the representatives of local authorities .	32
3.3.2 Questionnaires answered by the representatives of local authorities.....	33

3.3.3	Research interview with the representatives of federal state authorities and city networks .....	34
3.4	Data analysis .....	35
4	The federal republic of Germany .....	37
4.1	Characteristics of Germany .....	37
4.2	The role of the federal states .....	37
4.3	The formal structure of spatial planning in Germany .....	39
5	The investigation area Rhine-Ruhr .....	41
5.1	Metropolitan areas .....	41
5.2	Metropolitan areas in Germany .....	42
5.3	The federal state North Rhine-Westphalia .....	43
5.4	The Rhine-Ruhr metropolitan area .....	44
5.4.1	The Ruhr area .....	47
5.4.2	The 'Rheinschiene' .....	48
5.4.3	Cooperation in the Rhine-Ruhr metropolitan area .....	48
5.4.4	Future prospects .....	49
6	Presentation and interpretation of findings .....	50
6.1	The statements of the interviewed local authorities .....	50
6.2	The statements of the interviewed authorities and networks/associations .....	57
7	Discussion of findings .....	61
7.1	Reasons why local authorities in the Rhine-Ruhr metropolitan area lobby the EU .....	62
7.2	Channels used by local authorities to present their interests to the European Union .....	64
7.3	Experiences and expectations of the local authorities .....	65
7.4	Difficulties and limitations .....	66
8	Conclusion .....	68

References.....	72
Appendix.....	78

## List of acronyms and abbreviations

BMBau	Bundesministerium für Raumordnung, Bauwesen und Städtebau (Federal Ministry for Spatial Development, Building and Urban Design) (now BMVBS)
BMVBS	Bundesministerium für Verkehr, Bau und Stadtentwicklung (Federal Ministry for Transport, Building and Urban Development)
BO	Brussels Office
BRD	Bezirksregierung Düsseldorf
CEMR	Council of European Municipalities and Regions
CEU	Council of the European Union
CoM	Council of Ministers
CoR	Committee of the Regions
DG	Directorate-General (European Commission)
EC	European Commission
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
e.g.	Exempli Gratia
EMR	European Metropolitan Region
EP	European Parliament
etc.	Et Cetera
EU	European Union
IT.NRW	Information und Technik Nordrhein-Westfalen (NRW State Office for Information and Technology)
LA	Local Authority
LEP	Landesentwicklungsplan (Federal State Development Plan)
LSG	Local Self-Government
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
METREX	Network of European Metropolitan Regions and Areas
MKRO	Ministerkonferenz für Raumplanung (Conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning)
MLG	Multi-Level Governance
MR	Metropolitan Region
NRW	North Rhine-Westphalia
RRMA	Rhine-Ruhr Metropolitan Area
RVR	Regionalverband Ruhr (Ruhr Regional Association)
Stäv	Ständige Vertretung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen in Brüssel (NRW Representative Office to the European Union)
ToL	Treaty of Lisbon
UN	United Nations

## List of figures

Figure 1: The planning paradox .....	20
Figure 2: Direct local EU interest representation.....	22
Figure 3: Administrative districts of NRW.....	44
Figure 4: The Rhine-Ruhr metropolitan area according to the regional development plan of NRW .....	46
Figure 5: The opportunities of LAs to influence in the multi-level systems of the EU.....	69

## List of tables

Table 1: The used methods .....	30
Table 2: Overview of the interviewed LAs.....	33
Table 3: Overview of the interviewed institutions .....	34
Table 4: Population figure – 20 local authorities and 11 rural districts and total population Rhine-Ruhr metropolitan area .....	47
Table 5: Channels used by LA to represent their interests .....	51

## **Summary**

The European Union has a massive impact on the local level, as it is the level where most regulations, directives etc. have to be implemented. Due to the fact that the European institutions are known for their openness, the method of local authorities to present their interests is lobbying. There are several reasons why local authorities lobby, above all the influencing of decision-making processes and the acquisition of funding. As there are several higher levels than the local level, local authorities can make use of many actors that work as mediators for their representation of interest. They can either contact the EU institutions and their members directly or approach to actors and offers of federal state authorities. Another opportunity, which has been assessed as being very influential, is the participation in European associations and networks. This research focuses on the Rhine-Ruhr metropolitan area. The region is divided into two several regions, which are different in terms of their economical and financial situation. It has been analyzed, if a common cooperation would be beneficial but this can be denied. The backgrounds of both regions are too different and moreover both of them have already established their own regional networks.

## 1 Introduction

The policy of the European Union (EU) has a massive impact on local authorities (LAs). On the local level many legislative acts of the EU have to be implemented. Because of the gradual transfer of national competences to the EU the number of regulations, directives and decisions that origin at the European level and have to be implemented at the local level is increasing. Consequently LAs began to represent their interests to the EU. As the possible channels are limited and rather consulting<sup>1</sup> the method chosen by LAs is the one of lobbying. Particularly, as the EU institutions, primarily the Parliament, are considered to be very open towards interest groups. The number of lobbyists in Brussels rises steadily, following current estimates there are about 15 000 in 2012 (LobbyControl, 2012). Furthermore, Brussels is known as *“the world capital of lobbying for local and regional authorities”* (Huysseune and Jans, 2008, p.10).

The topic and the aim of this master thesis will be explained on the basis of the set research questions in the following pages. Additionally, the societal and scientific relevance will be explained and the structure of the thesis.

### 1.1 Problem statement, research objectives and research questions

There are a lot of strategies used by LAs to represent their interests because of the multi-level structure of the EU. There is not only one possible way of having an influence or one decision-maker, but rather a variety. Therefore the concept of multi-level governance (MLG) is used, as it covers the linkages between the different levels and also between the LAs and the respective levels. The focus is on the strategies which are used by the LAs to upload their ideas to the European level, meaning that this happens from the lowest (local) to the highest (supranational) level.

There are quite a lot of possibilities, but how are they used? How keen are the LAs to present their interests, to what extent can they participate in the lobbying process and which strategies are used?

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<sup>1</sup> Like the inclusion of the local level through consultations.



The area under investigation, the Rhine-Ruhr metropolitan area (RRMA), is the largest agglomeration in Germany, but also very heterogeneous. Is there a common representation of interests or how does it happen? In the past a lot of problems were obvious, termed in German as 'Kirchturmdenken', what is similar to parochialism. Every LA thinks of herself first and not about the entire region. Is the situation in this sector different?

On the basis of the above explained situation the following research question has been set up:

- Which strategies are used by the local authorities to present their interests towards the European Union?

To answer the main research question there are three sub-questions:

- Why do German local authorities lobby the European Union?
- Which channels are used to lobby the European Union?
- What are the expectations and the experiences of the local authorities? How do they evaluate the different channels?

From this the following hypothesis is derived:

- A common interest representation of all LAs in the RRMA is non-existent, but would be beneficial.

## **1.2 Contribution to societal and scientific relevance**

There has been quite a lot of research focusing on the regional interest representation (for example see Blatter, Kreutzer, Rentl and Thiele, 2008 and 2009; Nielsen and Salk, 1998; Moore, 2008), but less about local interest representation (see Leitermann, 2006; Niederhafner, 2008; Münch, 2006, v. Alemann and Münch, 2006). But there is almost no research about the local interest representation in one specific region, especially when the region is in a special situation as in the RRMA where many LAs are financially weak. Therefore, the aim of this thesis is to identify the strategies that are used by the LAs and if there is any cooperation. By this the possibility of an exchange of best practice should be enabled so that LAs with little or no experience can

benefit from new ideas and procedures that are pointed up. An exchange of specialized knowledge could lead to the development of new strategies and more cooperation. Generally speaking the thesis aims to connect research and practice a little more.

### **1.3 Structure of the thesis**

The thesis is arranged into seven chapters. In order to answer the research questions it is necessary to consider the background, namely MLG, lobbying and interest representation (ch.2). First the concept of MLG and the status of the local level in this will be analyzed (ch.2.1). This is followed by a brief introduction of lobbying and the uniqueness of lobbying in the multi-level system of the European Union (ch.2.2). Finally the reasons and strategies for the interest representation of LAs will be analyzed (ch.2.3 and 2.4). This is important so as to understand the complexity of interest representation on the European level as it is somehow different to those on the national level.

In chapter three the used research design will be introduced. At the beginning the research strategy (ch.3.1) will be presented followed by the research methods in chapter 3.2. This section explains why the interviewees have been chosen and will also introduce them briefly. The chapter ends with the explanation of the approach to data collection (ch.3.3) and the type of data analysis (ch.3.4).

The next chapter (ch.4) concisely illustrates the complexity of a federal country (ch.4.1) and illuminates the role of a federal state (ch.4.2). This is necessary so as to understand the routes of interest representation in Germany. At least there will be a short description of the spatial planning system in Germany (ch.4.3).

In chapter five the RRMA and a little more background information will be given, starting with the definition of metropolitan areas in general (ch.5.1) and in Germany (ch.5.2). This is followed by a brief history of the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia (ch.5.3) and ends in the presentation of the RRMA (ch.5.4). A detailed analysis of the history and the current situation is needed to understand the applied procedures, especially because the assumed weak cooperation in the region may have its origin in the past.

In chapter six the findings of the interviews will be presented. The first section (ch.6.1) focuses on the answers given by the representatives of the interviewed LAs and the second section (ch.6.2) will present those of the interviewed authorities and European associations/networks.

In the following chapter (ch.7) those findings will be discussed according to the research questions. Here the reasons why LAs lobby the EU serve as a basis (ch.7.1), followed by the channels used by LAs to present their interests (ch.7.2) and finally the experiences and expectations that were mentioned in the interviews (ch.7.3). The chapter ends with the mentioning of some difficulties and limitations that have come across (ch.7.4).

The conclusion will be drawn in chapter eight, including recommendations, future areas of research and reflections on the research that was conducted.

At the end of the introduction some general comments: as may be surmised from the table of contents some topics radiate on more than one point of the thesis. Therefore, certain overlapping and repetitions can hardly be avoided. The interviewees will not be named, but statements can be assigned to the respective LA, association, network or ministry. It should be noted that the terms 'interest representation' and 'lobbying' are used as synonyms. Ultimately, the term 'lobbying' is solely used in its pure neutral meaning.

## **2 Interest representation and lobbying in the multi-level system of the European Union**

The EU is of sui generis nature, it is an economic and political unique system of the current 27 countries. These countries have transferred specific rights of sovereignty to the EU and due to this act together and make binding decisions. Therefore the common Brussels policy is the basis of many national decisions (Vertretung der Europäischen Kommission in Deutschland, 2010).

The Treaty of Maastricht<sup>2</sup>, or the Treaty on European Union, represents the founding of the EU in 1992. The EU should not remain as an economic community but rather become a political union. Several foregone foundings and decisions have set the stage for this development, most important the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community in 1957, the founding of the European Community in 1967 and the signing of the Single European Act in 1986 (ibid.).

To describe the emergence of a supranational level by the founding of the EU and its central institutions<sup>3</sup> and the not strictly hierarchic structure of the EU the concept of MLG is used. The following part presents the concept of MLG and its horizontally and vertically shifting of authority. Moreover the role of the principle of subsidiarity and the influence of the Treaty of Lisbon are introduced as both have a direct effect on the status of the local level within the multi-level system of the EU. The concept of MLG helps to identify the available channels for the interest representation of LAs as they can be found on all levels.

Afterwards the European dimension of lobbying will be analyzed. As lobbying is believed to have a great impact on the European decision-making processes, the lobbyists on the different levels have to be identified. According to the concept of MLG and the federal structure of Germany, it is assumed that influential lobbyists can be found on all levels.

The following two sections ask why LAs present their interests and how they try to upload their ideas on the European level.

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<sup>2</sup> Signed on February 7<sup>th</sup> 1992 and entered into force on November 1<sup>st</sup> 1993.

<sup>3</sup> Such as the European Commission, the European Parliament and the European Court.

## 2.1 The concept of multi-level governance and the role of the local level

The concept of MLG was developed by Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks in the early 1990s to explore complex regulatory systems. It was more or less a reaction to the dissatisfying explanatory approaches of the state-centric/intergovernmental<sup>4</sup> and the supranational/neo-functionalist<sup>5</sup> model as they were not able to cover some developments of the EU. Especially the major reform of the EU structural policy in 1988 was the decisive factor (Niederhafner, 2008; Bache and Flinders, 2004). Marks himself explained the emergence of the concept of MLG as follows:

*“(...) we are seeing the emergence of multilevel governance, a system of continuous negotiation among nested governments at several territorial tiers – supranational, national, regional and local – as the result of a broad process of institutional creation and decision reallocation that has pulled some previously centralized functions of the state up to the supranational level and some down to the local/regional level”.* (Marks, 1993 cited in Knodt and Große Hüttemann, 2006, p.226)

According to Hooghe and Marks the state players are no longer the decision makers in the European decision-making process. The governments of the member states still pursue their national interests and objectives, but now there is also a competition with supranational actors like the European Commission or the European Parliament. They lost their monopoly status and compared to the state-centric/intergovernmental model the focus is not on the state but on the specific actor instead (Knodt and Große Hüttemann, 2006).

MLG has added the sub-national level as an influential one for the decision making in the EU. By this the former two levels – national und supranational –

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<sup>4</sup> The state-centric model separates between domestic and international politics (Knodt and Hüttemann, 2006). Governments act like gatekeepers that can stop unwanted consequences of integration (Bache and Flinders, 2004).

<sup>5</sup> *“Neofunctionalists claimed that governments were increasingly caught up in a web of interdependence that provided a role for supranational actors and organized interests in shaping integration”.* (Bache and Flinders, 2004, p.2)

were supplemented and a multi-level system arose (Bache and Flinders, 2004). Marks and Hooghe state:

*“Because externalities arising from the provision of public goods vary immensely – from planet-wide in the case of global warming to local in the case of most city services – so should the scale of governance. To internalize externalities, governance must be multi-leveled”.* (Marks and Hooghe, 2004, p.16)

Marks and Hooghe term this as their core argument for MLG and it is the core argument for the use of the concept of MLG in this thesis as well: the local level is responsible for the implementation of many regulations, legislation etc.<sup>6</sup>, so the role of the local level needs to be involved in the holistic view of the EU. The ‘grand theories’ of European integration focus on the EU polity and therefore do not explain the MLG system sufficiently. The study of the policy- and decision-making processes is missing (Dühr, Colomb and Nadin, 2010). In addition, as mentioned earlier, the interdependences between the levels are the starting point for the identification of contacts for the LAs to represent their interests.

For a deeper understanding the next part will briefly present the connections, between the levels and the non-governmental actors.

### **2.1.1 The horizontal and vertical structure of the European Union**

The designation MLG itself refers to the fact that the described system has a horizontal and vertical structure. Multi-level covers the governments at the different territorial levels that are increasingly interdependent; and governance refers to the interdependence between governments and non-governmental actors at various territorial fields (Bache and Flinders, 2004).

Contrary to hierarchical models MLG does not bear in mind that policy development happens mainly on the national level and that the implementation takes place on the sub-national level. *“(...) authority (...) is gradually dispersing across different sectors and levels of action, and (...) political action occurs*

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<sup>6</sup> There are various appraisals that between 60-90% of all regulations that have to be implemented on the local level are originated at the European level (for example see Leitermann, 2006 or Schächtelin, 2009).

*within and between various levels of governance*” (Dühr, Colomb and Nadin, 2010, p.98). Furthermore, the levels are related via a variety of connections and channels. Dühr, Colomb and Nadin (2010, p.99) take the EU environmental policy as an example for MLG: not less than national ministers, European agencies, technical experts, interest groups, national and LAs and a body of law and policy are integrated in this policy area. This clarifies that each level has relations to other governmental actors – the vertical dimension of MLG - and non-governmental actors – the horizontal dimension of MLG. The levels are characterized by interconnectedness, cooperation and competition and not by a strict territorial sovereignty and a delimitation of competences (Stahl, 2011). The identification of such a policy-maker within both dimensions is another starting point for LAs. To know who can and will decide what and when is crucial for the systematic approach of LAs to present their interests.

### **2.1.2 The principle of subsidiarity and proportionality**

The acting of the EU is restricted and guided by the Treaty on European Union. The principles of subsidiarity and proportionality are defined like this:

*“Under the principle of subsidiarity, in areas which do not fall within its exclusive competence, the Union shall act only if and in so far as the objectives of the proposed action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States, either at central level or at regional and local level, but can rather, by reason of the scale or effects of the proposed action, be better achieved at Union level.”*  
(Article 5 (3) TEU)

*“Under the principle of proportionality, the content and form of Union action shall not exceed what is necessary to achieve the objectives of the Treatys.”* (Article 5 (4) TEU)<sup>7</sup>

The principles of subsidiarity and proportionality are the basics of federal systems (see also chapter 4). The lowest level is responsible for the problem solving as long as the capacities are existing. Thereby both principles are the legal protection of the lowest levels as they strengthen the guarantee of local

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<sup>7</sup> European Union, 2008. Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union. [pdf] Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:115:0013:0045:EN:PDF> [Accessed 27 August 2012].

self-government (LSG), the support responsibility, have no rights of intervention and at least support the competition. Furthermore, the European Commission has to provide an analysis of subsidiarity for each regulatory draft. But there are critics that mention the missing contractual allocation of responsibilities to the different levels in the EU (Niederhafner, 2008).

