6) UK Government Departments and the Creation of the EU's Fifth Framework Programme

Introduction

The formulation of the European Union's Fifth Framework Programme provides government departments throughout Europe with the opportunity to attract much needed research funds into their designated policy areas, both to promote RTD and to inform the policy-making process. This chapter examines the processes behind the formation of UK departmental lobbying strategies in relation to the EU's Framework Programmes, specifically assessing the extent to which a policy community exists on a UK-level and the extent to which any 'Europeanisation' of that network has occurred.

As outlined in Chapter Two, the analysis utilised in this thesis is based on a modified *policy network*s approach, emphasising the key role of institutional structures in the formation of actor relationships. The hypothesis is based on the premise of FP funding shifting departmental 'resource dependencies' to EU FP actors, therein producing a marked 'Europeanisation' of departmental lobbying activities. Equally, *policy network*s theory would indicate the prospect of the increasing interests of European-level institutions and actors, such as the Commission and MEPs, in gaining the opinions and support of government departments to further *their* FP aims. Within the parameters of this specific analysis, the government departments need only increase the scope and / or depth of their existing European-level interactions for limited Europeanisation to occur; no requirement has been placed for the UK *policy community* to significantly erode. As noted in the previous chapter, this hypothesis is challenged by two main features at the UK-level: the strong central position of the UK OST and the impact of the UK government's attribution system (*Europes*) which hold the prospect of limiting the 'pull' effect of the FPs.

This chapter is split into six main sections examining the impact of key factors in the UK government departments' strategies: firstly, the general policy impact of the FPs on UK government departments; secondly, the impact of varying departmental structures on negotiations; thirdly, the impact of the Office of Science and Technology (OST); fourthly, the role of the UK *Europes* attribution mechanism; fifthly, the role of the Research Councils; and finally, the impact of European-level actors.

Policy Impact of the FPs

In the late-1980s and early 1990s there was very little active interest in the FPs by the major government departments. Basically, the larger scale of the in-house research programmes dominated all of the departmental research agendas. As a senior Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (MAFF) official comments:

> "Four years ago there would have been a very strong view within MAFF that while the Framework Programmes were a valuable source of funding in themselves, they were not anything in which MAFF really had much of an interest ... So the feeling was very much 'just let the Framework Programme run on'. Why worry about it to much when we have our own research budget to fund the work we actually want." (MAFF, 1999: Interview)

However, by the mid-to-late-1990s all of the government departments engaged in civil research held a generally positive outlook on the FPs in terms of the funding opportunities provided and in terms of using the FPs as a basis for establishing research in areas that require pan-European co-operation. A departmental official commenting:

> "[MAFF's view] has changed for a number of reasons. Obviously budgetary constraints mean that people are now looking for alternative sources of funds. ... I think the whole attitude to the Framework has changed in the sense that if government funding in this area is reducing - budgets are getting tight - then you want to encourage people to look for funding from whatever other source is available and then obviously the Framework does offer a substantial amount of money." (MAFF, 1999: Interview)

A DoH official commenting:

> "If we can get one of our policy's research priorities funded through Europe we see that as a bonus and clearly there are some things that we would like to see funded

> through Europe because there is a very clear *added value*, things like control of infectious diseases [which don't stop at] national borders." (DoH, 1998: Interview)

In this respect, the DoH, as with the other departments, tries to ensure that it fully participates in the FPs where such a *European Added Value* is already present and has a direct interest in attempting to ensure that such areas are included in the plans for future FPs. (DTI, 1999: Interview; MAFF, 1999: Interview)

However, the FPs have *not* led to a significant movement in any of the government departments' RTD activities. This is largely due to five key factors: *Firstly*, government departments are largely 'specific-policy driven': rather than conducting RTD with an aim to further the general UK research base – as is the case with the Research Councils – their primary goal is to address pre-determined policy issues. In this respect departmental FP participation is largely specific area-attracted, rather than funding-attracted, thus departments face a more limited range of suitable FP Calls for Proposals than, for example, the Research Councils. MAFF has been particularly interested in changing this area of the FPs to gain it greater access to more relevant policy-driven projects, a MAFF official stating:

> "There are some areas within the programme that have been quite successful at producing some good projects that actually can inform policy making. [However,] my impression certainly is that DG-XII believe that what the EU should be funding [is] excellent science ... What they hadn't really taken very seriously was the need of the programme to inform policy making. ... This is something we have been pushing very strongly, it has been a very slow process to try and get this particular aspect." (MAFF, 1999: Interview)

The above point is backed-up by a *second* factor, that, participation in FPs frequently incurs more costs than are provided in the FP funding, for example through requiring matching funds. Given this, there is little for the departments to gain from applying to FP Calls for Proposals that are not considered to be in their direct priority areas – not only would the department be no closer to meeting its policy goals, it would most likely have to divert resources from its existing research to the less relevant FP project.

Thirdly, UK departmental actors have frequently been limited from applying for European funding by their domestic budget structures which do not always tie in well with the Framework application time-scales. One departmental actor stating:

> "Now because the research programmes ... have tended to be on a three year cycle, combined with the length of time the Commission takes [with the FPs, departmental] funding was often settled by the time people were coming to us asking for matching funding – we had not got any available. [This] remains a fundamental problem ... that we have no easy means of tackling." (Unattributable Departmental C, 1999: Interview)

Whilst this lack of budgetary flexibility is clearly a UK factor and as such cannot be blamed in total on the EU level, it remains the case that the departments are not likely to be willing to restructure their whole budgetary systems for this one area.

Fourthly, despite the great attention played to *Europes*-attribution by all UK departmental actors, no RTD budgets have been directly hit by the Treasury's system, each department choosing to absorb the cost within its total baseline budget. Therefore, even accounting for *Europes*, the FPs cannot be seen to have led to a direct reduction in the amount the individual departments spend on their domestic RTD, as detailed in the 'Europes' Mechanism, Page 147.

Finally, despite the significant increase in funding from FP3 to FP4, the amount realistically available to the departments as a whole remains relatively small in comparison to their overall RTD spend. As one MAFF official comments:

> "We will obviously tell everyone what is in the programme in the hope that it might get them to look at things on a European basis, but as yet it has had very, very, little impact on what our research programmes look like." (MAFF, 1999: Interview)

Basically, the FPs have not significantly diverted the overall research focuses of the UK government departments.

Largely due to these five key factors, the FPs still only represent a relatively small proportion of departmental research activities and do not play a dominant

role in day-to-day research issues. However, the *potential impact* of the FPs, when set against the background of increasingly evident areas of European Added Value, the 'double-whammy' of tight domestic research budgets and the potential for increased EU funding, has led to a significantly heightened fear that *Europes*-attribution will be directly applied to RTD budgets.

Therefore, despite the recognition of the FPs limited 'on the ground' RTD impact, there is a high degree of 'turf defending' from the departments. Specifically, there is a clear view within all the departments that whilst they value the FPs they are also vehemently against further expansion. As one senior departmental actor stated:

> "The UK's line has been – and I suspect always will be – that we want to minimise the amount of money that is spent on European research." (DoH, 1998: Interview)

Evidence of such 'turf defending' is largely backed by logical policy justifications concerning where and how the money is spent. The most prevalent of these policy justifications being the need for a clear European Added Value to be demonstrated in all projects – something that has not always been evident in all of the projects undertaken under the FPs to date. As one departmental official states:

> "It is purely and simply saying: If we had this money in our hands would we spend it in that way? The answer is probably no, we would spend it ways that were better suited for the UK where we could get better value for money. ... We do not want Europe to support research that is better and best supported at a national level. So it has got to have a European added value dimension to it." (Unattributable Departmental A, 1998: Interview)

The ever-present fear of the potential for direct *Europes*-attribution plays an important role in this defensive posture; the departments generally viewing attribution as 'losing' *their* national funding to the EU-level – particularly as there is little-to-no likelihood that they will be successful regaining the funding through the competitive FP applications procedure. In this case it must be recognised that whilst the UK as a whole receives more back from the FPs than it nominally invests, this funding is spread over a wide-range of actors. Furthermore, if little European Added Value is present in the FP Calls for Proposals, the departments will almost certainly have lost-out, as the FPs are

highly unlikely to fund exactly the same projects the departments would have individually undertaken. As a DoH official states:

> "[FP Calls for Proposals almost] certainly would be in different areas ... we would not [be] worrying so much – although we would still worry about European Added Value – but *we* would be directing the work into areas where *we* see that it is very important. [Basically, FP priorities do] not necessarily reflect UK priorities. That's the difference." (DoH, 1998: Interview)

Given that the departments exist to address policy issues of direct concern to the UK, it is only natural that they would hold reservations over a policy, such as the FPs, that takes money away from their budgets whilst not addressing their policy priorities.