Nevertheless both principles strengthen the local level. On the one hand the EU leaves as much action as possible on the local level and on the other hand the EU does not do more than necessary within the duties of the local level. A further strengthening of the local level has happened by the Treaty of Lisbon as presented in the next section.

### **2.1.3 The recognition of the local level in the Treaty of Lisbon**

The LSG was first recognized on the European level in the Treaty of Lisbon (ToL) in 2009<sup>8</sup>. Article 3a (2) of the ToL<sup>9</sup> states that:

*“The Union shall respect the equality of Member States before the Treaties as well as their national identities, inherent in their fundamental structures, political and constitutional, inclusive of regional and local self-government.”*

The LSG in Germany dates from the Prussian municipal ordinance from 1808. Spirit and purpose of the LSG was to give the civil society a little scope to participate in public affairs. Over time the LSG in Germany developed and exceedingly after World War II the importance of the local level was obvious: it is the grass roots level of a political system and was used as a ‘school for democracy’ by the Allies. Furthermore, the local level is often mentioned as the closest level, in a spatial, factual, social and political-personnel and emotional sense (Andersen and Woyke, 2003).

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<sup>8</sup> The Treaty of Lisbon was signed in 2007 and entered into force in 2009.

<sup>9</sup> European Union, 2007. Amendments to the Treaty on European Union and to the Treaty establishing the European Community. [pdf] Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2007:306:0010:0041:EN:PDF> [Accessed 27 August 2012].



The Treaty of Lisbon (ToL) strengthens the local level as it respects the right of local self-governance. This is of particular importance for the strong German LAs. In addition the local level has now the possibility to control the use of the principle of subsidiarity as the Committee of the Regions (CoR) can bring an action to the European Court of Justice when the powers of the EU institutions are applied incorrectly (Die Bundesregierung, 2010). The alterations were very welcomed in Germany and an often used quote is:

*“The Unions’ blindness regarding local self-government has come to an end since the Lisbon-Treaty.”* (Articus<sup>10</sup>, 2009 cited in Kuhlmann, 2011, p.20)

## **2.2 Lobbying**

This section explains briefly the origin of lobbying and its actual dimension in the EU, which is called the *“champions league of lobbying”* by Van Schendelen (2006, p.132). In the foreground are the possibilities of LAs to lobby the EU. This is followed by the identification of the lobbyists on the different levels.

### **2.2.1 The history and the significance of lobbying**

Lobbying<sup>11</sup> is the influencing of governments with the help of specific methods aiming to push through as much interests of specific groups as possible. Addressees of lobbying are all kind of governments that are responsible for decision-making processes or can influence them (Leif and Speth, 2006). The term lobbying became common in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century when representatives of interest groups waited in the lobbies of the US-Congress and the British parliament for trying to influence the voting of the congressmen/parliamentarian (Van Schendelen, 2006; Fischer, 2005). Lobbying developed and can nowadays be described as the exchange of information, sometimes also of political and financial aid. As the financial support of parties sometimes happens on the fringe of legality, lobbying partly enjoys a bad reputation (Van Schendelen, 2006).

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<sup>10</sup> Dr. Stephan Articus is the Chief Executive of the German Association of Cities.

<sup>11</sup> Lobbying and interest representation are different: interest representation happens constantly and represents unspecific interests in the political field. Whereas lobbying happens point by point and tries to influence or prevent specific legislation projects. Furthermore, lobbying is of an informal character as it does not know any predetermined procedures or rules and occurs non-public (Leif and Speth, 2006).

A distinction between private interest groups such as those from companies or civil society on the one hand and public interest groups like national ministries, agencies and local governments on the other hand, can be established (Leif and Speth, 2006).

The beginning of lobbying the European Union can be seen according to Fischer (2005) already in the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). The committee of the ECSC found it desirable to include non-governmental groups in the processes of policy-making and Fischer understands this as the institutionalization of the dialogue between EU institutions and interest groups. Van Schendelen (2006) adds two reasons why lobbying plays such an important role in the EU: the huge openness of the EU which is greater than the one of most national states, can be used as the starting point. Therefore the EU is receptive to lobbying. The first reason is the heterogeneous structure of the EU officials in the institutions as they have different origins. They have an open mind about support and information by public and private interest groups. As a quid pro quo the EU officials provide the interest group's information and support them as well. For example the European Commission publishes calls for interests regularly and by this involves interest groups. Van Schendelen mentions the relatively small size of the EU Commission as the second reason. Compared to many member states the Commission employs less officials than they do in their national ministries. As the officials are not able to deal with their work on their own, they work in panels of experts, some of which are representatives of interest groups. These are two out of many ways for interest representation in Brussels showing relative easy access to EU institutions.

Typical instruments of lobbying are the collection, the preparation and the transfer of information, the cultivation of contacts, the formation of alliances, the organization of events and the party donation. The last two restricted with the smell of corruption (Leif and Speth, 2006).

## 2.2.2 The lobbyists on the different levels

*“Like birds and bees taking in the scent and nectar of the flowers of ‘Brussels’, they try to enjoy the honey and money of EU. Many lobby groups have already got the taste of it and are eager for more.”* (Van Schendelen, 2005, p.11)

According to estimates between 10 000 and 20 000 people are working as lobbyists in Brussels organized in circa 3 000 interest groups (Nugent, 2010; Van Schendelen, 2006; Greenwood, 2011). They can be found on all levels and may vary in their type and strength of lobbying. In the Transparency Register of the EU institutions are actually 5295 registrants from which 278 are in the category of ‘Organisations representing local, regional and municipal authorities, other public or mixed entities, etc.’<sup>12</sup> The register has been launched in 2011 to make public who seeks to influence the policy-making processes of the EU. In addition the registered organizations can get access rights to enter the European parliament (EU, 2012). But it cannot be assumed that every interest group is registered somewhere, so the real number is unknown (Greenwood, 2011; Niederhafner, 2008).

Lobbyists can be identified on all levels of the multi-level structure of the EU. As explained above there are public and private interest groups. LAs can make use of both, which will be explained in more detail in chapter 3. The next section will show why LAs present their interests and lobby.

## 2.3 Reasons for interest representation

In the German-speaking literature the term ‘Europabetroffenheit der Kommunen’ is often used to describe that the local level is affected by decisions of the European Union. Schächtelin (2009) mentions the Single European Act (1987) and the Treaty of Maastricht (1992) as the starting point, when a “*flood of directives*” had to be implemented on the local level. After the introduction of the European Single Market 282 measures had to be implemented, 120 of which concerned the local level (Münch, 2006). This can be seen as the initial situation; LAs were directly involved and because of this began to present their

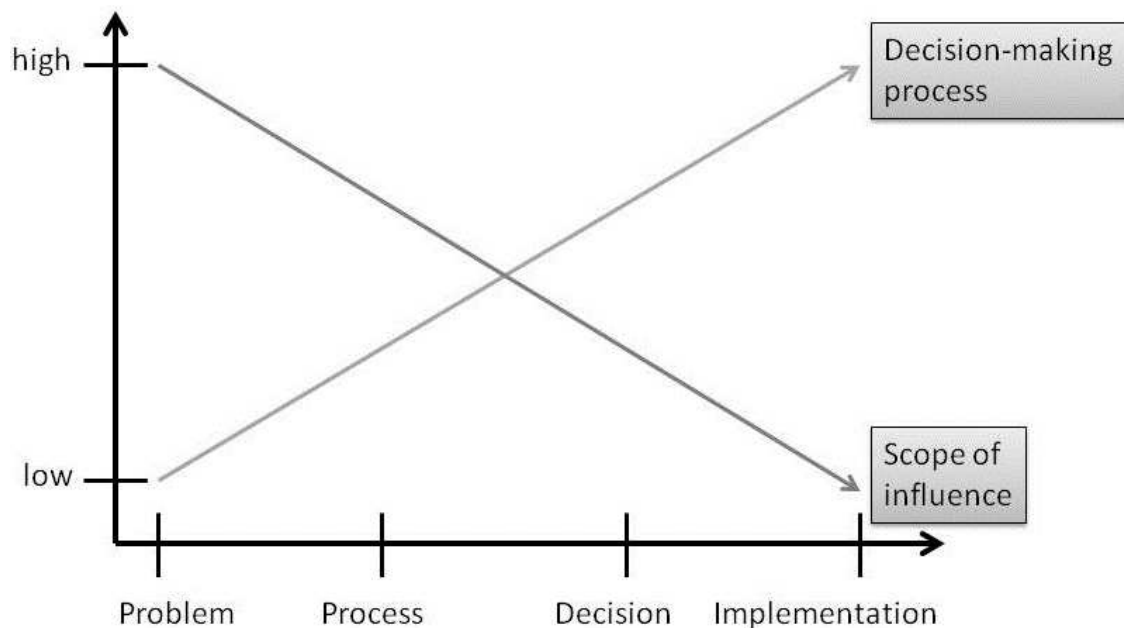
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<sup>12</sup> Statistics for the Transparency Register. [online] Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/consultation/statistics.do?locale=en&action=prepareView> [Accessed on 28 August 2012].

interests. In addition, LAs cannot rely on the influencing of European decisions on the national level, as the decisions are made in Brussels and have to be influenced there (Leitermann, 2006). Münch (2006) makes a distinction between direct and strategic impacts of the impacts from the European level on the local level: direct influences are those where European law has to be implemented on the European level and strategic influences are those where adoptions have to be made in compliance to standards of the European structural policy.

Six main causes of why LAs present their interests on the European level can be identified<sup>13</sup>:

1. *Influencing of EU policy* – Huysseune and Jans (2008) state that German regions opened representations in Brussels as European rules had a massive impact on their domestic powers. Regional and LAs recognized that they had to influence those rules where they originate and as soon as possible.



**Figure 1: The planning paradox**

Source: author's own on the basis of Reinert (2003).

This can be explained with the help of the planning paradox above. At the beginning of a decision-making process the possibility to influence it is very high

<sup>13</sup> Some of the literature focuses on the regional level. It is assumed here that the reasons of actors of the local and the regional are quite similar in relation to their interest representation to the EU.

which changes during progress. Related to the decision-making process of the EU this means that the LAs have to get involved into this process as early on as possible which correlates with points 3 and 4.

2. *Acquisition of funding* – A prime motive for the lobbying in Brussels was and still is the possibility to get access to the EU-funding sources (especially the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Funds). The structural funds were the initial point and are nowadays complemented by funding programs in other policy areas (Huysseune and Jans, 2008). A typical reason is to increase the amount of funding (Dühr, Colomb and Nadin, 2010).

3. *Information management* – The basis of all action is to be informed. It is crucial for LAs to know what is on the agenda of the EU institutions, especially the Commission and the Parliament, and to know who may be able to influence it. Only when a LA knows what is going on, an opinion can be formed and a specific approach can be worked out. A decision has to be made whether to participate in a process or to not depend on the interests of the LA (Huysseune and Jans, 2008; Leitermann, 2006).

4. *Socializing/networking* – Hooghe and Marks (1996) explain the presence of LAs in Brussels with their will to network with other regional/local actors and with EU political actors. Leitermann (2006) adds that a fundamental experience in political work is that a position becomes more influential the broader the base is. The presentation of single positions is much more difficult.

5. *Exchange of experiences* – This point correlates massively with point 4. Through the engagement in a network or the presence in Brussels LAs can become acquainted with other LAs that face the same problems or have already solved them. This can lead to a common interest representation and/or the exchange of know-how and examples of best practice (Huysseune and Jans, 2008).

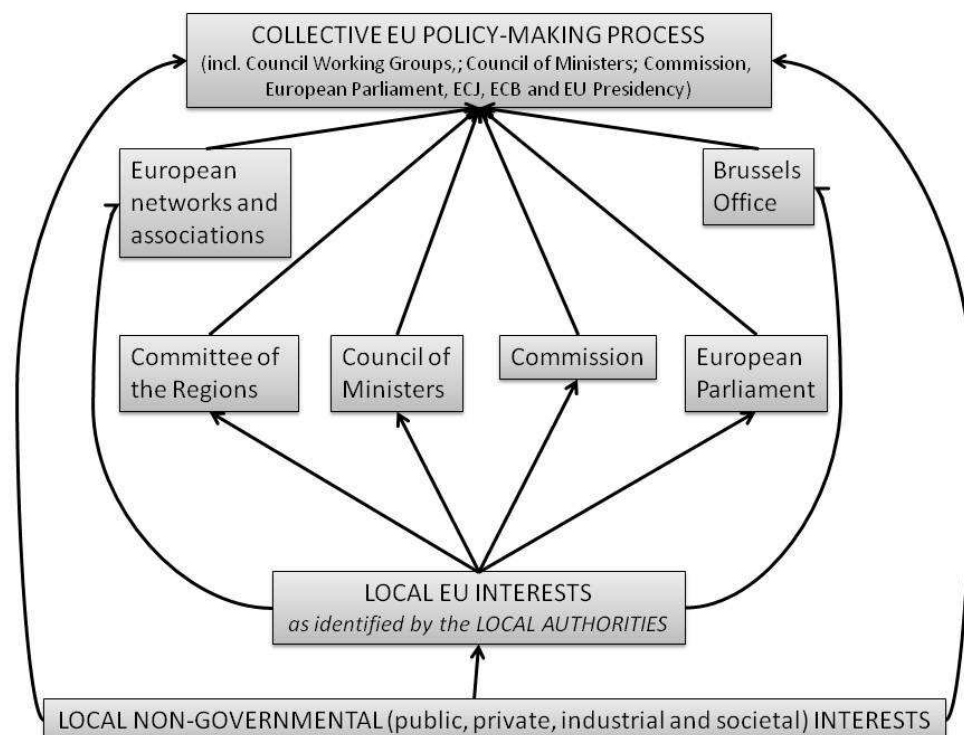
6. *Increase of awareness level* – A side effect of an active interest representation in Brussels is that the lobbying city or region becomes more famous and that can be indeed beneficial. Having a good reputation can push a

city or a region forward for example in terms of the settlement of economic actors and highly trained employees. A broader marketing and a branding strategy can be developed (Huysseune and Jans, 2008).

On the basis of the reasons for an active interest representation of LAs the strategies available to LAs have been worked out and will be presented below.

## 2.4 Strategies for interest representation

As explained earlier the LAs try to influence policy outcomes by uploading their ideas on the European level. In the previous section the reasons and their benefits were introduced. LAs try to be more than just the implementer of European policy outcomes, they want to shape them according to their concerns. Within the literature on channels<sup>14</sup> of interest representation, six strategies can be differentiated (e.g., Tatham, 2008; Hooghe and Marks, 1996; Niederhafner, 2008).



**Figure 2: Direct local EU interest representation**

Source: author's own on the basis of Tatham (2008).

<sup>14</sup> Also described as routes or access points (see Tatham, 2008).

Figure 2 shows the available ways for the uploading of local ideas. In the core of the figure are the EU-institutions, namely the Committee of the Regions, the Council of Ministers, the Commission and the European Parliament. These are supplemented by transnational networks and associations and so called Brussels Offices. Each way has its strengths and weaknesses which will be analyzed below.

1. *Committee of the Regions (CoR)* – The CoR has been established in 1994 and it sees itself as “*the regions’ and local authorities’ voice in the European project*” (CoR, 201-). The CoR has been criticized a lot and has a largely symbolic function (Hooghe and Marks, 1996) as well as its influence is diffuse and weak (Tatham, 2008). In addition, Niederhafner (2008) lists four further points of criticism: the insufficient competencies of the CoR<sup>15</sup>, the late involvement of the CoR in the policy-making process and the length of the decision-finding within the CoR<sup>16</sup>, the underrepresentation of cities in the CoR<sup>17</sup> and at least the general form of decisions<sup>18</sup>. Even in the 1990s the expectations regarding the CoR were restrained as the committee’s influence was and still is limited because of its solely consultative powers (Hooghe and Marks, 1996). But on the other side the CoR has some (perhaps restricted) possibilities to influence the decision-making of the other institutions: first, the CoR is consulted on most public policy domains and can make proactive statements. Moreover, Hooghe and Marks (1996) mention that the members of the CoR speak for local and regional governments and that it is hard for European decision-makers to ignore that. Additionally, since the Treaty of Lisbon entered into force in 2009, the CoR has gained the right to watch over the subsidiarity principle and can bring an action before the EU Court of Justice (CoR, 2012).