Departmental Structures: Impact on Negotiations

Whilst it is standard practice across government departments to employ some form of overarching Chief Scientific Officer to co-ordinate their RTD policies, their roles vary from the rather hierarchical and centralised RTD structures of the DoH to the much more devolved departments such as MAFF and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). This section examines the impact that such varying structures have held on the process of formulating and applying a FP lobbying strategy.

Departmental Research Divisions' International Branches naturally act as the official point of contact for interaction in the development and application stages of the overall FPs, for the majority of departments this leaves them responsible for three main functions. *Firstly*, to seek the views and requirements of their individual 'customers' – the departments' Policy Divisions – in relation to the Framework Programmes. *Secondly*, to produce a holistic account of the departments' overall requirements, based on the 'customer' submissions. As one senior departmental RTD official comments:

> "we get input from them and put our own spin on it." (Unattributable Departmental A, 1998: Interview)

Thirdly, to promote the holistic account in the relevant UK and EU policy arenas. In theoretical terms, the actors responsible for this role occupy strong *gatekeeper* positions in relation to the ideas that can be transferred between the

Policy Divisions and external actors, such as the Research Councils, OST and European Commission. The situation is slightly different for the DTI whose separate Policy Divisions submit individual reports directly to the OST. The explanation for this practice is two-fold. Firstly, the DTI take by far the lion's share of the *Europes*-attribution with some individual Policy Divisions being accountable to a greater extent than most of the other government departments. Secondly, as noted in the previous chapter, the OST is held with the DTI and is therefore in a good position to reconcile any competing claims between DTI Policy Divisions, particularly when contrasted with other departments. Importantly, there does not appear to be any sense of unfair treatment in the other departments over the institutionally close relationship between the OST and the DTI divisions, as whilst one departmental official comments:

> "The OST does give the DTI more attention ... " (DETR, 1999: Interview)

He goes on to state:

> "... but there is nothing wrong with that as the reason is not because it is part of the same department. You have to recognise that the DTI takes the largest share of *Europes* and therefore deserves greater attention in some areas." (DETR, 1999, Interview)

In terms of their in-house research, for the majority of government departments, such as the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) the Chief Scientific Officer's role is more to advise than to provide, with 'on the ground' research decisions being left to the department's Policy Divisions. As one senior departmental official comments:

> "[Generally] government departments will have their research branches embedded in their policy branches." (DoH, 1998: Interview)

This clearly leaves a greater potential for conflict between the relatively autonomous Policy Divisions with in-house Research Divisions of the decentralised departments and the generally centralised process of collating, concocting and disseminating FP negotiation positions than is likely to be the case for the more centralised RTD departments, the DoH being the prime example.

In operational terms, the DoH's research division, headed during the FP5 negotiations by Chief Scientific Officer Dr. Peter Greenaway, views the department's Policy Divisions as 'customers' for its research actions. Whilst it is split into Policy Divisions, as is the norm for UK government departments, it is unusual in holding a centralised Research Division that manages *all* DoH research activities. This strong *gatekeeper* position provides both advantages and disadvantages in pursuing an efficient and effective FP strategy, as examined below.

The centralised nature of the DoH's RTD structure provides it with a slight advantage over other departments in terms of the ease of producing clear, concise and co-ordinated positions for interaction with external actors. This is clearly beneficial in relation to policy negotiations, particularly given the premium placed by all the major FP actors on speedy, consistent and reliable information sources. Centralisation also provides DoH's Research Division with greater flexibility in negotiations: as the Research Division is representing its own *direct* interests it holds a greater legitimacy in sacrificing particular scientific areas during negotiations for gains in others.

In theory, whilst the central FP policy co-ordinators in less centralised departments are able to act in a similar fashion, the stronger research power-bases in each Policy Division and thus the greater direct FP interests acts to weaken their institutional dominance, creating more room for internal conflict and cross-lobbying over departmental FP goals. However, this research has proved that this point should not be overplayed as other institutional factors come into play to smooth out the process for the decentralised departments. As one official of the relatively decentralised MAFF stated:

> "There is not really any competition between divisions within MAFF as, at least in the early stages of negotiations, we are looking for information on what MAFF sees as its objectives for research over the next period. ... Once we have take the views there is generally not much conflict within MAFF ... probably because they are having to do this sort of work for MAFF's domestic policy as well – the objectives will have been thrashed out in a different forum." (MAFF, 1999: Interview)

Here, the greater requirement for MAFF officials to co-ordinate their domestic research budgets means that the potential for internal conflict over FP negotiations is decreased as major areas for disagreement over research priorities will already have been resolved. Of course the different nature of the FPs and the search for European Added Value will put a different spin on the debate leaving new room for conflict in certain areas. Another factor that reduces the prospect of conflict within the departments is the fact that *all* the actors appear to be fully aware that the chances of *all* their proposals being adopted by first the OST and then by the European Commission and European Parliament are slim. Therefore in a cost-benefit analysis it is generally not worth risking their highly valued departmental policy community relationships over an issue in which they ultimately hold little control – due the highly unpredictable long-run and complex negotiating process and which does not directly affect their RTD budgets. As one MAFF official comments:

> "because there is not a specific budget they are not fighting as much as they would otherwise be." (MAFF, 1999: Interview)

On the negative side, the DoH's centralised Research Division's institutional role does provide some problems in terms of gaining accurate and high quality information to submit to external actors. This information gap is due to the relative detachment of the Policy Divisions from RTD in general and the FPs in particular. As the DoH's seniors FP representative comments:

> "it makes it difficult in respect of trying to contact customers [(the Policy Divisions)] and find out what they actually want - they are even further removed from European R&D than we are *and we are quite removed from it*. So there is quite a gap there in terms of understanding the importance and relevance of European research from my policy colleagues." (DoH, 1998: Interview)

Basically, with the bulk of research responsibilities and thus direct FP contact in the DoH's separate Research Division, the Policy Divisions have relatively little knowledge of, or interest in, the FPs. Though, as noted earlier, this situation is not completely negative for the DoH as it heightens its ability to interact with external actors on their 'holistic' view of the department's needs: There being little fear of departmental infighting over the inevitable compromises made between the Policy Divisions' priorities. Interestingly, this knowledge gap exists

within nearly all the departments, the DTI with its Policy Divisions producing separate submissions being the exception. As a 'rule' it can therefore be concluded that the greater the decentralisation of in-house RTD the greater the individual Policy Division knowledge of the FPs. However the impact of this 'rule' is clearly muted in all of the departments, bar the DTI, by the clear institutional dominance of the international RTD co-ordinators and the perception of an over-riding need to speak with a single voice if any of their positions are to stand a chance of inclusion in the forthcoming FP - a clear example of a gatekeeper system in operation below the level of the executive.

THE OST

As outlined in the previous chapter, The International Science and Technology Affairs section of the OST exists as the primary focal point of the UK FP *policy community* due largely to its responsibilities for developing and pursuing a UK negotiating stance regarding the FPs. The OST's resources - particularly its strong institutional position as the UK government's official FP negotiator - make it by far the most important UK institution where government departments are concerned. Relations between the OST and the departments are conducted through a combination of official and unofficial contacts based on a mutual, though uneven, dependency. The nature of this dependency relationship is examined below.

Establishing a FP Negotiating Position

The OST co-ordinates its FP actions in relation to the UK government departments through two major committees: i) Interdepartmental Committee on International Affairs (ICIA), and ii) Programme Management Managers Committee (PMM). Both committees consist of an OST representative and departmental Chief Scientific Officers, or where applicable departmental specialists dealing with specific programme areas.