2. *Council of the European Union (CEU)* – The CEU, also referred to as the Council of Minister (CoM), is the legislative body of the EU next to the European Parliament. In the CEU the Ministers from the member state are attending as

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<sup>15</sup> For example the missing veto power.

<sup>16</sup> Statements of the CoR only after the completion of drafts by the EC.

<sup>17</sup> As the focus is much more on the regional than on the local level, as the true sense of the word explains.

<sup>18</sup> The decisions of the CoR remain rather general as they include the opinions of representatives from 27 differing countries.

well as the responsible Commissioners. Actually there are ten configurations according to the discussed subject where the relevant minister of each member state participates (CEU, 2012). Since the Maastricht Treaty regional representatives can be included in the delegations of the member states. There has been a broad debate in the literature if the presence of regional ministers is beneficial. The following quote shows that the influence of regional ministers is indeed difficult to measure:

*“I think it is very much a psychological impact that he [the regional minister, author’s note] has but, at the end of the day, it is a real impact.”* (A Directorate-General Director as cited in Tatham, 2008, p.501)

But even when the level of influence is unknown Hooghe and Marks (1996) and Tatham (2008) state that the German federal states have a good access to the CEU as they are institutionally strong regions.

3. *European Commission (EC)* – The EC is known as the ‘driving force of integration’ and as the ‘Guardian of the Treaties’. It occupies a central supranational position and has executive powers. Critics title the EC as the ‘strangest administration’ or as the ‘most ingenious foundation’ as there is an ongoing debate about the legitimacy and capacity to act of the EC. There is one Commissioner per member state and actually there are 33 departments named Directorates-General (DG). The EC has the monopoly of initiative in most policy fields and its tasks are the preparation, the passage, the implementation and the control of compulsory decisions (Wessels, 2008; Tatham, 2008). Furthermore, the EC should, according to the EU’s treaties, consult widely and publish consultation documents (Tatham, 2008). Wessels (2008) complements that the Commissioners not only receive significant suggestions from the CEU and the EP but also from interest groups, lobbyists and representatives of the civil society. Cohesion and regional policy affected and still affects the regional and local level and therefore actors of both levels began to revise their relation to the national government. Regional and local interests can be different to those of the national government. As the EC pursues an ‘open door policy’ it is open to regional interests as well, which is sometimes referred to as a *“strategy to weaken member states and empower regions”* (Tatham, 2008, p.502;



Hooghe and Marks, 1996). The heterogeneity of a member state in relation to their regional setups is very important: there are varying positions which is why Tatham (2008, p.503) states:

*“Central government will tolerate and might even encourage its regions to liaise with the Commission on policies of importance to the region but irrelevant to the member state as a whole.”*

Regional actors can give the Commission important data and expertise which can be influential in the early process of policy formulation but later on, during the negotiations, the influence of regional actors shrinks (Tatham, 2008). But it has to be kept in mind that, according to Art. 213 (2) of the Treaty establishing the European Union, *“the Members of the Commission shall, in the general interest of the Community, be completely independent in the performance of their duties.”*<sup>19</sup>

4. *European Parliament (EP)* – The EP has three main ways to influence the EU system: the legislative process, the budgetary process and the control and supervision of the executive (Nugent, 2010). The Members of the EP (MEPs) are directly elected by the EU citizens. At the moment there are 754 seats in the Parliament, seven political parties are represented and 99 MEPs are German (EP, 2012; Wessels, 2008). The EP can be seen as an effective channel for the promotion of regional and local interests at the European level as the MEPs come from the regions. There are two reasons why the EP can be identified as influential: on the one hand the MEPs can contact commissioners and their cabinets and thus impinge on them, and furthermore the EP has co-decision powers with the Council in many policy fields. On the other hand the MEPs have a lot of soft power and the EP benefits from the aura of direct election, as it is renowned as the ‘voice of the people’ (Tatham, 2008).

*“MEPs who are sensitive to regional concerns can be a very effective way for regions to promote their particular interests, bypass their member-state’s*

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<sup>19</sup> European Union, 2002. Consolidated version of the Treaty establishing the European Union. [pdf] Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:12002E213:EN:HTML> [Accessed 20 August 2012].

*tutelage, gain direct access to the Commission's higher hierarchy and directly influence EU legislation.*" (Tatham, 2008, p.506)

But it remains questionable how successful one out of 754 MEPs can lobby for the particular interests of a region.

5. *European networks and associations* – There are a lot of European networks and associations that are interesting for the local level. Among these are the Assembly of European regions, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), The Network of European Metropolitan Regions and Areas, Eurocities and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe to name just a few examples<sup>20</sup>. Most of them promote specific regional and local interests and Hooghe and Marks (1996) mention a few examples like a local network for rural areas, a network for the conversion of coalmining areas, for textile areas, shipbuilding etc. Usually networks are established for regions with similar territorial features or policy problems. There are also networks that are run by the Commission that supports the transfer of know-how between developed and disadvantaged regions and act like self-help exchange programs (ibid.). The influence of those networks and associations is questionable, but:

*"The great strength of these associations, or at least the bigger ones, is that they can have access to Commissioners and often manage to make them commit to certain policy points."* (Tatham, 2008, p.508)

Through the contact to the Commissioners they can influence the policy process from the top and the Commission encourages the networks and associations to support the Commission during consultations (ibid.). According to Hooghe and Marks (1996) the fact that the network or association is narrowly based is a premise for those exchanges. Furthermore, the effectiveness of a network or an association depends on the resources, the strategy pursued and the activity of its members. All aspects considered it can be certified that the interests of a LA gain weight in a network and that they have a better and wider voice taken together. Therefore it is not astonishing that many regions and LAs

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<sup>20</sup> This work concentrates on CEMR and Eurocities as they are very relevant for the representation of local interests and many local authorities in the area under investigation are members in one of them or even in both.

are members of several networks and associations. In addition, it is a possibility for them to bypass their central government and influence key institutional players on their own (Tatham, 2008).

6. *Brussels Office (BO)* – Many subnational governments have established independent offices in Brussels. All 16 German federal states did so. The first ones were those of Hamburg and Saarland in 1985. The German federal state representations are the equivalent to an embassy (Hooghe and Marks, 1996; Tatham, 2008). But also the Bavarian, the Baden-Wuerttemberg and the Saxon LAs have an office in Brussels (Schächtelin, 2009). But there is a competition between those BOs as explained in this quote:

*“if (sic!) you have a regional government.... For example, Baden-Württemberg they are clearly in the Premier League, they have more resources and more competences and they have 40 people in their office.... So clearly there is a mismatch there. We are playing the same game. It is rather like Chelsea playing, I don't know, Hull City, or even lower than that. So the game is the same, it is football, but they have got more resources.”* (Head of an English region BO as cited in Tatham, 2008, p.507)

The resourcefulness of a BO has a direct impact on the influence of a BO in the shaping of public policy (regional, social cohesion, agriculture, environment, transport, industrial and energy policy are most likely). BOs mainly try to influence the Commission and the Commission sees it as a resource and diplomatic status dimension (Tatham, 2008; Huysseune and Jans, 2008). German federal state offices belong to a first league of strong and richly endowed EU regions (Tatham, 2008).

Huysseune and Jans (2008) characterize BOs in detail: their task is to search for funding opportunities, to find out possibilities to lobby for regional interests and to expand or preserve regional powers in the home country. Additionally, BOs are *“most active in lobbying for the extension of the influence of regional authorities in Brussels”* (p.5) and act as an information channel. They can get access to unofficial information and have a good contact with EU officials and other policy makers. They pass on their information to the local and regional

authorities via their websites, newsletters etc. and additionally they can assist them on EU projects and programs (ibid.).

### 3 Research design

In the previous chapter many connections between the concept of MLG and lobbying/interest representation could be identified. Furthermore, the reasons why interest representation is useful were mentioned. In this chapter the research design of this thesis will be introduced. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009, p.136) define research design as *“turning your research question into a research project”*. Due to this the following sections will focus on the used research strategy and methods as well as the data collection and the data analysis. Afterwards, the chapters 4-7 will analyze the strategies that are used by the LAs in the RRMA, how they are evaluated and if there is any cooperation.

Generally speaking the aim of the thesis is to find out what is happening, to get new insights and to ask questions. Therefore it can be classified as an exploratory study which contains the search of the literature and the interviewing of experts in the subject (ibid.). Furthermore, it is a fixed research design, as it is theory driven (deductive). There is already a detailed theoretical framework which can be used for the planned research.

The objectives derived from the research questions mainly need the know-how of experts that work for LAs, networks, associations, ministries or other public bodies. In this way one gets the data as well as the experiences, assessments and expectations from the initiators of interest representation (LAs) and the real lobbyists (e.g. European networks and public bodies). Of course this will be underpinned by the evaluation of scientific papers, information on the websites of the interviewees etc. The objective of the thesis is according to the main research question to find out which strategies are used by the LAs in the RRMA to present their interests to the EU.

For a deeper understanding the research strategy will now be explained in more detail.

### 3.1 Research strategy

As mentioned earlier there is no need for an inductive approach (e.g. by using grounded theory), as the concept of MLG already covers the intended research very well. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009, p.147) support this assumption by saying that the “*case study strategy can be a very worthwhile way of exploring theory*”. In addition, the study of an empirical investigation can get a deeper understanding through a case study. In this instance the case study strategy is useful, as it can answer why, what and how questions, which are necessary for the fulfillment of the research objective. The research tries to identify if there is an active interest representation in the RRMA. If this is the case, which strategies are used that focus on the region as one unit on the one hand, on the 91 LAs on the other hand. The concentration on multiple cases allows the comparison of the different cases occurring and thus the findings can be generalized and used for the region as a whole (ibid.).

The research strategy ‘case study’ bases in this case on several research methods which will be introduced now.

### 3.2 Research methods

According to the research questions multiple methods are used:

Question	Method
<b>0. Strategies of interest representation</b>	Evaluation of questions 1-3
<b>1. Reasons for lobbying</b>	Literature review plus interviews/questionnaire
<b>2. Strategies used to lobby</b>	Interviews/questionnaire
<b>3. Expectations and experiences – Evaluation of strategies</b>	Interviews/questionnaire

Table 1: The used methods

Source: author's own

As mentioned above the research seeks to explore the strategies that are used by the LAs in the RRMA. This is neither measurable, nor written down anywhere. So especially for sub-question one a literature review is possible and partly also for the sub-questions two and three but not very in-depth. As the

approach is exploratory, the aim is to get new insights. Therefore the methodological setup bases mainly on interviews in order to find out opinions, knowledge, thoughts and attitudes (Hug and Poscheschnik, 2010). However it is obvious that the theoretical framework and the needed background will be given through a detailed analysis of the latest research.

In the following the setup of the interview and the online questionnaire will be presented in more detail.

The main method consists of surveys in different modes. As explained above, the required data is taken from the expert interviews. All interviewees can be considered as experts, as they have special knowledge of the topic of the research. Experts are a medium through which the researcher can get interesting insights of a topic. Interviews are a successful method to collect qualitative data (Hug and Poscheschnik, 2010).

In the context of this work semi-structured interviews have been conducted as well as the publication of an online questionnaire including nearly the same questions. The interview in general was preferable as the main method, as the answers were directly controllable and, if needed, an intervention was possible, meaning that additional questions could be asked when it was necessary. Generally the questions of the semi-structured interview base on the knowledge from scientific literature and the open questions seek to retrieve the knowledge of the experts (ibid.). All interviewees receive the same questions in the same phrasing and order what leads to a standardization enabling a certain systematization and goal-directedness. This reflects the difficult measurability of qualitative data but makes it easier to interpret the subjective factors that are in the foreground (Konrad, 2010).

The interviews contain evaluation questions, questions of attitude and questions of behaviour. It is a funnel-type interview that starts with some general aspects and then moves on to specific aspects. Finally the interview gives the interviewee the possibility to give some feedback (ibid.). For further information please see an example of an interview guide in the appendix.

The online questionnaires supplement the interviews. They are prepared according to the interviews. They are used to involve more experts as there is less time exposure and it is cheaper and as the distance does not matter. In the upcoming section the details on how the data has been collected will be explained.

### **3.3 Approach to data collection**

In the RRMA are altogether 91 LAs, interviewing all of them would go beyond the constraints of this thesis. Therefore choices had to be made and are presented below. This section is subdivided into three parts, one for each kind of data collection. All three parts focus on the choice of the interviewees and introduce them briefly.

#### **3.3.1 Research interviews with the representatives of local authorities**

The first criterion was that the LA has more than 250 000 inhabitants because it is the preferred size of a municipality to become a member of the network Eurocities<sup>21</sup> (Eurocities, 2011). Furthermore, it was essential that the LA has a responsible contact person for European affairs, titled in German as 'Europabeauftragter' or 'Ansprechpartner/Referent für Europaangelegenheiten', who could answer the questions (see questions in appendix 2). Consequently due to these two important decisions the following ten LAs have been contacted.

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<sup>21</sup> Because it has been chosen that the focus in this thesis is on the European network Eurocities and on the European association CEMR (see chapter 2.4).



Local authority	Population (2010) <sup>22</sup>
Bochum	373 976
Bonn	327 913
Dortmund	580 956
Duisburg	488 005
Düsseldorf	592 393
Essen	573 468
Gelsenkirchen	278 695
Köln	1 017 155
Mönchengladbach	257 208
Wuppertal	349 470

**Table 2: Overview of the interviewed LAs**

Source: author's own

The first contact was made by phone. For one thing in some cases it was impossible to identify the responsible contact on the website of the LA, additionally this approach was very time-saving and there was not the risk of getting no answer. Eight contacts were immediately willing to give an interview, the responsible person for European affairs of the city of Cologne was unfortunately not available but has provided some publications. These papers have been analyzed as far as practicable in accordance to the questions of the interview. Ultimately, the city of Mönchengladbach felt unable to answer the questions and has given a written statement which is taken into consideration in the analysis. This results in a coverage rate of 80% which is satisfactory. The interviews took place between July 23<sup>rd</sup> 2012 and August 15<sup>th</sup> 2012.

### **3.3.2 Questionnaires answered by the representatives of local authorities**

The procedure of the distribution of the online questionnaire was quite similar. 21 further LAs were chosen to be desirable to answer the questionnaire. Ten of them are the remaining independent cities in the RRMA and eleven are the largest cities within their county. This choice has been made as it became clear that the small LAs rarely have the ability to answer the questions adequately. An overview of the 21 LAs can be found in the appendix under point 1. The

<sup>22</sup> IT.NRW, 2012. Population figures. [online] Available at: <http://www.it.nrw.de/statistik/a/daten/amtlichebevoelkerungszahlen/index.html> [Accessed on 14 August 2012].

questions are quite similar to those in the interviews (see appendix 4) and 14 LAs answered them as far as possible. This is a coverage rate of 66% which is also satisfying because the response rate is supposed to be low in an online questionnaire and some of the LAs that did not answer actually wanted to help but were not able to, as their LA has no capacities to deal with European affairs. The online questionnaire was available between 20<sup>th</sup> of August 2012 and 9<sup>th</sup> of September 2012.

### **3.3.3 Research interview with the representatives of federal state authorities and city networks**

The interviews with the representatives of federal state authorities and city networks which were also similar to the others, of course adapted to the different level. Additional questions were asked to find out how those institutions present the interest of LAs and how they advise the LAs to improve their interest representation. The questions can also be found in the appendix under point 3. The following authorities and networks/associations have been interviewed:

<b>Institution</b>
<b>Ministry for Building, Housing, Economy and Transport NRW</b>
<b>NRW Representative Office to the European Union</b>
<b>The Ruhr Regional Association</b>
<b>Representation of the European Commission in Germany</b>
<b>Eurocities</b>
<b>Council of European Municipalities and Regions – German Section</b>
<b>German Association of Towns and Municipalities</b>
<b>German Association of Cities</b>
<b>Metropolitan Region CologneBonn</b>

**Table 3: Overview of the interviewed institutions**

Source: author's own

The first three belong to the federal state NRW, the fourth to the European Union, the following four are European and German networks and associations and the last one is a registered association. All of them have departments, working groups or other units that are contactable for the LAs seeking to

present their interests to the EU. The institutions have been identified through searching for them and have been complemented by the institutions that were mentioned in the first interviews with representatives of LAs. Three institutions answered the questions in written form. It was aimed to interview a representative of the Committee of the Regions, but several requests have failed. So there is a coverage rate of 90% in this section. The interviews have been conducted between July 6<sup>th</sup> 2012 and September 6<sup>th</sup> 2012.

### **3.4 Data analysis**

The interviews and the questionnaire are subdivided into five parts. The first one is quite general and includes some basic questions about the interviewee and the work on European affairs of the LA respectively the establishing of the network/association. The second part focuses on the strategies used for the local interest representation respectively the interest representation through the authority, network or association. Part three links the survey to the concept of MLG and seeks to compare the status of the local level in Germany to those in more centralistic states. The following part, part four, aims to find out the expectation and experiences of the respective interviewee as he is the expert in that field. The last part, part five, relates to the future and asks about possible changes by a deeper integration of Europe. As mentioned earlier the interviewees can make comments at the end of the interview.

After the data was collected the type of analysis had to be chosen. For the collection of qualitative data some approaches exist: as for example the modern hermeneutic one, the critical one, the narrative one, the descriptive one and at least the explorative one (Mayring, 2010; Miles and Huberman, 1994). But most of them have their weaknesses in the analysis of the data as the interpretation is conducted freely (Mayring, 2010). To have a systematic approach while analyzing the collected data the qualitative content analysis has been chosen.

The preparation of the data for the analysis consists of 6 steps:

1. The realization of the interviews.
2. The transcription of the interviews.

3. The subdivision into analytical units.
4. The search for relevant information in the interviews and the extraction of those.
5. The collocation of those new statements in a category system.
6. Interpretation and conclusion (Mayring, 2010; Gläser and Laudel, 2009).

The first two steps have already been presented above and the other four will take place in the chapters six and seven.

## 4 The federal republic of Germany

In order to get a proper overview, the following chapter will briefly present the political system of Germany, beginning with the federal state structure and the specific role of the federal states and complemented with the way of functioning of spatial planning in Germany. The aim of the chapter is to explain the differences between a complex federal state and a centrally organized country. Furthermore, the existence of the federal state in between of the national and the local level should be explained. At least the responsible bodies for spatial planning, namely the decision-maker, will be introduced in accordance to the political system.

### 4.1 Characteristics of Germany

The Federal Republic of Germany was founded in 1949 consisting of eight federal states and three city states<sup>23</sup>. After the reunification of Germany five further federal states were included. As of today there are 16 federal states. The German constitution defines the state as “*a democratic and social federal state*” (Grundgesetz, Art. 20 (1)<sup>24</sup>). Because of this there is a separation of powers. On a horizontal axis the political powers are divided into legislative, executive and judiciary and on a vertical axis the powers are partitioned between the 16 federal states. The federal states have almost all political and administrative powers to decide about the affairs within their territory, whereas the state focuses on affairs of national importance like foreign affairs, defence and national finance (Scholl, Elgendy and Nollert, 2007).

### 4.2 The role of the federal states

Federal states have their own qualities of being a state: each state has its own constitution, an elected parliament and a federal state government. This structure is protected through the German constitution<sup>25</sup>. Furthermore, the

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<sup>23</sup> Berlin, Bremen and Hamburg.

<sup>24</sup> German constitution (Grundgesetz), Art. 20 (1) [online] Available at: <http://www.iuscomp.org/gla/statutes/GG.htm#20> [Accessed 28 August 2012].

<sup>25</sup> “*Amendments to this Basic Law affecting the division of the Federation into Länder, their participation on principle in the legislative process, or the principles laid down in Articles 1 and*

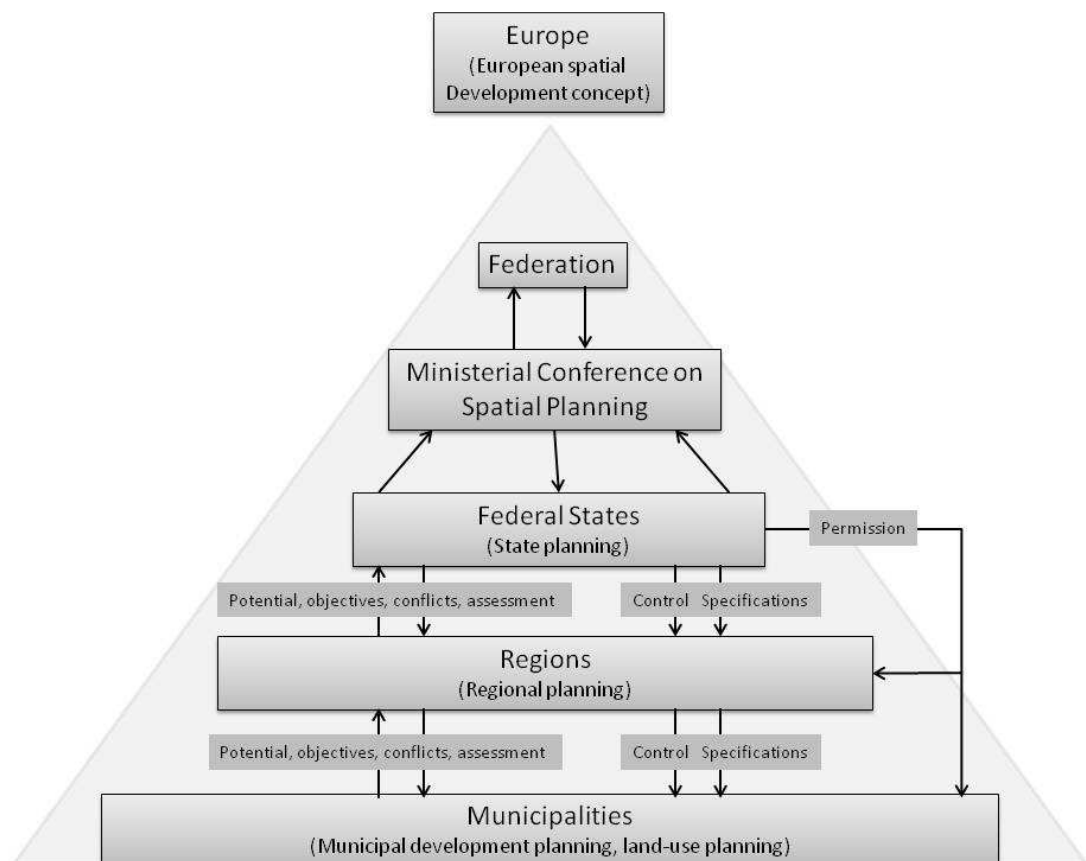
German political system bases on the principle of subsidiarity, such as those of the European Union (Scholl, Elgendy and Nollert, 2007; Detterbeck, Renzsch and Schieren, 2010; Freitag and Vatter, 2008). It can be predicated that the federal states have a similar status as small states within a super-state on the one hand and on the other hand they are the mediator between the local/regional and the national level. The system is easily understandable through the following example of the separation of powers in spatial planning. This is also the reason why it can be assumed that there is much more communication between the local and the federal state level than between the local and the national level.

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*20 shall be inadmissible.*" German constitution (Grundgesetz) Art. 79 (3) [online] Available at: <http://www.iuscomp.org/gla/statutes/GG.htm#79> [Accessed 28 August 2012].

### 4.3 The formal structure of spatial planning in Germany

Spatial planning in Germany is organized similar to the political and administrative federal system. The competences and powers are divided hierarchically between the different levels. The following figure depicts those levels:



**Figure: The German planning system**

Source: author's own on the basis of Scholl, Elgendy and Nollert (2007).

Spatial planning in Germany bases on three principles: the principle of subsidiarity, the municipal planning autonomy and the countervailing influence. Subsidiarity means that the municipalities can act autonomously and are responsible for spatial planning in their territory, but under respect of the guidelines and principles of the higher levels. The municipal planning autonomy is guaranteed by the federal constitution and the principle of countervailing influence says that the planning in one region must fit into the planning of the entire region. In other words the hierarchy of the German planning system is meant: the specifications of the state must be observed by the federal states,

the federal states specify them in their spatial planning law and their state development plans, the regions concretize those plans in their own again and by this prepare the frame in which the autonomous municipalities can act. But the municipalities can make requirements which have to be considered at the higher planning levels.

As already mentioned, the federal level is the highest level which takes the goals of the European policies that effect the spatial development into account. The state has only framework responsibilities and formulates general principles, but cannot enact legally binding plans. The federal states are responsible for the planning in their area and prepare a federal state development plan. The responsible ministers of each federal state participate in the ministerial conference on spatial planning (MKRO) and coordinate the plans of the federal states there. The regional level can be seen as the coordinator between the federal state and the local level. Regional planning happens under the spatial planning law of a federal state and the regional planning associations are often formed by the municipalities<sup>26</sup>. Finally, the municipal level can be defined as the main level of spatial planning in Germany. For their territory the LAs set up preparatory land-use plans and legally-binding land-use plans (Scholl, Elgendy and Nollert, 2007).

The organization of spatial planning is somehow top-down. Here the highest level does not necessarily have the most power. The lowest levels, LAs, are responsible for spatial planning and can work autonomous within the limits given by the higher levels. This leads to the assumption that many decisions taken at the EU level actually do have a direct influence on the local level.

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<sup>26</sup> Such as the Regionalverband Ruhr (RVR), for further detail see chapter 5.



## **5 The investigation area Rhine-Ruhr**

The Rhine-Ruhr metropolitan area has been chosen as a case study, in order to find out how LAs represent their interests to the European Union in a specific area. It is assumed that the background of a region has a massive impact on the method how LAs do this. For a better comprehension this chapter starts with explaining what metropolitan areas are and how they are defined in Germany. Afterwards the region will be presented starting with the federal state NRW and than focusing on the different regions within the RRMA. The chapter ends with a brief discussion of the question whether there is a RRMA and what its future prospects may be.

### **5.1 Metropolitan areas**

To put it simply, a metropolis can be defined as a very large city, in particular the centre of the political, economical and cultural life of a national society. Today there is no German municipality in this position (like Paris for France or London for the United Kingdom). Maybe Berlin was on the way to become the German metropolis until World War II. Metropolises are of international significance and have more than a million inhabitants (Siebel, 2008; Wittke, 2008).

The term “metropolis” goes back to the ancient Greek mother city. For the description of the functional position of larger cities the term is used since the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the English and French language area and since the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the German-speaking area (Blotevogel, 2005).

Furthermore, Blotevogel (2005) mentions four reasons why there is still a concentration of decision-, control- and service functions in the metropolises: here he mentions the indispensable face-to-face communication, the excellent environment of cities equipped with hard and soft infrastructure, the highly differentiated labour markets and finally the attractive living environment for high-skilled, career-minded and possibly culturally interested people.

Metropolitan areas, in a spatial sense, are one or several municipalities including their hinterlands. Two types of metropolitan areas can be distinguished: monocentric and polycentric metropolitan areas. Polycentric ones are a group of more or less similar core cities and their suburban or almost rural areas. The Rhine-Ruhr metropolitan area is an example par excellence for that (Blotevogel, 2005).

Further research (Blotevogel, 2010 and Wittke, 2008) suggests four fields of characteristics that should be fulfilled by a metropolitan area:

1. Decisional and control functions,
2. innovation and competitive functions,
3. gateway functions and
4. Symbol functions.

Therefore it is required that there are (1) offices in the area of national and international businesses, of the government, authorities and of other supranational organizations. Furthermore, it is taken for granted that (2) products, knowledge, attitudes, values and so forth are generated and spread in the area. This should create economical and technical innovations together with social and cultural ones. (3) The gateway functions are compulsory as well to guarantee the access to humans, knowledge and markets via transport (esp. by air and high-speed rail connections), media and trade fairs for example. Finally the area must have a symbolic function in respect to its architecture, image, cultural offerings etc.

## **5.2 Metropolitan areas in Germany**

In Germany the Ministerkonferenz für Raumplanung (MKRO / Conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning) identified in 1995 six 'European Metropolitan Regions' (EMR): Berlin/Brandenburg, Hamburg, Munich, Rhine-Main, Rhine-Ruhr and Stuttgart. In 1997 the potential metropolitan region Halle/Leipzig-Saxony Triangle was added and in a final step four more regions were labeled by the MKRO in 2005, namely Bremen-Oldenburg, Hanover-Brunswick-Göttingen, Nuremberg and Rhine-Neckar (Passlick and Prosek, 2010; Krell,

2008; Blotevogel 2010). So there are actually eleven regions labeled as EMR in Germany (for a better insight see map in appendix under point 5).

The MKRO defines EMRs as: *“(...) spatial and functional locations whose outstanding functions shine in an international scale beyond the national borders. As motors of societal, economical, social and cultural development they should preserve the efficiency and the competitiveness of Germany and Europe and play a part in the acceleration in the European process of integration.”* (BMBau, 1995)

Krell (2008) notes that it cannot be prescribed top-down that a region is or should become a metropolitan region. Furthermore, Passlick and Prosek (2010) mention that the resolution of the MKRO to set up EMRs has no binding effects and also no definitions of the spatial boundary and the organization and cooperation structures.

In the case of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) the EMR was promptly implemented into the Landesentwicklungsplan (LEP / federal state development plan) in May 1995 (Blotevogel, 1998).

### **5.3 The federal state North Rhine-Westphalia**

NRW is the most populous federal state of Germany. In 2011 17.84 million people lived there (IT.NRW, 2012a). The federal state was founded in 1946 by the British occupation force, uniting the Prussian Rhine Province and the Prussian province of Westphalia. One year later the state Lippe joined the new federal state. NRW was formerly known as the armory of Germany because the heavy industry, especially in the Ruhr area, was very important for the reconstruction of the state and way more. The heavy industry and the coal mining were the bases of the federal state. Because of the boom in the economic miracle area many immigrant worker settled in the region. But these prosperous years were followed by a long and maybe still ongoing structural change. At the beginning there was the so called coal crisis, resulting in the closing of almost all coal mines in the Ruhr area, followed by the crisis in the heavy industry that was responsible for the loss of many workplaces (Die Landesregierung NRW, 2012). In 1949 Bonn, located in the southern part of

NRW on the Rhine, became the temporary federal capital of the Federal Republic of Germany and only remained capital until 1999 because of the German division. Since then Berlin<sup>27</sup> has been the federal capital of the reunited Germany and Bonn received the title federal city and still hosts some ministries (Deutscher Bundestag, 2010)

Each German federal state is divided into Regierungsbezirke (administrative



districts). NRW is separated into five of them (see figure 1). The administrative districts are located at the higher planning authority and are the tier between the federal state ministries and the municipal authorities. They fulfill tasks of the federal state government and approve preparatory land-use plans and legally binding land-use plans compiled by the LAs (Scholl, Elgendy

**Figure 3: Administrative districts of NRW**

and Nollert, 2007).

Source: © Euro Geographics Association for the administrative boundaries, n.d. An online version is available at [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/atlas2007/germany/dea\\_en.htm?10](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/atlas2007/germany/dea_en.htm?10) (accessed 23 August 2012)

## 5.4 The Rhine-Ruhr metropolitan area

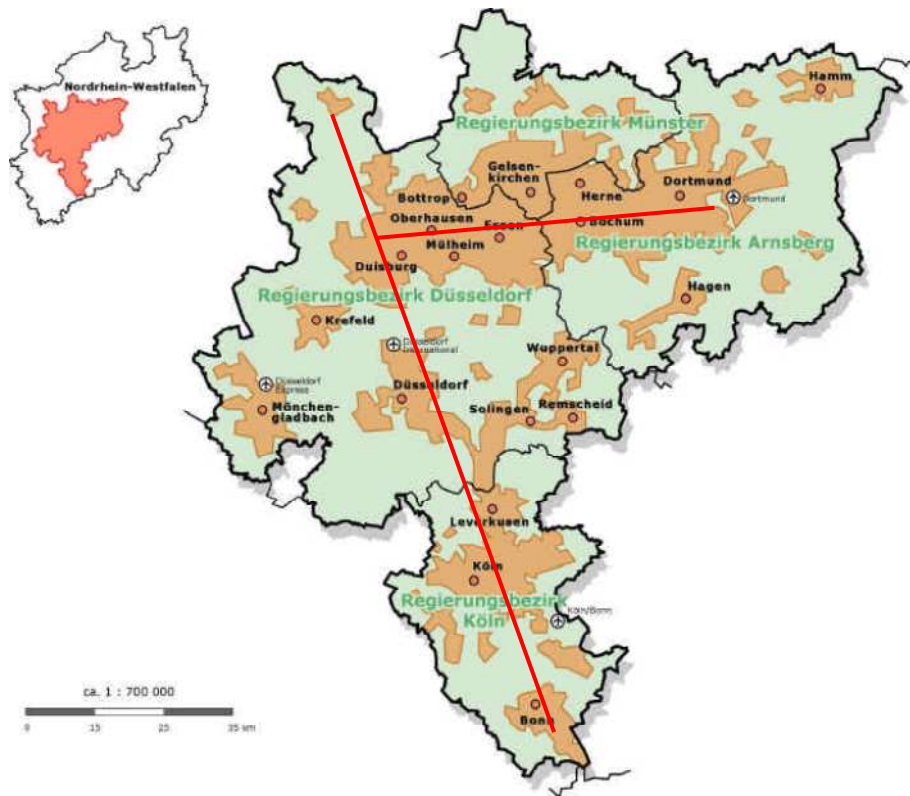
Within these administrative districts lies the Rhine-Ruhr metropolitan area as it is defined by the regional development plan of NRW. The area is named after two rivers that run through the region. The Ruhr is the name giver for the 'Ruhrgebiet' (Ruhr area) and flows from Hagen in the East to Duisburg in the West, where the Ruhr joins the Rhine. Along the Ruhr are several large cities which create the largest German agglomeration area (see figure 4 on page 44). The Rhine enters the region from Bonn in the southern part of the region and runs up further North past Cologne, Düsseldorf and Duisburg to the Netherlands ending into the North Sea. This part is called 'Rheinschiene'. The third historical part within the metropolitan area Rhine-Ruhr

<sup>27</sup> Berlin was the imperial capital of the German Empire, the Weimar Republic and the German Reich between 1871 and 1945.

is the 'Bergische Land'. The cities Wuppertal, Solingen and Remscheid belong to the 'Bergische Land'.