The OST initially approached the spending departments on an unofficial basis within the ICIA to seek their opinions in relation to the formation of FP5. At this

stage the negotiations remained general in nature with the OST seeking to develop an overall picture of the departments' major aims and desires on FP5's structure and content. Following their cue, the departments set out on a process of ascertaining a range of information to respond to the OST, including: their major policy priorities, past level of involvement with the FPs, previous criticisms of the FPs, and estimates of the value for money received from the FPs. (DoH, 1998: Interview) The majority of actors consulted in this process reside in the departmental Policy Divisions, though relevant external researchers are consulted and a department's 'partner' Research Council will play a role - as examined later in the Research Council section. As one official states:

> "As a result of that request for information [from the OST, I] will consult with my colleagues – broad-brush consultation – asking exactly the same thing [the OST asks of us], saying: "We have started thinking about FP5, how would you like it structured, what would you like to see in it?"" (DoH, 1998: Interview)

Another stating:

> "So on the whole we are using the MAFF body to provide us with informed negotiation lines." (MAFF, 1999: Interview)

One of the key points to note here is that the FP co-ordinators for each department are generally already in regular contact with the actors they will be requesting information from to establish a departmental position paper – due to the requirements for co-ordination during the running of the existing FP. As an official comments:

> "We go around all the heads of the Policy Groups and to the Scientific Liaison Officers saying new Framework coming up what would you like to see written in ... So our line here is informed by extensive contacts throughout MAFF on a very regular basis, sometimes formal at a very senior level other times less formal." (MAFF, 1999, Interview)

As noted, a problem common to all the departmental FP co-ordinators was the difficultly in getting their Policy Divisions to fully comprehend the nature of the FPs and the nature of the negotiation process. In particular, there was a difficulty in informing the Policy Divisions on the likely limitations of success for certain areas and therefore of the need to tailor positions to the flow of the negotiations. One departmental co-ordinator commenting in relation to this aspect:-

> "Sounds good in principle, but in practice it is very hard to get people to think strategically." (Unattributable Departmental C, 1999, Interview)

As indicated, this consultation process is two-way with the OST providing, as well as requesting, information in the form of pointers as to how it believes the FP is likely to develop (based on soundings from the Commission and other Member States) and the direction in which it would prefer the FP to develop. Such contact is clearly in the interest of both sets of actors, solidifying the policy community by enabling the departments to concentrate their efforts on feasible objectives and thus provide the OST with more relevant and useful material than would otherwise be the case.

Following the departments' consultation procedures, official departmental position papers are produced outlining their overall views on the future development of the FPs for delivery to the OST in the ICIA. The OST takes this information into account in creating a UK Position Paper on the FPs, alongside the potentially competing views from, for example, other departments and the Research Councils. The departments also take the opportunity to push their 'unofficial' positions following the publication of the position papers.

The perceived difficulty of pushing their views to the OST is reflected in the following statement:

> "We have to persuade OST that the points we are making are valid enough for them to put forward as the UK view and our objectives are not necessarily the same as theirs." (MAFF, 1998: Interview)

To gain their position greater weight the departments attempt to ensure that all channels of communication are utilised. In virtually all the stages of interaction between the OST and departmental representatives the line between official and unofficial contact is blurred. A DETR official stating:

> "Negotiations are often of a quite informal nature." (DETR, 1999: Interview)

The departments are at a particular advantage where those charged with creating the OST line and / or forwarding the OST line in the EU may not be specialist in the scientific field in question:

> "First of all you have to make sure that the negotiators understand as well being prepared to take it on. In a lot of cases because we are talking to people who have a very different outlook on the Framework. ... It does mean that there are specific areas where we can have quite a bit of difficulty getting our message across to our negotiators." (MAFF, 1999: Interview)

Whilst this may appear to be a disadvantage for the departments, it places them in a strong position as the OST is reliant on their expertise. Also, in such situations the informal relationships fostered in the blurred boundaries between the official and the unofficial can be invaluable to get the key points across to the OST beyond the overall official positions.

Such is the extent of different forms of contact, the key actors themselves are frequently confused as to the official / unofficial nature of the information they are giving and receiving. A senior DoH official's comments offer a good insight into the nature of the negotiations in this respect:

> "I say this without fear or favour: The whole process is totally bizarre, ... [there is] a very close interaction between formal and informal contacts and it is sometimes quite difficult to distinguish between the two because as OST come to us and say: "hey, you know, you really ought to start thinking about what is what." And they will ... ask for a formal input; [however, alongside this] they will also request informal input." (DoH, 1998: Interview)

Such official / unofficial dialogue is common in close-knit *policy communities*, serving as a useful tool for official positions to be made clear to all interested actors, whilst keeping more sensitive positions internal to the trusted *community*. As one departmental actor stated in relation to some of their more open contacts:

> "When you go to meetings you are trying to explain to people at coffee breaks what you really mean. It is a gradual process." (MAFF, 1999: Interview)

For example, with just official dialogue available, the departments would not be able to indicate clearly the areas on which they were willing for the OST to compromise in its European-level negotiations, without leaving their position open for external actors to take advantage. Hence, both the departments and the OST believe that whilst working in this fashion may be 'bizarre', it is necessary

to gain a clear picture of each other's true positions in relation to the FP negotiations.

OST as a '*gatekeeper*'

The OST holds significant *gatekeeper* powers over the UK government departments in terms of their access and input regarding the FP negotiations. Indeed, the departments are the *least* autonomous of the main UK *policy community* actors, their lobbying activities largely limited to the UK government arena, unless officially sanctioned to move to the EU-level by the OST. As one official comments:

> "I don't think there is any area in which we would take an opposing view [to OST] – in other words the UK speaks with a pretty uniform view in terms of the Framework" (MAFF, 1998: Interview)

The OST's relatively large FP-dedicated resources help to ensure its gatekeeper role. As examined in the previous chapter, these resources are based around its relatively large contingent of twenty-one staff that worked in close relation to the FP5 negotiations (including the UK programme managers for FP4) and the sheer range of information its gathers from both UK and European-level actors. Without OST co-operation in terms of these resources the departments would simply not be able to develop and implement a coherent FP strategy. Hence the dependency of the departments in this area, as with the Research Councils, limits their ability to push against OST positions.

Critically, the OST does insist that government departments 'toe-the-line' in relation to key external FP negotiations. This stance is not taken by the OST in relation to any of the other UK actors where, for example, it has taken the strategic decision not to attempt to monopolise UK input into the FPs or to force a homogeneous line in relation to the publicly funded Research Councils; indeed it has been willing to suggest appropriate EU-level contacts in some cases. (Willis, 1987: Interview; Wright, 1997: Interview) This is despite the fact that government departments are less directly resource dependent on the OST than their Research Council 'partners,' whose budgets and *Europes* contributions are OST-based. Thus, the

relative budgetary independence of departmental science budgets from the OST, the relatively balanced information relationship, and the equal reliance on OST negotiating when compared with the Research Councils leaves the question: Whence is this strong *gatekeeper* power derived? The answer lies in the clear and direct *institutional hierarchy* existing between the departments and the OST.

It is simply not generally acceptable for departments to be engaged in lobbying beyond the boundaries of the UK government against the official line expressed by the OST. A notable exception to this, examined later, is the interaction between the departments and Research Councils, which is encouraged by the OST. The centrality of the departments to the very core of the UK government results in a requirement for consistent official goals to be followed and an external level of consistency across UK government displayed in relation to the FPs. (Dennis, 1999: Interview; DETR, 1999: Interview) However, it should not be taken that the departments are 100 per cent loyal to the OST's line, as one official stated:

> "there are specific areas that we want to be given more emphasis that won't necessarily be something that OST is aware of or necessarily that keen on." (Unattributable Departmental C, 1999: Interview)

It should therefore be acknowledged that the departments are willing to bend the rules through changing emphasis on certain issues, however there is no evidence that they are willing to openly flout the rules in the face of the resource and institutionally dominant OST. To put this into context, the Research Councils, as analysed in the following chapter, do not operate under such strong institutional bondage due to their 'independent mandates' leaving them able to pursue individual lobbying strategies contacting whomever they see fit to pursue their ultimate goals. Though, as will be noted, there are other restraints on the Research Councils' actions that reduce the freedom offered by a lack of hard institutional ties.