Because of the profound structural change in the region the cities focused in the last decades on the enlargement of the tertiary sector and still do. Today many well-known energy companies have their headquarters there and a large research landscape has been established with lots of research facilities, universities and universities of applied science. Due to this and the excellent global accessibility, the area fulfills many of the requirements of an EMR (Robert, 2008). The area has an international connected motorway network, three international airports in Cologne, Dortmund and Düsseldorf and a highspeed train connection to the largest German airport in Frankfurt on the Main. In addition there is the harbour in Duisburg which is a direct connection to the harbour of Rotterdam (Knapp, Scherhag and Schmitt, 2006).

The Rhine-Ruhr area is quite a unique area because of its polycentric urban configuration. Only the Dutch Randstad is similar. The area lacks a clear leading city, instead there is huge competition between the bigger cities (see table 4 on page 45) (Knapp, Scherhag and Schmitt, 2006). More than eleven million people live in 20 cities and eleven rural districts. Due to the integration of three different regions (Ruhrgebiet, Rheinschiene and Bergische Land) within the metropolitan area, there are no similarities and no common identity as the regions have different historical origins and diverse economic and socioeconomic structures and functions (Strubelt, 2008).



**Figure 4: The Rhine-Ruhr metropolitan area according to the regional development plan of NRW**

Source: Grier, 2003?, p.12

Local authority	Population (31.12.2011)	Landkreise (rural districts)	Population (31.12.2011)
<b>Bochum</b>	373 976	Ennepe-Ruhr-Kreis	329 870
<b>Bonn</b>	327 913	Märkischer Kreis	428 385
<b>Bottrop</b>	116 361	Kreis Mettmann	494 457
<b>Dortmund</b>	580 956	Kreis Recklinghausen	625 523
<b>Düsseldorf</b>	592 393	Rheinisch-Bergischer- Kreis	276 173
<b>Duisburg</b>	488 005	Rhein-Erft-Kreis	465 578
<b>Essen</b>	573 468	Rhein-Kreis-Neuss	443 850
<b>Gelsenkirchen</b>	256 652	Rhein-Sieg-Kreis	600 432
<b>Hagen</b>	187 447	Kreis Unna	409 524
<b>Hamm</b>	182 112	Kreis Viersen	299 842
<b>Herne</b>	164 244	Kreis Wesel	467 274
<b>Köln</b>	1 017 155	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4 840 908</b>
<b>Krefeld</b>	234 396		
<b>Leverkusen</b>	161 195		
<b>Mönchengladbach</b>	257 208		
<b>Mülheim a. d. Ruhr</b>	167 156		
<b>Oberhausen</b>	212 568		
<b>Remscheid</b>	109 596		
<b>Solingen</b>	159 699		
<b>Wuppertal</b>	349 470		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6 511 970</b>		

	Population (31.12.2011)
Rhine-Ruhr metropolitan area	11 352 878

**Table 4: Population figure – 20 local authorities and 11 rural districts and total population Rhine-Ruhr metropolitan area**

Source: compiled by the author on the basis of data from IT.NRW 2012b

Several researchers agree (Blotevogel, 2008; Strubelt, 2008; Aring, 2008; Krell, 2008; Kunzmann, 2008) that the EMR Rhine-Ruhr is a planning construct. The region has neither a corporate focus, nor a joint past. Strubelt (2008) refers to Henry Kissinger who said when talking about Europe that the biggest weakness is the missing common phone number. This also accounts for the EMR Rhine-Ruhr: the missing centre of the region, the missing collective identity and the missing contact point for people from abroad. The two dominating regions (Ruhrgebiet and Rheinschiene) are very heterogeneous even within themselves.

#### **5.4.1 The Ruhr area**

The Ruhr area suffers from its past. Even today a widely known stereotype about the region is the fact that the chimneys never stop smoking and that it is

impossible to see the sky because it is full of grey dust. Furthermore, the region is still recognized as a highly industrial region characterized by a working class community even though there have been almost three decades of structural change. The actual strategy helps to make use of the former industrial sites and rearranges them as industrial heritage (Siebel, 2008). In 2010 the Ruhr area had the chance to present itself as the European Capital of Culture to the world. The Ruhr area has established a cultural landscape that is comparable to those in other EMRs (Klink, 2008). But it has to be mentioned that a lot of cities in the Ruhr area actually have a massive problem with their local budgets. They are in a financially weak situation and some can only work with a budget consolidation plan which is solely under the control of the federal state government (BRD, 2009).

#### **5.4.2 The 'Rheinschiene'**

On the other hand the cities within the 'Rheinschiene' never had problems like that. They have a good reputation, nationally and internationally, and many of the cities are financially strong. In addition the three largest cities (Düsseldorf, Cologne and Bonn) all have their own identity. Düsseldorf is known as the German fashion capital and as the home town of the poet Heinrich Heine and Cologne is famous for the history of the city (including the architecture) which goes back to the Romans and its art trade. Finally Bonn, as the former federal capital, still hosts international institutions like some organisations of the United Nations (UN) (Kunzmann, 2008).

#### **5.4.3 Cooperation in the Rhine-Ruhr metropolitan area**

There is good casue to believe that the cooperation between three different regions respectively 91 LAs is very difficult to establish. A lot of research (Schulze and Terrfrüchte, 2010; Blotevogel, 2010; Krell, 2010; Klink, 2010; Kunzmann, 2010) obtains the result that an extensive cooperation is needed to ensure that the EMR Rhine-Ruhr becomes more than a planning construct. Actually there is no single operational unit and it is very challenging for the LAs to give up their self-governing status for greater regional cooperation (Knapp, Scherhag and Schmitt, 2006). In fact there are two repressive developments at



the moment. On the one hand there is the Regionalverband Ruhr<sup>28</sup> (RVR/Ruhr Regional Association), which is trying to market the Metropole Ruhr and on the other hand there is the foundation of the Region CologneBonn<sup>29</sup> (Klink, 2008). These two form diverse starting points that will not lead to a common representation as one EMR. Knapp, Scherhag and Schmitt (2006) go so far as to state that the government of NRW fears a too powerful “Rhine-Ruhr state” within the federal state and for that reason has neither provided a common initiative, nor issued legal requirements. Kunzmann (2008) sarcastically adds that a common representation of the EMR Rhine-Ruhr in Brussels would bring the representation of NRW in serious argumentation difficulties, as too many political positions are affected and too many official cars and jobs in ministries, regional administrations and city administrations could disappear.

#### **5.4.4 Future prospects**

Terms like ‘hidden metropolis’, ‘sleeping giant’ and ‘unknown giant’ are used to describe the status quo of the EMR Rhine-Ruhr (Knapp, Scherhag and Schmitt, 2006; Blotevogel, 2008). Furthermore, Knapp, Scherhag and Schmitt (2006: 162) advise:

*“Instead of continuing a ‘wait and see’ policy, the central and fundamental task for the future is a complex and difficult one: enhance a broad (not only economic) regional discourse, combine this with the formative power of organizing capacity and regional governance, and begin to formulate the strategic issues concerning the development of a new and distinctive economic cluster.”*

Schulz and Terfrüchte (2010), Blotevogel (2008) and Kunzmann (2008) sum up with similar advice and point out that the external perception and visibility of the EMR Rhine-Ruhr must be improved to raise the level of awareness of the region.

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<sup>28</sup> The RVR is responsible for the regional planning tasks in the Ruhr area since 1920. The RVR is a public body and has undergone a lot of changes on the bindingness of its planning. Since 2009 the RVR has again alone the regional planning competences (Petzinger, Scheytt and Tum, 2007).

<sup>29</sup> The Region CologneBonn is a registered association founded in 1992. Members are local authorities and associates from the economic sector (Region Köln/Bonn e.V., 2008).

## **6 Presentation and interpretation of findings**

This chapter will present the data which has been collected in nineteen interviews with representatives of LAs and other authorities plus European networks/associations. In addition, there is the data which has been collected through fifteen online questionnaires answered by smaller LAs. In the beginning the statements of the LAs will be presented, interview and questionnaire combined, and after that the answers given by other authorities and further interviewed bodies will be explained. The data is presented in the order of the interviews, starting with a brief introduction of the contacts, followed by the used strategies and the memberships in networks. The following part focuses on MLG and the expectation and experiences of the interviewees. Finally, a brief future prospect will present the statements of the interviewees on a possible deeper integration of the EU. If not mentioned otherwise, all information in this chapter bases on the statements that were made in the interviews and in the online questionnaire.

### **6.1 The statements of the interviewed local authorities**

For a better overview there will be a brief introduction of the interviewees of the LAs. Only three out of the 25 LAs have an 'Europabeauftragten' (a responsible person for European affairs) working full time on that subject, namely Cologne, Essen and Hagen. The other 22 interviewed persons declare that they can focus between 5-70% on European affairs whereof the majority is between 5-20%. A correlation between the size of the LA and the consideration of European affairs is visible: the larger the LA the greater the focus on Europe. But there are outliers and altogether the sum of the interviewed LAs is insufficient to make a scientific statement. Furthermore, most of the interviewees studied science of public administrations, other fields of study were geography and social science. One interviewee is a certified teacher, but is qualified for the field of work through eighteen years of experience in European project work. Just one interviewee has studied European administration management. Most of the interviewees belong to the departments of economic promotion or are located in the bureau of the mayor of their LA. Other mentioned departments are marketing and urban development. The city of

Duisburg was the first LA in the RRMA that established an office of European affairs in 1989. Some other founded those offices in the 1990s after the enactment of the Treaty of Maastricht and the remaining ones during the 2000s. Besides the clustering around 1992 no other accumulation can be identified.

Asked about used channels for their interest representation the interviewees mention eighteen channels in total (see table 5).

Channel	Number of mentions (n=25)
German Association of Cities	21
CEMR	18
State chancellery – Dialogue on Europe	16
Member of the European Parliament	11
Administrative districts	6
Eurocities	5
NRW Representative Office to the European Union	5
Representation of the European Commission in Germany	4
Euregios	3
Committee of the Regions	3
Metropolitan Region CologneBonn	2
German Association of Towns and Municipalities	2
European Commission	2
Ministry of Economics	1
NRW-Werkstatt der Europabeauftragten	1
The Ruhr Regional Association	1
NRW Ministry for Federal Affairs, Europe and Media	1
Member of the Parliament of NRW	1

Those channels can be subdivided into four main groups: state authorities, European institutions, associations/networks under private law and politicians that are members of the federal state parliament or the European Parliament. Almost all LAs are member of the ‘kommunale Spitzenverbände’ (the national associations of local authorities), either the German Association of Cities or the German Association of Towns and Municipalities. Through the membership in those associations the LAs can be member of CEMR, what 18 of them are. The most often mentioned federal state authority is the state chancellery where biannual meetings are offered which is called ‘Dialogue on Europe’. As described by an interviewee those meetings are the place where the ideas, interests and worries are presented very early, what is *“very praiseworthy that the federal state government gives*

**Table 5: Channels used by LA to represent their interests**

Source: author’s own

*the LAs such a strong audience*<sup>30</sup> (Bonn). Others criticize it stating that those conventions only offer “*warm words*” (Bochum) and decline those invitations. But most of the interviewees militate for those meetings and participate there as it is the only assembly where almost all ‘Europabeauftragte’ of the LAs in NRW meet. The fourth most mentioned channel is the contact to members of the European Parliament (MEP). Especially those LAs that are the constituency of a MEP ask them for the transfer of their interests. Only some LAs state that they are in contact with the Commission and the Committee of the Regions, whereas five LAs (Bonn, Cologne, Dortmund, Düsseldorf and Hagen) are member of the European network Eurocities. Eurocities was founded in 1986, is open to cities with more than 250 000 inhabitants and its main objectives are to present the interests of cities in the European Union and to promote transnational collaboration between those cities. Contemporary there are 134 members plus 52 partners (de Lange, 2011; Eurocities, 2012). The memberships of the five LAs in the RRMA of Eurocities exist for some time now and all of them are very satisfied with the work of the network. Especially positive considered is the similar size of the member cities. In addition, the members cherish the exchange with other members, the collaboration in working groups and the networking in general. A further explanation is “*because it has been realized that the EU becomes more and more important and this also applies for the interest representation. The exchange with other European actors that are in the same position. A purely German position is less able to change something in contrast to a coordinated European position*” (Düsseldorf). This statement is supported by all other interviewed members and especially the lobbying of the European Commission is emphasized. Several times it is underlined that Eurocities is influential during decision-making processes. Another interesting perception on the subject is that “*your best allies, your best partners are not your neighbors, they are in Yorkshire, they are in Slovenia or they are in Nijmegen because they have common interests. Düsseldorf and Essen are not necessarily our friends*” (Duisburg). The cities of Duisburg and Essen aim for the membership in Eurocities but have no consolidated budgets and as a result are not allowed to make voluntary expenditures. The membership fees of

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<sup>30</sup> The quotations in this chapter are translated by the author.

Eurocities are between 15 820€ and 21 540€ per year (Eurocities, 2005). The second European association that has been scrutinized in more detail is the CEMR, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions. The CEMR was founded in 1951 and today more than 50 national associations of towns, municipalities and regions, representing circa 150 000 local and regional authorities, are members. *“It is the largest organization of local and regional government in Europe”* (CEMR, 2012). The opinions regarding the CEMR are diverse. On the one hand almost all LAs are members as it is free of charge through the membership in the German association of cities. The information about legislation, funding and other topics that are relevant to LAs is positively regarded, which is offered by the monthly members magazine Europa Kommunal, thematic newsletters and case-related information via email. Particularly the hints about calls, new projects and deadlines are welcomed. But on the other hand the broad representation of counties, rural areas and small LAs is criticized as the interests are too different. Especially the larger LAs that are members of Eurocities point this out and by that justify their membership in Eurocities. *“Viewed in this light, we find ourselves more in the statements of Eurocities as they are usually more concentrated than statements of the CEMR”* (Bonn). But also smaller LAs mention that German LAs have other interests than LAs from other countries because of the different governance model in Germany. Highlighted in this domain is always the German LSG. In summary the CEMR is seen by practically all interviewees as a good informant, but not as a strong lobbyist. Furthermore, the German section of the CEMR offers a working group for ‘Europabeauftragte’ where some of the interviewees participate to use the possibility to exchange their experiences and knowledge with other experts, which have the same responsibilities in their LAs.

Many interviewees are aware of the multi-level structure of the EU. One interviewee emphasizes that *“an interest representation to the European Union can only be successful when [the LA, author’s note] focuses on this multi-level structure and is able to act stringently on all levels”* (Cologne). The opinions, if a federal state or a unitary state can influence the European policy processes better, are diverse: some state that the possibilities are similar while others think it is easier for German LAs again referring to the LSG. They assume that

German LAs in this way have a better standing. Contrariwise one interviewee mentions that LAs in unitary states can acquire European funding directly whereas in Germany is the intermediate level of the federal states. Other stated arguments are that the poor cooperation between the German levels is their benefit: *"the federal state and the national state do not cooperate. [...] I could not place a project on that level [on the federal state level, author's note], but maybe I can market it at the national state level"* (Wuppertal). This reflects the concentration of many LAs on the funding aspect as well. Asked about advantages for the LAs in the German federal structure the following keywords were very often used: independence, autonomy and self-confidence. Almost all interviewees mention the LSG, which makes it supposedly easier for the LAs to present their positions to the different higher levels. Also, that they are not bound to instructions of higher state units to a certain extent. This may be the case in a state framework, but one interviewee notes that the consultations of the European Commission are equal for all LAs in the member states regardless of their standing in their homeland. It is pointed out that the short distance between the local and the federal state level is welcome and that the enforcement of local interests is easier to achieve on the federal state level than on the national level. Another advantage is seen in the possibility to communicate with all actors directly. An appropriate statement is that *"by the federal state structure the LAs have more possibilities to independently participate in European legislative processes because of the guarantee of self-government. The Treaty of Lisbon strengthens explicitly the status of LAs as a fourth level in the European multi-level system. This role can be perceived well in a federal state to the national level"* (Hagen). Disadvantages are seen in relation to time and strength of positions. For one thing it takes longer to take a position because of the coordination processes on the different levels, as the federal republic of Germany has the additional level of the federal states and their great powers. For another thing the positions may not be as strong and consistent as they may be in a unitary state. The decisions made at the national level in Germany include the positions of 16 federal states and may reflect the lowest common denominator. Some interviewees assume that the positions of unitary states are more straightforward and can be done faster. Many LAs

estimate the interest representation to three levels as an additional administrative burden and fault their insufficient human and financial resources. They complain that evermore tasks are transferred from the national and federal state level to the LAs without financial compensation.