Government Department Power Over the OST

As the *policy community* model predicts, the OST does not hold unchecked dominance over the government departments, rather the relationship is based on a limited *mutual dependency*: the OST requiring departmental co-operation to

ensure it fulfils its mandate of maximising returns from the FPs for the UK science-base. Basically, the OST needs departmental co-operation to gain the scientific and political information required to establish valid and persuasive negotiating positions on the FPs, and to ensure the successful participation of the UK in the programmes, for example through departmental participation in the FP Programme Management Committees (PMCs). This mutual, if OST-dominated, dependency acts as a variable constraint on the OST's negotiating position in three major ways, as examined below.

Firstly, the OST is *reliant* on *information* from the departments to fulfil its own requirements. Given it is the OST's responsibility to represent the UK science-base, it is duty bound to gain the perspectives of the departments' research sectors in order to reflect their needs adequately.

Secondly, the OST *needs* to retain *legitimacy* in its actions. Given their high level of research activities and centrality to the government machinery, the departments head the list in terms of legitimacy of input into the OST's formulation and negotiations stages. Further, the legitimacy of departmental input is reinforced by the *Europes* attribution system which ensures that the departments view the FPs as a form of purchase. In this respect the OST is basically negotiating a deal on how the various departments *Europes* contributions will be spent, thus 'advice' from the departments on how the Framework should be constructed holds a heightened degree of legitimacy – particularly when contrasted to the demands of private corporations, which are not *Europes* susceptible, and the Research Councils which to date have had their *Europes* contributions paid by the OST. Hence, it is essential that the OST retains the confidence and co-operation of the departments in order to maintain the legitimacy of its own actions.

Finally, the OST is dependent on the government departments for the successful *implementation* of the FPs in relation to gaining maximum funding for the UK science-base. This dependence comes in terms of departments directly applying for FP funding, encouraging their research partners to do the same, and critically in ensuring that the EU-level PMCs are competently staffed. Indeed, the OST is

almost totally reliant on departmental (and Research Council) co-operation in the PMC stages, requiring their specialists to create and argue the UK's case at the EU-level. Though it must be noted that the UK institutional requirement for such specialists is to act on behalf of the whole UK sector, not just their departmental needs, limiting the extent to which the departments can take advantage of the OST's dependence on their co-operation.

In conclusion on the OST's role in this area, the input of the departmental actors into the FP negotiations is moderated by the OST in its position as a strong *gatekeeper* on departmental interaction with actors external to the UK *policy community* due to a combination of institutional, information and personal factors. As one departmental official comments:

> 'This is all co-ordinated though the OST: ... information from my policy colleagues gets wrapped up and fed into OST. ... OST will distil it all down and eventually feed that into the Commission.' (DoH, 1998: Interview)

However, despite this limitation, it is clear that the departments exist as central, if not primary, actors in the UK area in terms of the formulation of the OST's FP negotiating positions and strategies.

'*Europes*' Mechanism

> "It is *Europes*, it is the financial side, that really causes the conflict." (MAFF, 1999: Interview)

The UK Treasury's *Europes* attribution system is the most unpopular aspect of the FPs throughout government departments. Indeed, *Europes* is frequently cited as the primary factor in their unwillingness to embrace the FPs fully and in explaining their open opposition to expansions in FP funding. For example, the following views expressed by departmental officials were common across the government departments:

> "We take the view that as a matter of policy that Framework spending is essentially quite high ... there is a very, very, strong argument for not increasing the amount of money that is spent ... We have always taken this view. ... We said no more than under FP4 and preferably less." (MAFF, 1998: Interview)

> "In the UK, European funding is part of the overall research pot and the more you spend in Europe the less you have to spend nationally." (DoH, 1998: Interview)

As noted in the previous chapter the *Europes* mechanism is an attribution-based system created by the UK Treasury to 'retrieve' funds allocated to the FPs whilst creating a degree of accountability, by holding departments and Research Councils attributable for FP expenditure. In basic terms, the Treasury estimates the funding proportionately provided by the UK in a specific science area and attributes this to the relevant baseline departmental and Research Council budgets. (Treasury, 1997: 218)

The government departments do understand the Treasury's rationale for *Europes* beyond that of simply attempting to restrain expenditure; as explained by one departmental official:

> "*Europes* itself is a very forceful way for the Treasury turning around and saying "You are the spending departments you must play an active role in determining what is going on in Europe, because ultimately you are the ones that are going to a) benefit and therefore b) be accountable."" (DoH, 1998: Interview)

However, understanding the rationale for the system offers little comfort to departmental Science Officers who potentially stand to lose millions from their research budgets due to *Europes*-attribution.

Crucially, the impact of *Europes* even on similarly attributed department's RTD programmes holds the potential for largely varying impacts depending on the extent to which the overall department is willing to absorb the costs. In other words:

> "[It] depends on how each department attributes the attribution." (DoH, 1998: Interview)

To date, all the departments have protected their RTD budgets by absorbing *Europes* attribution within the overall departmental baseline budgets. For example, the DoH's *Europes* attribution is absorbed centrally within its overall baseline budget – not specifically attributed to the Research Division:

> "At the moment policy people can turn around and say: ... "One-hundred thousand pounds or two-hundred thousand pounds or even one million pounds is fairly small

> beer and therefore totally insignificant [within departmental baseline budget]." (DoH, 1998: Interview)

Thus, as noted earlier, the protection offered to research budgets has helped ensure that the actual research carried out by the departments has not significantly altered due to *Europes*-based financial constraints.

The DTI remains a special case in relation to *Europes* for two main reasons. Firstly, whilst the DTI remains by far the greatest *Europes* contributor, its decentralised organisation has meant that instead of simply being distributed across the department as a whole the attribution is split between the sectoral divisions of the DTI. Secondly, it was clear to the DTI research actors that as their actual budgets were extremely limited in the first place – the DTI being much more of an administrative than a research active department in this area – the FPs would comprise the bulk of their research and that they wouldn't have a significant budget to be attributed (the cost is absorbed within the overall DTI budget). As one departmental actor stated:

> "DTI, for example, are coming at the Framework from a completely different angle due to a much higher *Europes* contribution. They are throwing money at publishing the Framework as being an excellent means of research money for UK industry and in fact they do have a large percentage of industrial take up, whereas we have a very small percentage of industrial take-up. ... We in a policy department will take a different line from the DTI because [the FP] is the main source of finance in their policy area." (Unattributable Departmental C, 1999: Interview)

When submissions for the content of the FPs were made by the DTI actors they were left with a relatively 'fear' free hand – *Europes* did not play a real part here. (Dennis, 1999: Interview) However, the departmental Scientific Officers from the remainder of the relevant departments tend to treat the threat of direct attribution as a likelihood rather than just a possibility, with growing fears that further *Europes* increases will result in their protection being revoked and attribution being specifically attached to their research budgets. As one MAFF official comments:

> "The argument within the department will be that the research budget has to pay because there is such a tight control on all the budgets within the department that nobody is going to be willing to fork out for it. There is still the option of top-slicing it off the [overall] MAFF budget – you just say "right it is a cost we have to

> meet" - but the argument is likely to be "its research you have got to pay for it". The implication being that there will be less research money to spend in our national research programme, which takes us back right to the beginning as to why there is now greater interest in looking at the Framework funding, because if we cannot get it from our own domestic budget we have to get it from somewhere else." (MAFF, 1999: Interview)

The DoH's Research Division is particularly fearful of its departmental protection being removed due to fears that its *Europes* attribution will increase a potential threefold under FP5, following an increased number of areas carrying a health component in FP5.[43] As one official states:

> "If attribution increases, there will be pressure to actually push the attribution down to the spending divisions, so that you make the spending divisions a lot more accountable for what is spent. ... If the attribution becomes very large then it *would* be pushed down to the spending division, that would be in our case [the Research Division]. ... it is something that I am personally quite concerned about." (DoH, 1998: Interview)

If attribution were to be directly applied to RTD budgets it would place a further strain on the relationships within the UK FP *policy community* - each actor being forced to defend their direct RTD budget, rather than the more abstract overall departmental budget, when in negotiations over their respective *Europes* contributions. This potential for conflict is exacerbated by the necessity to determine which department and / or Research Council is 'responsible' for specific areas of FP spending. As on MAFF official comments:

> "So what happens now is that over the next couple of years we have got to negotiate with other departments and the Treasury on how much we actually fork out. Because the particular key actions involved don't all fall into the MAFF policy area. It is a nightmare. For example, the [FP4] FAIR programme carries agriculture, fisheries, food, forestry and environment, but actually MAFF ends up paying only 50 percent of the cost of that: OST paid for the BBSRC element, Environment paid for the environment element, the Scottish Office paid for a chunk and Health took a chunk. (MAFF, 1999: Interview)

According to both policy networks and institutional theory, an increase in the potential costs and benefits from a system combined with an increase in

complexity is likely to produce tensions. When one takes into account the fact that the bulk of FP4 negotiations were relatively simple when compared with the FP5 structure – which has differing scientific areas spread throughout thematic programmes, not kept in neatly defined sectoral boundaries – the scope for interdepartmental and department / Research Council conflict is increased. Also, whilst the partner department / Research Council *Europes* negotiations are supported by a strong *policy community*, the *policy network*s across departments whilst not strong enough to be classed as part of a wider policy community are limited due to the sectoral RTD differences and are therefore more susceptible to tension. However, the policy communities were largely spared during the formulation of FP5, with the negotiations held back from souring specific interdepartmental relationships. The break in the pressure came from the fact that the *Europes* issues are generally dealt with by separate finance sections within the departments and the fact that the impact of a new FP is not felt for at two to three years after the overall programme had been finalised:

> "The [financial] negotiations [are] where the really hot wrangling comes and it will often not involve the same people who normally negotiate as it will involve the finance people in each department." (MAFF, 1999: Interview)

This combination of an institutional division of Labour between the research and the finance sectors of the departments and the delayed impact of *Europes* clearly provided the policy community with a valuable buffer.

It is clear that the departmental RTD actors as a whole appear to take the *Europes* threat more seriously than the Research Council actors as the money is seen as coming directly from *their* departments, therein increasing their alertness to the impact, whereas the Research Councils' attribution is taken from the rather more abstract OST budget. (See following chapter for details)

> 'because the Research Councils at one stage have it removed they don't feel the full effects of it.' (DoH, 1998: Interview)

The following quotes provide some indication of the complexity of the process of 'attributing the attribution' within an actual department and of the fact that

[43] Biomedicine and health represents about 6 per cent of FP4's budget, analogous calculations for FP5 place this figure at around 16 per cent.

uncertainly over *Europes* has contributed to a *fear* of the system resulting in attempts to *limit* any potential impact of increased FP funding:

> "*Europes* is so complicated and has so many elements to it in terms of past cost, future cost, three year rolling programme and all the rest of it, that it was actually quite difficult to work out the specific amount that you were supposed to pay out per year. The overall thing is so unbelievably complicated that even though we have gone though the calculations even our financial people cannot tell me exactly why, but it looks to me like we could face having to fork out quite substantial sums." (Unattributable Departmental , 1999: Interview)

The unpopularity of *Europes*, and thus the FPs, is further increased by its 'blunt instrument' approach in determining attribution. In the departments' view *Europes* should only be applied where the FP directly covers a specific areas of research that they intended to cover. However the Treasury applies *Europes* to wide-ranging general scientific areas, maximising the extent to which the departments are susceptible and therein maximising its *Europes* returns. As one departmental official comments:

> "It is quite crude. [The Treasury view is that] this is the sum that we need to recover from the baseline budget, these are the spending departments' budget hits - against which we will attribute - and this will be the overall amount then that we will take off the baseline budget." (DoH, 1998: Interview)

Basically, opportunities available in the FPs are also unlikely to be directly equivalent to those that would have been chosen within the a department. Indeed, the departments are consistently attributed for programmes that they have no direct interest in, and in many cases actually lobbied against:

> "The problem always is that, although in theory *Europes* is supposed to act as a means of control on individual departments, individual departments have very little control over what is agreed. What we ended up with was an 80 percent increase in expenditure on food and a nearly 20 percent increase on agriculture, despite the fact that we as a department took a trenchant line." (MAFF, 1999: Interview)

This leaves the potential for departmental researchers to compromise their policy-directed activities to compete for money that was initially destined to fund their original projects. Although departmental budgetary protection has meant that there is no evidence of *Europes* affecting departmental research in such

ways at present, there is strong evidence that the *fear* of such consequences plays a large factor in relation to the departmental perspectives on the FPs.

Even where a department may represent a scientific area that has been successful in winning FP funding – a common occurrence given the success of GB participation – there is no guarantee that the potential departmental *Europes* 'losers' will have benefited in policy or financial terms. For example, the DoH estimates in FP4 that somewhere in the region of 25 to 30 per cent of all successful Biomedicine and Health programmes had a lead UK partner, whilst around 75 – 90 per cent of all successful projects have a UK partner.

> "if you just look at it in ... very crude number terms: a) we [the UK] are successful and b) therefore by definition we get more out of Biomedicine and Health programmes than we put in." (DoH, 1998: Interview)

However such success is of little comfort to *potential* victims of *Europes* cuts, as they cannot be guaranteed successful FP applications. In this respect, the actors would clearly prefer to have their usual access to funding from within the UK departments.

A further failing of *Europes* in the eyes of the departments is based on the Treasury's option to recalculate attribution on an annual basis, which can lead to widely fluctuating attribution contributions. In short, the Commission is free to spend varying amounts per year on each sector of the FP, as long as the five-year total reaches the figures agreed within the overall FP. Unfortunately for the departments, it frequently exercises this right, therein creating varying annual *Europes* contributions. This is compounded by fluctuating exchange rates that add to the variance of the Treasury's calculations. As on official states:

> "Unfortunately it is never constant, because you have got shifts in exchange rate – the pound against the ecu – and you have got shifts in the actual spend [per year] because the Commission is given a financial perspective, it is given an envelope that is can spend up to – it doesn't necessarily spend up to that in any one financial year. Now it may be that in the first year of the Framework it spends 1 per cent of the Framework budget and in the fourth year of the Framework it spends 99 per cent. So you are totally at the mercy of [the Commission]." (DoH, 1998: Interview)

This situation improved for some of the departments towards the end of FP4, with the Treasury willing to calculate static annual payments based on a three-year projection of spending. For example, the DoH (along with the MRC) was successful in holding the Treasury to a static three-year contribution, running to the end of FP4, based on the total the Commission would spend over whole of the period, thus enabling a greater degree of stability in the department's budget. It could be argued that the stability of *Europes* contributions is not that important, given that the contributions have been absorbed in the overall departmental baseline budgets. However, this very fact exacerbates its importance as stable contributions do provide the advantage of making the absorption of the attribution more a matter of routine for their 'sponsors' – therein reducing the risk that the protection be revoked.

Given the policy impact of *Europes*, the question arises of the extent to which it has had an impact on the lobbying activities of the departments. As expected, the system has created a strong negative impact. Basically, *Europes* distorts the lobbying positions of the departments, pressuring them to limit their interests for fear a successful lobbying campaign will lead to increased *Europes* contributions. Indeed, upon being asked if *Europes* had limited departmental lobbying activities one official commented:

> "Oh, undoubtedly, undoubtedly. You would be ... lobbying much, much harder if you didn't have in the back of your mind that you could get attributed. (DoH, 1998: Interview)

This statement represents a clear fear across the departments that:

> "The more successful you are in getting your policy and priorities taken-up by Europe, the more you are going to be attributed – ... a catch-22 situation." (DoH, 1998: Interview)

Not only is the Treasury able to point to an increase in FP funding in a departments science area, it is also able to point to the active support of the increase by the department in question. Thus, it should be recognised that limiting demands by the departments is one of the primary reasons for *Europes* being in place. As one departmental actor stated:

> "The ministers rather like it as a management tool" (Unattributable Departmental C, 1999: Interview)

Despite the negative impact of *Europes*, lobbying is, of course, still undertaken as the attribution contributions will not simply go away if the departments do not show any interest: it being recognised that the individual departments are relatively powerless to set the overall spend in their scientific areas. Thus the departments are left in a position where it would be foolish not to lobby for a fine-tuning of the FPs to suit their policy areas: a process in which they are likely to be more successful than in relation to determining the overall FP spend in their area. In this respect, *Europes* does fulfil the core-executive's aim of ensuring the departments play an active role in tailoring the FPs to the UK science needs whilst not pressuring for spending increases, therein improving the UK's value for money. As on official comments:

> "All we can do is try to influence where we can and influence in a sensible way; recognising that what we spend in Europe we don't spend nationally. ... From that perspective it is [effective]; it forces us to take an active role in negotiating." (DoH, 1998: Interview)

Hence, departmental and Research Council lobbying activities tend to be directed towards a fine-tuning of existing programmes given their limited potential impact on the overall spend.

In conclusion, *Europes* will remain a negative influence on the lobbying actions of the UK government departments, expressed mainly in a reluctance to lobby for increased shares of FP spending and in the albeit limited tension created between *policy community* actors in relation to negotiating attribution amongst the UK public actors. As an issue for future research, it is clear that *Europes*' negative impact is likely to expand in the future as the potential for the direct application of attribution to the research budgets increases. There is also clear scope for a comparative research project with any one of the other FP states, none of which apply attribution to their domestic research. On the positive side, *Europes* clearly does force the departments to examine their proposals carefully in terms of specific FP RTD areas, therein limiting the presence of unnecessary projects and increasing the presence of UK-relevant projects. After all, if the departments are going to be attributed the same amount whatever their actions, it is logical that they try to ensure maximum returns from their forced *Europes*

'investments'. In this respect, *Europes* is ultimately recognised as a 'necessary evil' amongst the departments that must be endured until a better alternative can be found. The following official reflecting the views of many of his peers:

> "I personally would like to see *Europes* revised, ... but I don't know what else could be used to replace it." (DoH, 1998: Interview)

Overall, the main point to grasp in relation to *Europes* is the immense impact that a single institutional trait can hold on the lobbying activities of the government departments, particularly in reducing their incentives to support FP5 to their fullest ability.

Research Councils

In terms of the FPs, the UK government departments and the Research Councils are after the same goal: to maximise potential FP returns whilst minimising potential *Europes* contributions. Based on this goal and the natural symmetry that exists between much of the RTD work of the individual Research Councils and their 'partner' departments – i.e. the departments that cover their scientific areas – there are clear perceived benefits of producing a united front to other FP actors. In respect of this bond, the relationships between the individual departments and their 'partner' Research Councils have developed to form some of the strongest bonds in the UK FP *policy community*.

The DoH holds a particularly close relationships with its 'partner' Research Council, the MRC. As a DoH official comments::

> "Clearly although we are separate entities we like to speak with one voice if we possibly can ... and generally we do." (DoH, 1998: Interview)

The primary aim of these relationships, beyond simply comparing and contrasting their individual positions, is to produce a united front to the OST in the hope of gaining an advantage over the other actors and issues being addressed – or at least to avoid them holding an advantage over the DoH and MRC. A united front, comprising of two major public interests, being of clear advantage in fending off any potential OST moves that may compromise their interests for the benefit of other sectors in the UK science-base. This pressure works both in terms of potential goals sacrificed within the UK negotiations by

the OST and those open to compromise once negotiations progress to the EU-level. Thus, even in the initial stages of the FP5 negotiations, when the OST first contacted the departments they moved into a phase of consultation with the Research Councils to try and find areas of common interest. (Dukes, 1997: Interview, West, 1997: Interview) For example, before formally submitting papers it is common for both types of institution to informally distribute them amongst their closest policy community associates. For example, as one MAFF official comments:

> "In terms of co-ordination with other bodies, if we are putting a MAFF paper in it will have been sent to Health and BBSRC so they can have a look through and we try as much as we possibly can to reflect their interests." (MAFF, 1999: Interview)

Naturally, beyond the many areas of coinciding interests, potential areas of conflict between the departments and their 'partner' Research Councils are present, particularly concerning the different emphases of their research strategies. Despite the natural symmetry of the research sectors, they *do* hold different emphases in their research approaches; the departments generally producing much more 'near to market' applied research than the Research Councils' more 'basic research' approaches. As on official states:

> "MRC, and the Research Councils in general, will want to do research that will add to the general knowledge base – it will want to undertake fundamental research. Whereas the department will be much more into applied research, looking at problem-solving, evaluative, technology transfer applications, all of that rather than trying to push back the frontiers." (DoH, 1998: Interview)

In this respect the FP preferences of the institutions are going to differ in relation to their applied / basic research approaches, thus encouraging a split in lobbying directions. However, the extent of the strains that are created are clearly dependent upon the impact of the existing FP and the direction of negotiations for the new FP on the particular policy community partners in each particular sector. For example, MAFF and the BBSRC have consistently held good relations in the early stages of negotiations because the FPs have been structured in such a way that their interests have not clashed. (MAFF, 1999: Interview)

As noted earlier, once the general structure of an FP has been determined there is further scope for conflict over the level of *Europes* contributions each institution should make. The institutions are put in a position of having to lobby to ensure that they do not lose their funding through attribution. As one departmental official commented in relation to the impact of *Europes* across general departmental / Research Council relations: -

> "There is a great deal of conflict, there was extreme conflict in negotiating *Europes* for FP4" (DoH, 1998: Interview)

It is at this stage that the BBSRC / MAFF relationship has suffered in the past, their relationship moving to one of conflict in relation to *Europe*s issues: -

> "If you look at MAFF and their relationship with BBSRC, MAFF is always trying to ensure that it pays as little as possible, but that as much of the Framework V programme is relevant to its own programmes as possible. A typical Whitehall thing of trying to get someone else to pay..." (Unattributable Research Council A, 1998, Interview)

The more that MAFF can get attributed to the BBSRC the less it will have to pay out of its own budget, hence the strain in the relationship. An important point highlighted by this process is that the strength of the policy community is going to alter depending on which stage of the process you examine, generally being stronger during the initial formulation stages and weaker once the FP has been set and formal *Europes* negotiations come into play. However, it must be noted that such conflict is not dominant over the entire range of department / Research Council relationships, restricting the scope for *policy community* generalisations in this area. Also, as stated earlier, it is common for separate financial divisions to debate and finalise *Europes* arrangements – a factor that has limited the overall strain on the BBSRC / MAFF relationship. (MAFF, 1999: Interview)

The DoH / MRC *Europes*-related negotiations, though strained, remained co-operative. In the DoH's view, both FP4 and FP5 are much more suited to the MRC's 'basic research' approach, providing the DoH with cause to argue that the MRC should take the bulk of the *Europes* burden:

> "[W]e in the department see the Framework Programmes as being very much oriented towards fundamental research and therefore within the province of the Research Council." (DoH, 1998: Interview)

This was reflected in their final FP4 *Europes* settlement, with the MRC nominally taking 60 per cent (ECU 360 million) of the total BIOMED attribution, the DoH absorbing the remainder. The largely amicable nature of this 'gentleman's agreement' – a term noted by both DoH and MRC officials – is clear testament to the strength of the *policy community*, reflecting a willingness to compromise and take account of the wider-picture. As a senior DoH official comments:

> "The Department of Health and the Medical Research Council sat down together and said: "In Framework IV there is a programme called Biomedicine and Health, nominally no other spending department and no other institutional Research Council will have an interest in this, so we will accept the attribution and if we look at the Framework, the specific programmes and the work programme we can make a rough guess of how relevant all of that is to the work of our respective organisations." And the answer that we came up with was, ... it is going to be roughly two-thirds relevant to the MRC and one-third of it would be relevant to the department. And so the gentleman's agreement ... was forwarded onto the Treasury." (DoH, 1998: Interview)

The solid nature of this agreement was of benefit to the two institutions in terms of budgetary stability, as it enabled them to convince the Treasury to provide a set level of attribution based on the figures for the final three years of FP4, as noted in the *Europes* section of this chapter.