Questioned to the affected policy areas three items were named very often: 'Kommunale Daseinsvorsorge'<sup>31</sup>, procurement and environmental protection together with nature conservation and climate protection. Furthermore, *"there are always highlights that engage us"* (Bonn). It has been stated several times that the European legislation has impacts on all areas of the local level.

Defined as good practice are networks/associations and the direct inclusion of LAs via consultations and statements. Network activities are assessed well as they pool mutual interests and inform about current processes and lobby for the interests of their members. Another reason for the participation in networks is: *"I don't know which interests the city of Bochum should have on its very own that would be worth presenting to the EU"* (Bochum). On the one hand smaller LAs do not see the point why they should be more open to European developments and on the other hand they see the importance of coordinated actions. But the problem of insufficient cooperation remains: *"there has to be the amalgamation of LAs doing that in cooperation. Mülheim with Essen with Oberhausen and together with Duisburg or Düsseldorf, but Düsseldorf doesn't want Duisburg and so on and so forth"* (Duisburg). This can be attributed, among other things, to the different historical developments within the RRMA.

In the next section the interviewees have been consulted about the work of networks and associations, advantages and disadvantages of those cooperation and could give improvement proposals. In general there are two statements that reflect the difficult relation between LAs and the EU. From their point of view the difficulties are related to the responsible persons: *"LAs have to understand, especially our local politicians, that Europe is not synonymous with receiving cash (...) we have the problem XY, look after incentives (...) is there anything offered by the EU? Good, then Europe is good. Is there nothing offered by the EU than Europe is not good"* (Duisburg). Another interviewee

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<sup>31</sup> The duty of local authorities to provide essential services

highlighted the importance of the mayors. Either their emphasis is the EU and the integration and development of the European idea or not. If it is not what they have nailed on their flag it is difficult for the whole local administration to strengthen their focus on European affairs. As mentioned earlier LAs are satisfied with both networks/associations, Eurocities and the CEMR. Eurocities is seen as a strong lobbyist, the CEMR a little less. But both are used as information channels and in an advisory function. It is also mentioned that the CEMR informs in German, as they have a German section, whereas Eurocities only publishes in English. For some LAs this is problematic as the information has to be translated, which results in further charges. The city of Cologne indicates that their participation in European projects and city networks has the side effect of making a name for the city in the European context. Furthermore, networking is done for these reasons: the acquisition of information, the exchange of knowledge and experience, especially best practice examples, the active interest representation and the influencing of European decisions. Those networks are seen as a good opportunity to raise the local positions to the European level. Again it is pointed out that *“the voice is strengthened. One city alone has no voice, but in association with other stakeholders a corresponding voice emerges”* (Düsseldorf). Disadvantages are mentioned again in relation to the poor financial and personal situation of the LAs in the RRMA. Some networks have high member fees and a participation in working groups would be preferable. *“Against the background of increasing savings and the challenge of local tasks it is rather difficult to keep Europe as an own remit and to work on that topic intensively”* (Bonn). Another point is that the benefit of those networks/associations is not appraisable. Due to this it is apparently necessary to do a lot of persuading in the LAs. Especially small and medium-size LAs answer that they can only focus on other topics, which are more relevant for them than European affairs. In the same breath, they refer to their poor budgetary situation as a reason why they do not participate in many funding programs.

The last questions in the interviews asked about the future positioning of the LAs when a deeper European integration towards a political union might be achieved. The reactions vary widely and range from the opinion that this would



be totally irrelevant for the local level or weaken it, to the support of a deeper European integration. Partly the interviewees state that the European financial union can only survive when it develops to a political union. In retrospective, the more appropriate approach would have been to establish a political union and afterwards a financial union. Furthermore, the handover of sovereignty to the EU would make it more necessary to present the local interests at the European level and has to be protected against the national and federal state level. The current euro crisis is described as deadly for the European idea. But the representatives of the LAs claim for more inclusion of the local level, if it proceeds to a deeper European integration. Not only is the inclusion through consultations wanted but rather the cooperation in European committees and institutions. Especially, more representatives of the local level in the CoR are desired, as it is feared to be only the implementing level without the right to a say.

## **6.2 The statements of the interviewed authorities and networks/associations**

In this section the statements of eight authorities and networks/associations will be presented, whereof two answered the questions in writing. Unfortunately it was not possible to get answers from a representative of the CoR and the representation of the European Commission in Germany just sent back a short statement on the topic (see appendix 2). Representing the federal state authorities the head of the department of urban development at the Ministry for Building, Housing, Economy and Transport NRW as well as the advisor for transport, urban development, housing and building policy at the NRW Representation to the European Union in Brussels have been interviewed. Another four interviews were conducted with representatives of the German Association of Cities, the German Association of Towns and Municipalities, both answered in writing. In addition the deputy secretary-general of the German section of the CEMR and a policy advisor of Eurocities. At least two regional associations have been interviewed: a representative of the Ruhr Regional Association (RVR) and another one of the Metropolitan Region (MR) CologneBonn. Both are leading the departments dealing with European affairs

in their regions. The occupational background of those contacts ranges from the study of urban sociology, law, landscape planning, geography, political science, public administrations to history and French. The previously mentioned has proved successful on regional structural policy for a long time. A noticeable correlation is that almost all authorities and networks/associations started with their work around 1990. Only two are different: the German section of the CEMR was established in 1953, but focused in those decades on municipal partnerships, and the RVR has founded the department of European networks just at the beginning of the year 2012. All interviewed authorities and associations/networks are channels for the interest representation of LAs. Their offer varies between the representation of LAs in Brussels, the support by the acquisition of funding, the provision of general information or special information from the European institutions. Additionally, some of them lobby the EU and are the meeting place for European LAs. As most of them are represented in Brussels they themselves find the required information for their work by the observation of the current processes in the city and the use of contacts on all levels. These contacts vary from formal to informal. Most of them have contacts within the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Committee of the Regions. Some of them stress the importance of personal contacts, fostering those contacts is much easier with an office in Brussels. But it is also mentioned that an exchange between those actors is important what is especially done between the CEMR and the German Associations of Cities and Towns and Municipalities as they belong together under the umbrella of the CEMR. Naturally the ministries of NRW are in close contact with their representation in Brussels. The disclosure of their information and knowledge is done through similar channels: information events, publications like position papers and reports, their websites, newsletters, emails, interactive web-based communication and meetings of working groups. Eurocities has a so called contact officer in every member city that is responsible for the transfer of the information to the relevant department of the municipal administration. The articulation of LA interests happens through formal and more informal practices as well. Regarded as formal can be the preparation of position papers for consultations and the attendance at public hearings. More informal is the

organization of evening receptions or summer parties aiming at bringing together representatives of LAs and European politicians. A more focused way is to hold seminars and workshops where actors from both levels attend. The separation of articulation and representation is impossible as the transitions are fluid. But two statements can be considered as being more representative: events where a LA represents and promotes itself on the one hand and on the other hand the presidents or chairman of those associations/networks, as they present their associations/networks in public and by that their members, the LAs, as well.

The statements in relation to the multi-level system of the EU and the role of German LAs are once more very diverse. For example one interviewee thinks that LAs in unitary states are more influential and explains it like this: *“Sometimes I have the feeling that, I compare it with France, that French LAs almost have better access points through their state institutions. While in our country it is highly split up due to the federalism and everybody goes his own way”* (CEMR – German section). Next to the French LAs the Scandinavian countries are mentioned as having strong LAs which found their ways and means to present their interests. Further skepticism is generated by the additional strong regional level in Germany presented by the federal states. It is mentioned that the federal system is not beneficial for the local level and explained in the following way: *“the federal states take up much space and also has many competences. The powers distributed are not distributed here between two levels but rather between three and because of this the LAs maybe do not have much of a say in Germany”* (Eurocities). Interviewees thinking that German LAs have a strong role refer again to the LSG and the related self-confident appearance on the European level. Furthermore, the three German associations for local authorities which represent the interests of almost all German LAs are believed to have a strong voice. They present the interests of LAs that do not have the possibility to lobby directly or via charged networks in Brussels. Another point is that the LAs can act further away from the national state. They must not bring their positions into agreement with the federal state. But also disadvantages are raised by the federal structure of Germany. For one thing the national state has to coordinate 16 federal states

and by this the interest representation of LAs that are in different federal states becomes difficult, as the federal states can have different legislations and by this the LAs are affected by different challenges of federal state politics. Moreover, it is assumed that LAs in Germany are more affected by European legislation as they are the level where the implementation has to take place and are not supported like LAs in unitary states are believed to be. *“(...) the competitive pressure is much stronger between three levels than between two”* (MR CologneBonn) and there is the fear that the local level could lose out.

As the most important policy areas the competition law, the public procurement law and the environmental law are enumerated again but this time supplemented by cohesion policy. Repeatedly it is mentioned that *“All, endless norms pertain but that is not visible for the citizen or the applier or the institution as it is a European legal regulation but arranged according to German law”* (RVR).

Seen as the mediator between the local and the European level the interviewees have been asked about problems that may arise in the communication between those levels. Again there were statements that the interest representation is accompanied by additional costs and additional needed staff as well as the language barrier. A greater involvement of the local level is intended by the EC and the EP but *“a concrete difficulty is that the federal states and the national state do not necessarily want the involvement of the local level”* (Eurocities). The local levels in the EU member states are very complex and *“of course the European level has to see the overall situation and has to do justice to the LA in Lapland as well as to the LA on a Greek island”* (MR CologneBonn). The common opinion and observation is that the intensity of the interest representation has risen in the last years and more and more regions and LAs open their own Brussels offices, especially following the ToL. But it is also mentioned that the influencing has been easier before the enlargement of the EU. Most interviewees think that the inclusion of the local level will be strengthened in the future. This is so because of the ToL and the recognition of the LSG, as well as the reinforcement of the principle of subsidiarity. *“I think it has been recognized on the local level that a focus on the*

*European legislative organs is a must*” (StäV). Many interviewees state the increasing influence of European legislation on the local level.

When asked about the best approach to represent interests to the EU all interviewees come up with the same procedure of solution: the collection and focusing of positions. LAs should cooperate therefore giving their positions more weight and they could do it based on the division of labor which would smoothen away their difficulties of staff shortage. Although it is important to decide between the representation of typical German and European interests as different networks/associations or authorities might be best for each position.

As advantages of a participation in networks/associations and the active interest representation, it was indicated that the LAs get information about future legislation very early, can contribute to the common positioning and can exchange knowledge and experiences. Furthermore, they can position their LA in Europe and *“when the LA has a smart strategy it can be a financial success”* (Eurocities). In contrast, the success is difficult to measure and it is necessary to participate actively to use those channels adequately.

Almost all interviewees have a positive attitude towards the deeper European integration. On the one hand as the German LAs are used to the division of powers and have high competences in dealing with several higher levels. So it is assumed that they are better suited to the multi-level system than LAs from unitary states. On the other hand it is stated that the members of the networks/associations would welcome a deeper European integration. Some suppose an increased importance of the local level while others are afraid that the democratic deficit would be enlarged and the LAs have problems to participate.

## **7 Discussion of findings**

In this chapter the findings will be discussed in accordance with the research questions. Furthermore, the answers of the representatives of the LAs will be compared to those of the representatives of the authorities and networks/associations. Both sides were interviewed to get different insights. On

the one side to come to the knowledge what the responsible persons for European affairs at the LAs in the RRMA actually do and what they expect by participating in a European network/association. On the other side to find out what the representatives of those networks/associations would advice the LAs on how to participate and use networks/associations to represent their interests to the EU. Meaning that the aim was to figure out what is done currently, what can be done and from the other point of view what has to be done for a successful interest representation at the European level. Again, the starting point was that many LAs in the RRMA are in a financially weak situation so their approaches cannot be the same such as those of financially strong LAs or regions.

### **7.1 Reasons why local authorities in the Rhine-Ruhr metropolitan area lobby the EU**

To build a basis for the research it has been examined why LAs lobby the EU. Previous research has been analyzed and the interviewees have been asked under the assumption that there might be special interests within the RRMA. Six reasons have been identified: the influencing of EU policy, the acquisition of funding, information management, socializing respectively networking, the exchange of experience and the increase of the awareness level. Compared to the answers given in the interviews all six reasons have been approved. The most frequently mentioned reason is the information acquisition. Many LAs have realized that it is an advantage to have an early awareness about new or changed regulations. But it is very diverse how active a LA is and how important the influence of the EU on the local level is assessed. There are still representatives, especially those of smaller LAs, which do not see the linkages between the local and the European level. Furthermore, they do not see any impact of EU regulations on the local level. The second most mentioned reason is the acquisition of funding. The willingness to deal with European processes is much higher when it could be financial beneficial. *“Everybody thinks Europe is great as long as they get funding”* (Duisburg). There is thus a strong suspicion that the acquisition of funding is especially important for poor LAs like those in the RRMA, but it is nearly immeasurable. The only LA that has monitored that is

the city of Cologne. They indicate that they have acquired circa 2.5 million Euros since the year 2000. This refers to the European funding acquired by their office for European affairs and excludes funding acquired by other departments or at other levels. The third reason is to influence the European policy-making processes. The LAs are aware that they are the level where most legislatures have to be implemented. The influence of European legislature is increasing the more the European integration is driven deeper. There are policy areas that are totally in the responsibility of the LAs and they try to prevent that another instance becomes too influential in their territory. Particularly the retention of the strong German LSG and the public procurement law are in their focus. Compared to other European countries the LAs in Germany provide many services and try hard to obtain this and make public procurements in their region, whereas the EU promotes the Single European Market. Socializing and networking can be subsumed with the exchange of experience. It is known that the cooperation between LAs is almost crucial to have a voice on the European level. LAs come together in national and international networks and associations. Both ways are helpful as the conditions in Germany may be difficult to those in other countries. Actors in similar situations have to be found for what networks/associations are good platforms. It is Important to find networks/associations where the interests and the conditions of the members are homogenous. There is hardly any consensus about the question if the federal structure of Germany is an advantage or otherwise for the LAs. The estimates vary between the assumption that it is more comfortable for LAs from unitary states, that the starting point is quite similar for LAs from federal and unitary states and that LAs from a federal state are in advantage. The LSG of German LAs can be seen as a benefit as they already have a strong standing in Germany and are used to defend their rights and by this articulate their interests. But on the other hand this makes it difficult to have one common interest representation of German LAs, as their interests may vary more than those of LAs in unitary states. German LAs have more and maybe stronger levels to communicate with. In the context of this work it can only be assumed whose position is stronger as the federal system of Germany seems to have advantages and disadvantages. The least often mentioned reason is to raise

the awareness level of a LA. This is justified because presenting a single LA in Brussels is expensive and only few LAs in the RRMA would have the money for that, whereas the idea of a common representation of the region remains to make it more popular. All in all, the reasons for an active interest representation found in previous research are applicable to the interest representation of LAs in the RRMA, but the reasons are very different in weight.

## **7.2 Channels used by local authorities to present their interests to the European Union**

There are four main types of channels available for the interest representation of LAs: the European institutions, European networks and associations, the federal state government and own Brussels offices. A distinction can be made between the channels where the LAs try to present their interests by themselves (European institutions and Brussels offices) or where they let someone else present their interests (European networks/associations and federal state government). But of course those channels are interwoven, as the networks and authorities present the local interests to EU institutions as well. The direct contact of LAs to the EU institutions is rather rare. The most frequently mentioned contact is with MEPs, a direct contact to the EC or the CoR is more unusual. A wide echo finds the offer for an exchange about European affairs of the state chancellery NRW what brings together representatives of all LAs in NRW. Neither the RRMA in general nor an individual LA from the region has its own Brussels office. But the German associations of local authorities, the European network Eurocities and the CEMR have offices in the European capital Brussels. Regarding to networks and associations there has to be a difference made between the ones which are free of charge and the ones which are charged for. Almost all LAs are a member of the CEMR as it is free of charge for them. Some LAs that can afford it and fulfill the admission requirements are members of Eurocities. Others mentioned their desire to join Eurocities but are not allowed, although it is questionable whether the profit would not be higher than the member fee. Again, this can hardly be measured and not only the decision-maker of the LAs would have to approve it but the higher instances where the budget is under



consolidation would have to do it also. As the participation in some networks is restricted, poor LAs cannot present their interests in the same way as LAs who are financial strong. Another point is that the networks and associations that are best for an individual LA have to be chosen very carefully. The more the interests are similar the more straightforward are the outcomes. If the participants have the same goals and are affected by the same decisions their positions may be stronger. When the participants are very heterogenic, for example in relation to the size of the LA, their positions may be weak as they had to find a common ground. But, *“the city networks are only as good as their members and I don’t want to hide that when you are member in a city network you have to participate”* (Bonn). This leads to the next problem of many LAs in the RRMA: not many have the manpower to create a job in the field of European affairs that could only deal with the participation in European networks. Basically, the LAs have to be conscious of the different networks and their work. This is the only way that it can be chosen which networks are appropriate for the objectives of the individual LA. Some very active LAs mentioned that they are very satisfied by using several channels at the same time, which means that they have chosen the channels that complement each other and by that the LAs reaches its objectives. At least an appropriate proposal is to *“(...) bring together the work and by that maybe iron out the personnel weakness by distributing and dividing the work (...)”* (StäV). This would be an imaginable approach for the LAs in the RRMA to strengthen their interest representation.

### **7.3 Experiences and expectations of the local authorities**

The interviewed representatives of the LAs in the RRMA see the necessity to present their interests to the EU via networks and associations. They evaluate their financial and personnel ability as too weak to do it just on their own. Furthermore, the participation in those networks/associations brings along several further advantages. They support LAs by the acquisition of funding and bring together their members, who can support mutual learning as well. Almost all reasons why LAs lobby the EU are present in those networks/associations, only the degree with which they influence decision-making processes varies.

Moreover, the raise of the awareness level is easier to achieve by the LA itself or by a common representation of a whole region. But even when a LA is member of a European network/association and does not participate in it their interests are somehow uploaded on the European level. But an LA with poor participation can of course not be as successful as an active LA.

A special feature of the German federal system is mentioned as well. The main communication takes place between the European and the national state level. As there is a strong regional level in Germany the representatives of the local level state that they have to present their interests in a greater amount than LAs in a unitary state have to. In addition, the general consensus is that the local level of unitary states has a better representation in the CoR. Germany has 24 seats in the CoR whereof 21 are taken by the federal states and only three are taken by the German associations of local authorities. But almost all interviewees assess the CoR as an influential channel for the local interest representation as it only has a consulting function. Only one interviewee mentioned that the EC takes the advice of the CoR more and more seriously. But it is an ongoing debate on the European level about how to improve the involvement of the local level. *“In Germany there is nothing like the CoR on the European level. On the European level we are better positioned than on the national level”* (CEMR). This shows the confidence of the LAs in Germany and it can be assumed that the EC has just started to involve the local level more in the decision-making processes and takes their interests more seriously.

#### **7.4 Difficulties and limitations**

The first difficulty was finding the appropriate contact in each LA. Some interviewed LAs do not have a ‘Europabeauftragten’, a responsible person for European affairs, what made it difficult to find someone who was willing to answer the questions. This lead to the different knowledge of European affairs and by this some answers of interviewees are more qualified than others. Some smaller LAs admit that they are not aware of how to deal with European affairs and so they were unable to answer all the questions. As a result especially some smaller LAs did not answer the online questionnaire. Moreover, it was a limitation that the research took place during the summer period as many

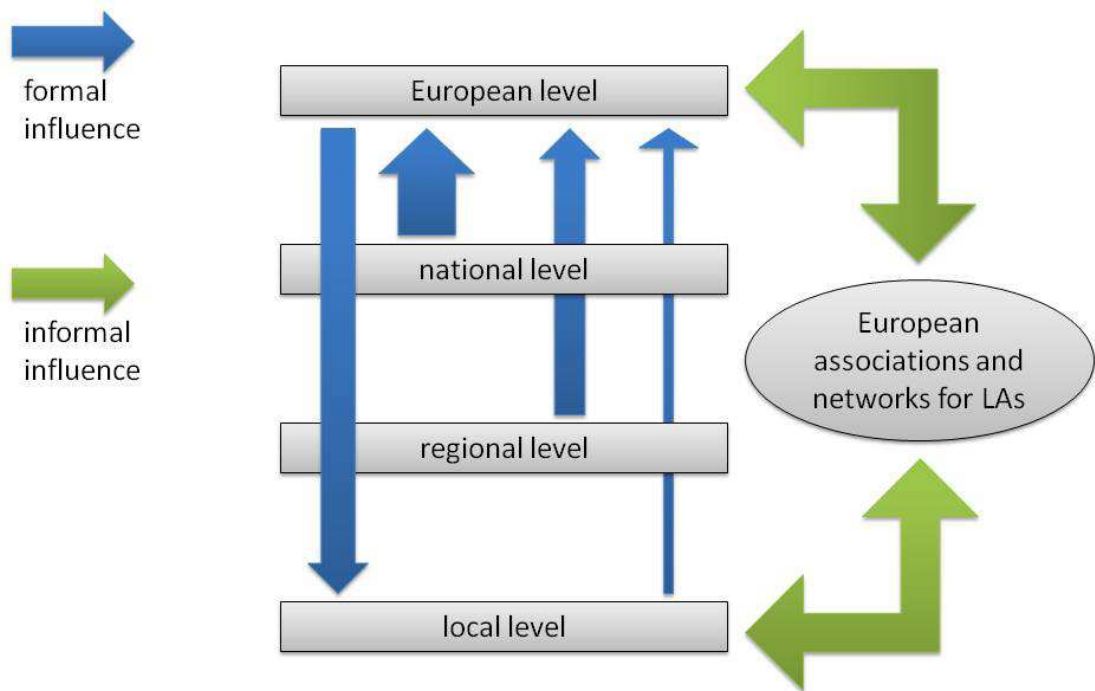
appointments had to be postponed because of holidays. A further limitation was that of all things the contact person of the city of Cologne, the largest LA in the research area, was unwilling to support the research. This also applies for the CoR where no contact could be found which is very regrettable, although contacting the CoR directly in Brussels and contacts in Düsseldorf and a member of the CoR has been tried. One last limitation was that no similar research was found what would have made an interesting comparison possible.

## 8 Conclusion

The decisions of the European Union have a massive impact on the local level, as it is the level where those decisions have to be implemented. It can be assumed, and the realized interviews approved it, that the competences of the EU will probably be strengthened in the future. Many LAs try to influence the European decision-making processes by using the method of lobbying. The main reason for this is the so called openness of the European institutions. Many researchers state that it is much easier to influence the European institutions instead of those of many national states, whereas one has to bear in mind that this communication happens between the highest (supranational) and the lowest (local) level. According to the concept of MLG there are two more levels in between which are possible mediators between the local and the European level. Furthermore, the concept of MLG testifies some changes of the distribution of power. Hooghe and Marks (1996) do not see the state as the strongest player in the European decision-making processes any longer. Of course the European level is higher and more influential but the sub-national level becomes more and more influential as well. Due to these changes the scale of governance has shifted, especially when there are direct linkages between the European and the local/regional level, the nation states are left out.

The aim of this thesis was to find out the strategies that are used by LAs in the RRMA to present their interests to the EU and if there is a common interest representation of all LAs in the region. The focus was on the participation in European networks/associations and the question of how they are used. Furthermore, it has been analyzed how willing the LAs are to actively present their interests or if there are any restrictions. The RRMA is divided into two regions which has already been explained in chapter 5. Both regions are very difficult, which can be restored to historical reasons. The Ruhr area is characterized by its industrial past and a massive ongoing structural change. There have been many hints that there is almost no awareness within both regions that they are part of a larger RRMA. When it comes to the interest representation of the LAs in the RRMA, many channels were mentioned.

However, at the same time a lot of LAs present their interest to a very limited extent, which is, according to many interviewees, due to the shortage of staff and financial power. Figure 5 shows the possible ways of influence between the four levels.



**Figure 5: The opportunities of LAs to influence in the multi-level systems of the EU**

Source: author's own on the basis of Niederhafner (2008).

As already mentioned, the formal influence of the local level on the European level is not very strong. A possible way to strengthen this influence is the participation in European networks and associations that have an informal influence. This channel has been assessed as a successful way for the interest representation of LAs. There are a lot of networks/associations, which have all different emphases and target groups. As explained in chapter 2 the achievement of a network/associations depends on its resources, its strategy and the activity of its members. In addition, Verboven (2011) assumes that the interest representation is driven by cost-benefit calculations. Many LAs in the RRMA do not participate in charged networks/associations, as it is difficult to measure whether or not the benefit would be higher than the costs. Other used

strategies are directly contacting the EU institutions and their members or via federal state authorities.

On this basis some recommendations can be given to the LAs in the RRMA and their regional networks. It has become clear that the retention of two independent regions is recommendable. One reason is simply that the RRMA covers almost the whole federal state of NRW and would only exclude some edge areas. The other reason is that both regions historically developed in a different way and which are not very interested in a cooperation because of their different backgrounds. Many interviewees mentioned the non-existence of the RRMA. Additionally, both regions have their own institutions that present their interests to the EU: the Ruhr Area has the RVR, which is currently constructing a regional network focusing on European affairs. Also the Rheinland has established the Metropolitan Region CologneBonn, which has an emphasis on European affairs. Therefore the expansion of these regional networks seems much more desirable than the forced cooperation. As mentioned above the Ruhr area is facing a structural change and the LAs are facing high unemployment rates and unbalanced budgets, so it can be assumed that they have different interests as those LAs in the Rheinland. The advantage of regional networks, especially in the Ruhr area, would be that they can base on the division of labor, which would reduce the costs for all participating LAs. Furthermore, as it can be assumed that the cities in both regions have similar interests, an exchange of experiences in the regional networks would be helpful. But it is also imaginable that smaller cooperation could be established, for example the coalition between neighboring LAs where again the labor is divided. Thus the costs are reduced but the interest representation is strengthened. Finally it has to be mentioned that the available channels have to be sounded and the appropriate ones have to be chosen.

An interesting future area of research would be the analysis of one specific channel. Due to this it could be examined how and where the influencing takes place in more detail. Additionally, an analysis of the benefits seems to be very interesting, but it can be assumed that it will remain very vague, as it is difficult to measure. Finally, a research when the best time for influencing the European

policy-making process would be great, helping the LAs to improve their interest representation.

From the present point of view maybe it would have been better to ask the questions in the interviews, especially those to the representatives of the LAs, a little bit simpler. The standard of knowledge was very different and by asking easier questions all LAs maybe would have been able to attend. Finally, with the wisdom of hindsight, it would have been interesting to ask more about the RRMA. Most interviewees already mentioned in the preliminary talk that the area is not existent, but more detailed answers would have been worthwhile.

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## Appendix

### 1. The 21 local authorities selected for the online questionnaire

<b>Local authority</b>	<b>Rural district</b>	<b>Population (31.12.2011)</b>
<b>Bottrop</b>	-	116 361
<b>Hagen</b>	-	187 447
<b>Hamm</b>	-	182 112
<b>Herne</b>	-	164 244
<b>Krefeld</b>	-	234 396
<b>Leverkusen</b>	-	161 195
<b>Mülheim a. d. Ruhr</b>	-	167 156
<b>Oberhausen</b>	-	212 568
<b>Remscheid</b>	-	109 596
<b>Solingen</b>	-	159 699
<b>Bergisch-Gladbach</b>	Rheinisch-Bergischer-Kreis	105 836
<b>Hürth</b>	Rhein-Erft-Kreis	58 673
<b>Iserlohn</b>	Märkischer Kreis	94 536
<b>Lünen</b>	Kreis Unna	87 061
<b>Moers</b>	Kreis Wesel	105 102
<b>Neuss</b>	Rhein-Kreis-Neuss	152 010
<b>Ratingen</b>	Kreis Mettmann	90 982
<b>Recklinghausen</b>	Kreis Recklinghausen	117 672
<b>Troisdorf</b>	Rhein-Sieg-Kreis	75 608
<b>Viersen</b>	Kreis Viersen	75 291
<b>Witten</b>	Ennepe-Ruhr-Kreis	97 819

Source: compiled by the author on the basis of data from IT.NRW 2012b

## 2. Interviews with representatives of LAs

### Leitfaden – Experteninterview

Kommune:

Gesprächspartner:

Ort, Datum und Zeit:

---

Vielen Dank, dass Sie sich die Zeit nehmen, um mich bei der Erstellung meiner Masterarbeit zu unterstützen. Der Arbeitstitel meiner Arbeit lautet: „Strategien mit denen Kommunen in der Metropolregion Rhein-Ruhr ihre Interessen gegenüber der Europäischen Union vertreten“.

Zunächst möchte ich Ihnen einige Fragen zum Einstieg stellen.

*1.1 Bitte stellen Sie sich und Ihr Tätigkeitsfeld bei der Stadt XY kurz vor.*

*1.2 Welche Ausbildung bzw. welches Studium haben Sie absolviert?*

(Wenn nicht ausschließlich Europakoordination:)

*1.3 Da Europaangelegenheiten nur einer Ihrer Aufgabenbereiche ist, wie hoch ist der zeitliche Anteil für diesen Bereich?*

*1.4 Welchem Bereich/Amt sind die Europaangelegenheiten bei der Stadt XY angegliedert?*

*1.5 Wissen Sie seit wann es den Aufgabenbereich der Europaangelegenheiten bei der Stadt XY gibt?*

---

Nun möchte ich gerne mit einigen Fragen fortfahren, welche sich auf die verschiedenen Strategien der Interessenvertretung beziehen. Mit Strategien meine ich zugängliche Kanäle, um kommunale Interessen auf der europäischen Ebene zu vertreten. Dies wäre beispielsweise möglich über Regionalvertretungen, die Landes- und Bundesregierung oder aber auch über Städtenetzwerke.

*2.1 Welche Kanäle nutzt die Stadt XY, um ihre Interessen gegenüber der Europäischen Union zu vertreten?*

*2.2 Welche Art der Interessenvertretung findet über welchen Kanal statt?*

*2.3 Seit wann bestehen die Mitgliedschaften bei den genannten Städtenetzwerken?*

(Fragen 2.4 und 2.5 nacheinander zu allen bei 2.1 genannten Netzwerken stellen.)

*2.4 Was waren die Gründe Mitglied bei ... zu werden?*

*2.5 Wie wird ... zur Interessenvertretung genutzt?*

---

Die Fragen im folgenden Block beziehen sich auf das Mehrebenensystem innerhalb der EU und besonders auf die Situation der Kommunen in einem föderalen System.

*3.1 Denken Sie, dass Kommunen in Deutschland im Vergleich zu Kommunen aus zentralistischer ausgerichteten Ländern andere Möglichkeiten haben ihre Meinungen zu europäischen Politikprozessen zu äußern?*

*3.2 Was sind die Vorteile für deutsche Kommunen im europäischen Mehrebenensystem (im Bezug auf die föderale Struktur Deutschlands)?*

*3.3 Gibt es auch Nachteile?*

---

Die nun folgenden Fragen beziehen sich auf Ihre Erfahrungen bei der Repräsentation von kommunalen Interessen auf der europäischen Ebene.

*4.1 Welche Politikbereiche auf der kommunalen Ebene werden durch Entscheidungen der Europäischen Union Ihrer Meinung nach am stärksten beeinflusst?*

*4.2 Um Entscheidungen in diesen Bereichen frühzeitig beeinflussen zu können hat sich bisher welcher Kanal bewährt?*

(Frage 4.3 zu allen bei 2.1 genannten Netzwerken stellen.)

*4.3 Wie beurteilen Sie die Mitgliedschaft bei ...?*

*4.4 Was könnte aus Ihrer Perspektive verbessert werden?*

*4.5 Woraus bestehen für Sie die Vorteile einer Beteiligung an den genannten Netzwerken?*

*4.6 Sehen Sie auch Nachteile?*

---

Der letzte Bereich wären zwei Fragen zu den aktuellen Vorgängen. Die anhaltende Diskussion über die Eurokrise führt vielleicht zu einer tieferen Integration Europas. Beispielsweise wäre eine politische Union denkbar.