Despite the above mentioned understanding, it should be noted that tension still existed between the DoH and MRC over *Europes* contributions in relation to the movement of the distribution of funds between FP4 and FP5, which opened up new room for conflict. For example, if FP money moved into the MRC's areas of basic research the DoH would clearly be under pressure to push for a re-negotiation of the *Europes* split, with negative consequences for their alliance. As both MRC and DoH officials note, their co-operative relationship is not set in stone:

> "We work quite well together, we don't quarrel, but I guess if the chips were down we would quarrel." (Dukes, 1998, Interview)

> "So the name of the game [is] deciding whether you can, gentlemanly or *otherwise*, [determine] the proportion of spend that will be finally attributed to you." (DoH, 1998: Interview)

Indeed, signs of such strains are already appearing within the 'partnership', as Dr. Dukes of the MRC states:

> "It may be that the Department may move in [a confrontational] direction, and if they do then it will be bad news for us, because what will tend to happen is that the political message from the department will be, as it rather is from the old Department of Environment, which is: "We don't like Europe, we don't like Framework V, we'd rather have the money and spend it ourselves."" (Dukes, 1998, Interview)

Further, the shift in funds in FP5 has been met with increased complexity and uncertainty in estimating the level of funds assigned to each area, particularly given the tendency for scientific areas to cross between the Framework themes. Indeed, the cross-thematic funding of scientific areas further complicates matters by necessitating the inclusion of a greater number of publicly funded institutions in such discussions. Negotiations between the actors concerning future distribution of *Europes* attribution have thus been made inherently more complex, providing greater room for disagreement and conflict. Given that the individual UK actors are ultimately not in a position to determine the outcome of the FP5 negotiations, this provides a clear example of change 'external' to a *policy community* impinging on the quality and reliability of the relationships within it. As one official:

> "Now it is different because all of these key actions in [FP5's] first theme – bar perhaps Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry – have a health component association. So rather than having one we now have four or five, and rather than just negotiating with MRC, you can see that for example Food, Nutrition and Health will have a DETR input into it, it will have a Food Standards Agency input into it, it will have a MAFF input into it [as well as the various other Research Councils.] [Basically] a whole range of players come in on the scene and that is going to really complicate things." (DoH, 1998: Interview)

Yet in another respect the cross-thematic funding has pushed together many of the cross-sectoral borderline policy community relationships where new common issues have been found:

> "[There have been examples where] we had to convince OST, by getting together a number of departments with a common interest – Transport, Agriculture, Environment and Health are the four who have a common interest here – to persuade them that they should take [issues] forward." (MAFF, 1999: Interview)

It is clear that whilst the actors do still consider themselves within a policy community with actors beyond their specific RTD sectors, the relative infrequency of meetings has left them less comfortable negotiating with each other. This highlights the need for any theoretical model explaining the UK FP Policy community to include mention of the varying strengths of relationships within the policy community at a horizontal as well as a vertical level. I.e. at the horizontal level, below the OST, RTD-sectoral divides will exist between the actors, with for example Health-based actors clumping closely together and agriculture / biotechnology actors clumping closely together.

In conclusion, there remains significant scope for disagreement between individual departments and between the departments and Research Council aims in their quest to provide a united front to the other actors. Whilst the advantages of co-operation are relatively standard across the relationships, the disadvantages vary – placing increased pressure on certain of the *policy community* relationships. Overall however, the actors' mutual dependencies, in terms of shared information and combined lobbying, leaves the balance of advantages of co-operation in ascendancy over those of 'going it alone'. There is one final and perhaps crucial aspect that keeps the actors together:

> "Overall there is very little policy conflict probably because there is a recognition that whatever we put in is not necessarily going to have any impact and it may be only marginal." (MAFF, 1999: Interview)

In this respect it simply is not worth the departmental civil servants splitting their 'firepower' or risking potentially valuable relationships over a lobbying process over which they believe may only hold marginal influence. Hence, the relationships remain extremely close despite what may appear on the surface to be a potentially volatile situation.

European-level Actors

European Commission

The European Commission's pivotal position in the creation and implementation of the FPs makes it an attractive target for departmental officials wishing to gain

the upper-hand in FP negotiations. Indeed the Commission's role in the process provides it with power that is in many respects beyond that of the OST. However, whilst the Commission's consultation procedures resemble the OST's in terms of its contacts with the Research Councils and other major UK *policy community* actors such as large companies, its contacts with the government departments are limited. Indeed, the departments do not engage in direct *official* contact with the Commission on a lobbying basis, as it is the OST's official responsibility to ensure their views are represented.[44]

The departments input their FP perspectives into the Commission via two main routes: i) the OST ii) unofficial contacts. As one departmental official commented:

> "We lobby officially through OST, we lobby unofficially through me talking to [individuals in the Commission]." (Unattributable Departmental A, 1998: Interview)

This approach differs markedly from that of the Research Councils as their independent charters enable them fully to utilise both unofficial *and* official contacts with the Commission. The primary official route via which the Commission gains input from the departments is therefore through the OST, which is able to act as a *gatekeeper* at least on official channels. For example, a departmental official comments:

> "The 'official-unofficial' approach comes to OST from the Commission saying... : "Here is an official draft and we want an official response from the member states." And OST will turn around and [to the departments and] say: "Here is the Commission's official draft, what do you think? Do you think its right? Do you think its in the right direction? How do you want it modified? Is the content right? Do you think that ought to be changed? If so, how do you want it changed? What is the justification for that change?" [This information is then passed to the Commission by the OST]" (DoH, 1998: Interview)

The links that are present between the departments and the Commission existed only at *issue network* levels in respect of the early FP5 negotiations, with closer links only being established at the lower programme management levels, as

[44] Clarification: Departmental officials were frequently in direct official contact with the Commission over the FP5 negotiations, however on such occasions they were acting as

would be predicted in Peterson's (1995) *levels of analysis* concept. Two major factors limit the policy networks in this area. Firstly, there is a clear divergence of preferences between the *Europes*-susceptible departments wishing to limit the future FPs and the Commission wishing to expand them. Secondly, the Commission is not as reliant on the UK actors as the OST, given the presence of fourteen other member states and three FP associate states. This lack of solid two-way dependency clearly limits the ability of departments to gain their views strong consideration.

In terms of unofficial contacts the departments are able to forward and receive information from the Commission through a range of contacts built-up in the application of FP5, particularly at the Programme Management level.

> "The Commission ... has got a structure and a bureaucracy that has been established to run Framework IV ... and they automatically will be talking with their counterparts or various departmental contact points about various aspects of Framework IV. ... By natural diffusion you develop a relationship and you exchange information. ... " (DoH, 1998: Interview)

> "You will get things said very indirectly to give you a feel for what is going on, even in meetings you get that as well, you couldn't quote someone and make it make sense ... they are very garbled ... they will tell you exactly how much they want to tell you." (MAFF, 1998: Interview)

One departmental actor providing an almost comical description of the process:

> "But it is all, what I said, very bizarre, you know, old ladies and tea cups, very gossipy." (Unattributable Departmental A, 1998: Interview)

Whilst this may not appear the most efficient of processes, it is often the only way that the Commission can forward up-to-date information to the actors given the laborious task of preparing official documents. Such techniques also enable to Commission to be much more frank about certain issues than would otherwise be the case. (DETR, 1999: Interview)

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representatives of the OST and as such were forwarding a UK, rather than departmental views.

The departments are also able to take advantage of their segment of the UK *policy community* to get their position pushed in the Commission wherever possible. As one official states:

> "We get our academic community to lobby wherever they can, so they to feed in to the Commission's thinking." (DoH, 1998: Interview)

The common lines developed with the Research Councils also play a role here, with both institutions combining their resources and points of access where appropriate. Though again, it is necessary to reinforce the point that there is little evidence to suggest the departments use such avenues to circumvent the OST's official UK negotiating line.

Information is a highly valued resource in terms of the FP negotiations, its presence affecting the effectiveness of all the actors. It is for this reason that the unofficial contacts between the departments and the Commission are encouraged rather than frowned upon by the OST – as long as the departments retain the integrity of the UK negotiating stance. On official stating:

> "So we get very much informal information [on] the way the Commission is thinking about Framework V, as does the OST, which we all feed into a collective intelligence." (DoH, 1998: Interview)

Indeed, information gained in this area is a valuable source for the OST in assessing the Commission's views on the FPs.