*5.1 Wie würden Sie deutsche Kommunen in dieser positioniert sehen?*



*5.2 Was wären die Vor- und Nachteile für die deutschen Kommunen durch diese mögliche tiefere Integration der EU?*

*5.3 Haben Sie Ergänzungen oder Anmerkungen zum Thema?*

Vielen Dank für das Interview!

### **3. Interviews with representatives of federal state authorities and European networks and associations**

#### Leitfaden – Experteninterview

Organisation:

Gesprächspartner:

Ort, Datum und Zeit:

---

Vielen Dank, dass Sie sich die Zeit nehmen, um mich bei der Erstellung meiner Masterarbeit zu unterstützen. Der Arbeitstitel meiner Arbeit lautet: „Strategien mit denen Kommunen in der Metropolregion Rhein-Ruhr ihre Interessen gegenüber der Europäischen Union vertreten“.

Zunächst möchte ich Ihnen einige Fragen zum Einstieg stellen.

*1.1 Bitte stellen Sie sich und Ihr Tätigkeitsfeld bei XY kurz vor.*

*1.2 Welche Ausbildung bzw. welches Studium haben Sie absolviert?*

---

Nun möchte ich gerne mit einigen Fragen fortfahren, welche sich auf die Interessenvertretung von Kommunen durch XY beziehen. Unterteilen möchte ich diesen Bereich in Information, Artikulation und Repräsentation.

*2.1 Wie findet die Kommunikation im Allgemeinen zwischen Kommunen und XY im Bereich der Europaangelegenheiten statt?*

*2.2 Wie findet die Informationsbeschaffung seitens XY statt?*

*2.3 Wie informiert XY die Kommunen über Europaangelegenheiten?*

*2.4 Wie artikuliert XY die Interessen der Kommunen gegenüber der Europäischen Union?*

*2.5 Wie repräsentiert XY die Kommunen gegenüber der Europäischen Union?*

---

Die Fragen im folgenden Block beziehen sich auf das Mehrebenensystem innerhalb der EU und besonders auf die Situation der Kommunen in einem föderalen System.

*3.1 Denken Sie, dass Kommunen in Deutschland im Vergleich zu Kommunen aus zentralistischer ausgerichteten Ländern andere*

*Möglichkeiten haben ihre Meinungen zu europäischen Politikprozessen zu äußern?*

*3.2 Was sind die Vorteile für deutsche Kommunen im europäischen Mehrebenensystem (im Bezug auf die föderale Struktur Deutschlands)?*

*3.3 Gibt es auch Nachteile?*

---

Die nun folgenden Fragen beziehen sich auf Ihre Erfahrungen bei der Repräsentation von kommunalen Interessen auf der europäischen Ebene.

*4.1 Welche Politikbereiche auf der kommunalen Ebene werden durch Entscheidungen der Europäischen Union Ihrer Meinung nach am stärksten beeinflusst?*

*4.2 Welche Schwierigkeiten sehen Sie bei der Kommunikation zwischen der kommunalen und der europäischen Ebene?*

*4.3 Hat sich die Intensität mit der Kommunen ihre Interessen vorbringen in den letzten Jahren verändert?*

*4.4 Wie sehen Sie die Entwicklung in der Zukunft?*

*4.5 Wie können Kommunen Ihrer Meinung nach ihre Interessen am besten gegenüber der Europäischen Union vertreten?*

*4.6 Können Sie zusammenfassend die Vorteile der Interessenvertretung gegenüber der Europäischen Union für die Kommunen benennen?*

*4.7 Sehen Sie auch Nachteile?*

---

Der letzte Bereich wären zwei Fragen zu den aktuellen Vorgängen. Die anhaltende Diskussion über die Eurokrise führt vielleicht zu einer tieferen Integration Europas. Beispielsweise wäre eine politische Union denkbar.

*5.1 Wie würden Sie deutsche Kommunen in dieser positioniert sehen?*

*5.2 Was wären die Vor- und Nachteile für die deutschen Kommunen durch diese mögliche tiefere Integration der EU?*

*5.3 Haben Sie Ergänzungen oder Anmerkungen zum Thema?*

Vielen Dank für das Interview!

## 4. Online questionnaire

Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen



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### Korrekturfahne

Die Korrekturfahne zeigt alle Seiten des Fragebogens als Übersicht im gewählten Layout. Wie im Debug-Modus sind die Kennungen der Fragen eingeblendet.

Bitte beachten Sie...

- bisher werden Fragen innerhalb von PHP-Code-Elementen noch nicht angezeigt,
- die Anzeige der Fragen kann abweichen, weil die Frage-Kennungen eingeblendet werden, und
- Platzhalter und andere dynamische Elemente können prinzipbedingt nicht angezeigt werden.

**Seite 01**

Vielen Dank, dass Sie sich die Zeit nehmen, um an der Onlinebefragung teilzunehmen.

Die Datenerhebung ist eine Grundlage meiner Masterarbeit, welche ich an der Radboud Universität Nijmegen schreibe. Das Thema der Arbeit lautet: "Die Strategien der Kommunen in der Metropolregion Rhein-Ruhr, um ihre Interessen gegenüber der Europäischen Union zu vertreten". Mit Strategien sind die unterschiedlichen zur Verfügung stehenden Kanäle gemeint, welche kommunale Interessen auf die europäische Ebene transportieren.

Die Befragung wird den 31 einwohnerstärksten Kommunen bzw. Kreisen der Metropolregion Rhein-Ruhr zugänglich gemacht.

Die Beantwortung des Fragebogens dauert etwa 10-15 Minuten. Der Fortschritt kann der Anzeige oben entnommen werden.

Bei Fragen oder Anmerkungen erreichen Sie mich per E-Mail unter [gabriele.sobotka@tu-dortmund.de](mailto:gabriele.sobotka@tu-dortmund.de).

**Seite 02**

1. Bei welcher Stadt sind Sie tätig? [GL03]

2. Was ist Ihre Tätigkeit dort? [GL04]

- Europabeauftragte(r)
- Sonstige

3. Wie hoch ist der zeitliche Anteil an Ihrer Gesamtarbeitszeit, den Sie für Europaangelegenheiten aufwenden? [GL05]

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Aufwand in % der Gesamtarbeitszeit

4. Welchem Bereich sind die Europaangelegenheiten bei Ihrer Stadtverwaltung zugeordnet? [GL01]

- Oberbürgermeisterbüro
- Wirtschaftsförderung
- Europabüro
- Keine zentrale Bearbeitung von Europaangelegenheiten
- 

5. Seit wann gibt es den Aufgabenbereich der Europaangelegenheiten bei Ihrer Kommune? [GL06]

Jahr

**Seite 03**

1. Welche öffentlichen Kanäle nutzt Ihre Kommune zur Interessenvertretung gegenüber der Europäischen Union? [KA01]

- Landesregierung in Düsseldorf
- Ständige Vertretung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen in Brüssel
- Regionale Vertretung der Europäischen Kommission in Bonn
- Bezirksregierung
- Europaabgeordnete
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

2. Welche privatrechtlichen Kanäle nutzt Ihre Kommune zur Interessenvertretung gegenüber der Europäischen Union? [KA02]

- Deutscher Städtetag
- Deutscher Städte und Gemeindebund
- Rat der Gemeinden und Regionen Europas (RGRE)
- Eurocities
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

3. Welche Art der Interessenvertretung findet über welchen Kanal statt? [KA03]

Öffentlich:

Privatrechtlich:

4. Was waren die Gründe Mitglied bei den genannten Netzwerken zu werden? [KA04]

- Informationsbeschaffung
- Lobbyarbeit
- Weitere:
- Weitere:
- Weitere:

5. Wie nutzen Sie die Mitgliedschaften bei den genannten Netzwerken? [KA05]

- Beschaffung von Informationsmaterialien
- Teilnahme an Veranstaltungsangeboten
- Einbindung eigener Themen
- Weitere:
- Weitere:
- Weitere:

**Seite 04**

1. Wo haben Kommunen mehr Möglichkeiten ihre Meinungen zu europäischen Politikprozessen zu äußern? [VG01]

- Deutschland
- Zentralistisch ausgerichtete Länder

Kein Unterschied

2. Was sind die Vorteile einer föderalen Struktur, wie sie in Deutschland vorherrscht, für die Kommunen? [VG02]

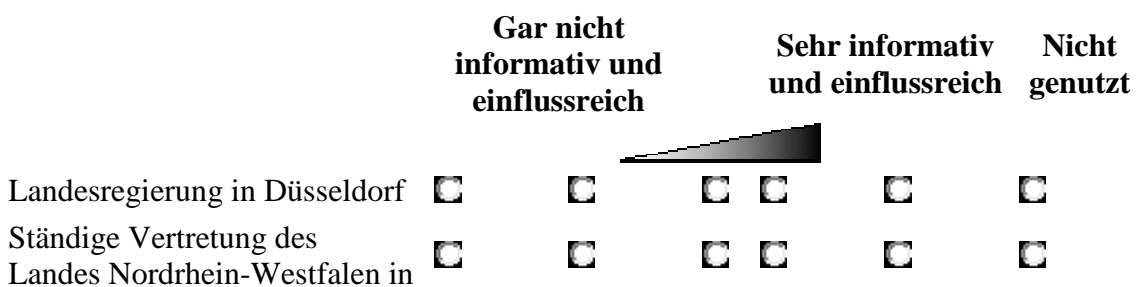
3. Was sind die Nachteile einer föderalen Struktur, wie sie in Deutschland vorherrscht, für die Kommunen? [VG03]

Seite 05

1. Welche Politikbereiche auf der kommunalen Ebene werden durch Entscheidungen der Europäischen Union am stärksten beeinflusst? [BE01]

- Kommunale Daseinsvorsorge
- Klimaschutz
- Umwelt
- Verkehr
- Wirtschaft
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

2. Welche Kanäle haben sich bisher bewährt, um die Interessen Ihrer Stadt/Ihres Kreises gegenüber der Europäischen Union zu vertreten? [BE02]



Brüssel						
Regionale Vertretung der Europäischen Kommission in Bonn	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bezirksregierung	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Europaabgeordnete	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deutscher Städtetag	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deutscher Städte- und Gemeindebund	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rat der Gemeinden und Regionen Europas (RGRE)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eurocities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Wie beurteilen Sie die Arbeit im Bereich der Europaangelegenheiten der hier genannten Kanäle? [BE03]

	Mangelhaft		Befriedigend		Sehr gut		Nicht genutzt
Landesregierung in Düsseldorf	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ständige Vertretung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen in Brüssel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regionale Vertretung der Europäischen Kommission in Bonn	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bezirksregierung	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Europaabgeordnete	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deutscher Städtetag	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deutscher Städte- und Gemeindebund	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rat der Gemeinden und Regionen Europas (RGRE)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eurocities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Was könnte aus Ihrer Perspektive an der kommunalen Interessenvertretung gegenüber der EU verbessert werden? [BE04]



5. Woraus bestehen für Sie die Vorteile einer Beteiligung an den genannten Kooperationen? [BE05]

- Informationsbeschaffung
- Austausch von Best Practise
- Einflussnahme/Lobbying
- Kommunikation mit anderen Kommunen
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

**Seite 06**

1. Falls es durch die Eurokrise zu einer tieferen Integration Europas kommt (beispielsweise einer politischen Union), was denken Sie wie sich deutsche Kommunen in dieser positionieren würden? [EU01]

2. Was wären die Vor- und Nachteile für die deutschen Kommunen durch diese mögliche tiefere Integration Europas? [EU02]

3. Haben Sie Ergänzungen oder Anmerkungen zum Thema? [EN01]

**Letzte Seite**

Danke für Ihre Teilnahme!

Ich möchte mich ganz herzlich für Ihre Mithilfe bedanken.

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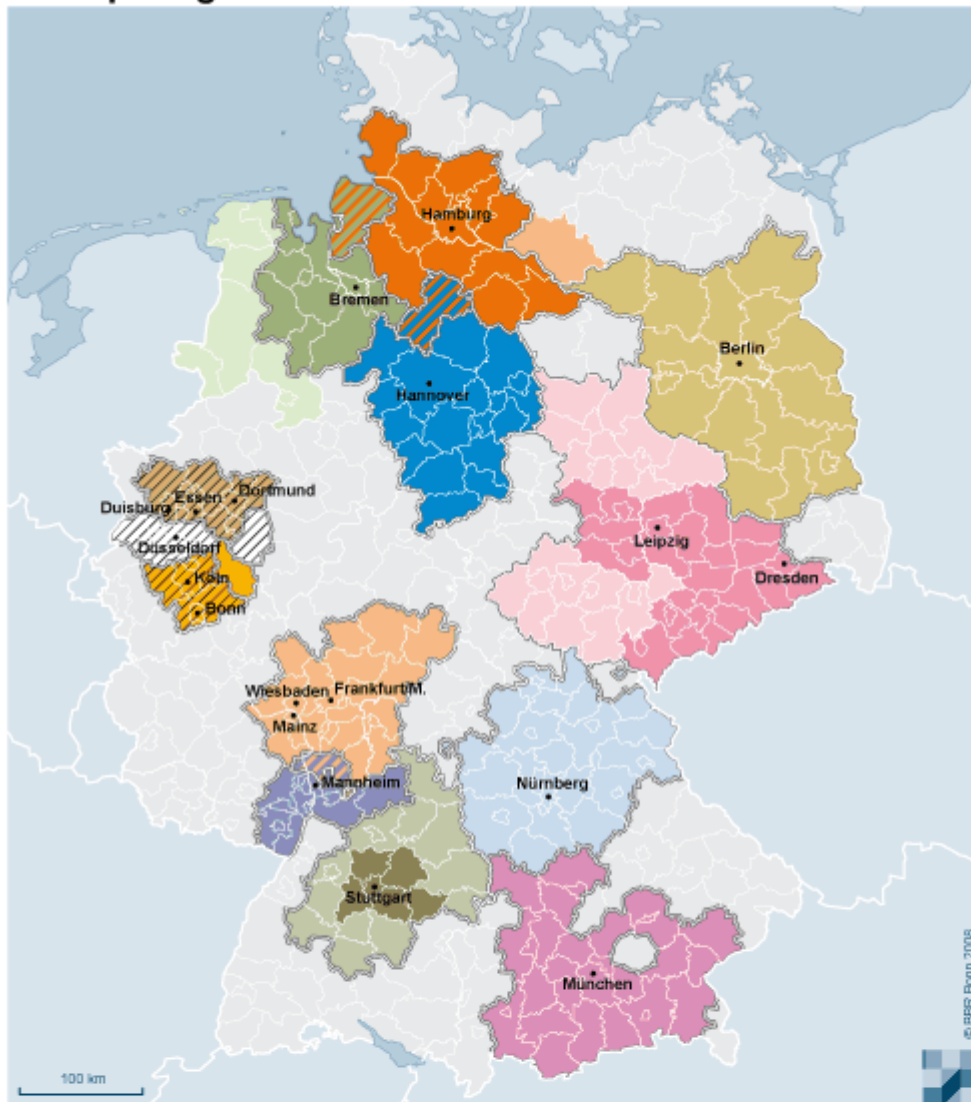
<http://www.ru.nl/masters/programme/planning-human/european-spatial/>

[gabriele.sobotka@tu-dortmund.de](mailto:gabriele.sobotka@tu-dortmund.de)

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## 5. The eleven European metropolitan regions of Germany

### Metropolregionen nach IKM



Europäische Metropolregionen in Deutschland nach IKM, Stand 1.8.2008

Hauptstadtregion Berlin-Brandenburg	Hannover-Braunschweig- Göttingen-Wolfsburg	Rhein-Ruhr dar. Regionalverband Ruhr dar. Region Köln/Bonn
Bremen-Oldenburg im Nordwesten weiterer Verflechtungsraum	Initiative Europäische Metropolregion München (EMM)	Stuttgart dar. Verband Region Stuttgart
Frankfurt/Rhein-Main	Nürnberg	
Halle/Leipzig-Sachsensdreieck dar. Kooperationspartner	Rhein-Neckar	
Hamburg dar. Partnerkreise		

Datenbasis: Angaben des IKM  
Geometrische Grundlage: BKG, Kreise, 31.12.2006

Source: Bundesinstitut für Bau-, Stadt- und Raumforschung, 2008. *Metropolregionen nach IKM*. [online] Available at: [http://www.bbsr.bund.de/nn\\_495188/BBSR/DE/Raumentwicklung/RaumentwicklungDeutschland/LeitbilderKonzepte/Projekte/Metropolregionen/01\\_\\_Metropolregionen\\_\\_Start.html](http://www.bbsr.bund.de/nn_495188/BBSR/DE/Raumentwicklung/RaumentwicklungDeutschland/LeitbilderKonzepte/Projekte/Metropolregionen/01__Metropolregionen__Start.html) [Accessed on 05 August 2012].