The need to keep ahead of the game in terms of information makes the departments eager to get access to unofficial texts from the Commission and other actors. This eagerness is backed by a lack of trust over the actions of the Commission based on the short response times it provides in terms of its production of official consultation papers and its deadline for responses. As a departmental official comments:

> "Clearly they play politics, you know, they know that because of the rules of engagement, the tighter deadlines that they operate to, the less time the member states has to produce a coherent argument against." (Unattributable Departmental A, 1998: Interview)

The deadlines are a particular problem as the departments need to be able to respond to calls for information in time for the OST to collate their responses and form a UK position paper. In respect of this, all of the departmental FP co-ordinators interviewed commented they ensured that they held the information likely to be sought by the Commission prior to its official request, in order that they would be in a position to respond to any new, inevitably short, deadlines that are set. One departmental official stating:

> "Why it is bizarre and why it needs to be bizarre ... is that very often the Commission will want official responses at incredibly short deadlines [leaving the national officials inadequate time to conduct full official consultations]. ... Really you've go to be one step ahead of the game. You really have got to get your intelligence about what the Commission is likely to produce possibly a couple of weeks ahead of the game - so you can do your consultation inside the department to be able to respond [to the OST so that it can respond to] the incredibly short deadlines that the Commission demand." (DoH, 1998: Interview)

Whether, as suspected by many of the departmental actors, this is a deliberate tactic of the Commission's to ensure it holds the upper-hand, or down to simple bureaucratic incompetence, or due to the inevitable complexity of negotiating with so many states, as the Commission claims, is unclear. (Baig, 1999: Interview, Rogers, 1999: Interview)

Mistrust of the Commission is reflected in the Commission in several areas. For example, some of the departmental actors clearly believed that the Commission would unfairly use its difficult position at the centre of negotiations to its advantage. As one actor stated:

> "The Commission can always say that another state agrees with what they are doing, apart from extremely important cases it is not possible to check everything, particularly where you are making tentative enquiries." (Unattributable Departmental B, 1999, Interview)

Such distrust is also evident in its operations in relation to its FP Expert Advisory Groups. As one senior departmental official commented:

> "Nominally what they [the Commission] will be doing is using those Expert Advisory Groups to determine what the work programmes will be. I say nominally because we will suspect they have already written the programmes - but nevertheless they will put their own spin on it. [Crucially] there is no guarantee

> that the Commission will accept the advice – I think they are stupid if they don't but nevertheless that is the way they operate." (Unattributable Departmental A, 1998: Interview)

This mistrust is heightened by the lack of influence the departments have on the appointments to the Expert Advisory Groups: the Commission holds the sole authority to appoint candidates of their choice. Indeed, there is no guarantee that there will be representation from every member state, let alone guarantees that a government department's preferred experts will be appointed. (Dennis, 1999: Interview) At another level, the same is true for the peer review of proposals that are submitted to FP Calls for Proposals.

> "[Whilst] member states suggest a whole range of individuals who would be in their eyes appropriate to review proposals, the Commission has access to its own data base and it determines who will be a peer reviewer. Member states and Programme Management Committees are not informed who the reviewers are either prospectively or retrospectively and it is a bone of contention with the member states, certainly in most states.... The Commission will not even produce a list of people that they have used. ... We just hope the Commission select the ones we suggest." (DoH, 1998: Interview)

Indeed, the only way a state can find out if their preferred candidates have been taken up by the Commission is if a chosen academic opts of his own volition to inform them. However, in its favour, the peer review process is generally seen as efficient despite the lack of transparency. (MAFF, 1999: Interview) Further strains in the network are reflected in the unwillingness of the Commission to distribute information on how each state fairs in relation to the distribution of FP funds. Whilst neither of these examples are directly connected to the negotiations for FP5, they do nevertheless create a degree of scepticism within the departmental actors clearly limiting any prospect of the relationships with the Commission progressing to what could be considered a policy community.

The departments registered a further fear in terms of the perceived limited degree to which the Commission utilised its official consultation procedures as evidenced in the frequently unfeasibly short time in which the Commission produced its re-evaluated proposals following the deadline for actor input. Many of the departmental actors commented that they did not believe the Commission could have adequately evaluated the national response position papers before

publishing its own reply, giving the impression that it is just going through the motions. In this respect, suspicion is clearly present concerning the Commission pushing its own agenda rather than simply operating as a negotiation facilitator.

Ultimately the departments do understand some of the Commission's own institutional and actor-based explanations for its frequently perceived belligerence and / or aloofness. As a DoH official comments:

> "They need to be transparent, but they are tossed in this maelstrom because they have to try to satisfy the needs and wishes of all the member states. They are hamstrung by the official languages, so occasionally they cannot [officially] allow out documents until [they have] been translated into the official languages. So, they're stuck." (DoH, 1998: Interview)

A DETR official reflecting those views stated:

> "They are incredibly undermanned" (DETR, 1999, Interview)

This acceptance within the departments of the severe constraints placed on the Commission and recognition that the Commission is aided by the fact that many recognise that it *can* be relatively open in the provision of unofficial texts and informal contact.

> "And that means that you get unofficial texts that 'fall off the back of a lorry', texts that suddenly drop on your desk that are French or German." (Unattributable Departmental A, 1998: Interview)

This aspect of the department / Commission relationship uncovers the very real need to be an 'insider' if you wish to influence proceedings with the Commission. Simply relying on publicly available official texts will severely limit the effectiveness of an actor: it is clear that those departments able to respond with near immediacy will gain an advantage over those that had to conduct time-consuming fresh consultations on the mark of an immediate official call from the Commission.

As a cautionary note, it should be recognised that the Commission cannot be examined as a uniform body – clearly some parts of the Commission will perform their duties and relate to the departments in different ways from other parts of the Commission. As one official comments:

> "Some DGs are better than others in terms of contact and responsiveness." (DETR, 1999, Interview)

Another commenting:

> "Some DGs are inherently more open than others and some characters are inherently more relaxed [about information exchanges] whilst others see it as member states versus the Commission rather than co-operating. It is not always easy." (MAFF, 1999: Interview)

Even within DGs the departments find different levels of contact, with many stating that they believed the top of DG-XII to be adequately resourced whilst the lower levels were understaffed and under-resourced with negative consequences for the amount of contact time they could spend with the UK departmental actors.

In conclusion, despite the negative aspects of Commission interaction, the departments still see it as vital to their lobbying strategy for two main reasons. Firstly, even if the Commission takes only limited note of their input it is better than allowing competing views free reign. Secondly, the OST will use the information gained from the Commission by the departments in the formulation and execution of its other forms of input with the Commission and other member states, and for formulating and arguing its position in the UK vis-à-vis other key actors. Thus if the departments do not benefit directly they stand a strong prospect of indirectly benefiting from their increased value to the OST as information sources and from improved efficiency of the OST due to the information they pass on.

Overall, it is clear that in many respects the departments are more detached from the Commission than other key UK actors. Their submergence in the UK *policy community* is reinforced not only by the resource dependencies on the OST, but also by the institutional constraints limiting direct official lobbying of the Commission and compounded by the noted limitations of the Commission's consultation procedures. To a large extent, many of the Commission's failings are unavoidable given the fact that it has to take account of such a large and diverse range of political, sectoral and state-based interests. In light of this it is highly unlikely that consistently concurring policy perspectives or improved

transparency are likely, therefore there is little prospect of the emergence of a departmental / Commission *policy community* – the dependency relationships are inherently too unstable at this level.

European Parliament

As evaluated in the Chapter Nine, the institutional requirement for the use of a modified co-decision procedure over FP5's structure provided the major UK actors with a strong incentive to lobby MEPs, particularly those on the Committee on Research, Technological Development and Energy. However, given the incentives, contact between the departments and the EP was minimal. As a senior departmental official comments:

> "We haven't actually bothered to contact the MEPs ... we don't see the need to have a contact. The only time we might is when, for example, an individual researcher is upset with the Commission over contract obligations, we will then contact the MEPs for support. In other words it is negligible." (MAFF, 1999: Interview)

Three key factors have served to limit this aspect of the policy networks: i) departmental *institutional limitations*, ii) *internal EP problems*, iii) the relative value of *other points of access*.

Firstly, the *institutional limitations* on the lobbying activities of the departments at the EU-level – concerning the OST's gatekeeper role – clearly limited the scope for department / MEP contact. This situation was even more relevant for the EP than the Commission, as at least the Commission has some pretence of being apolitical at the levels which the departments were dealing with it, whereas the MEPs are clearly political actors. (Dennis, 1999: Interview; DETR, 1999: Interview) It is possible for departments to circumvent the official channels through encouraging other policy community members to argue their case to the EP. For example, the DoH's close contact and co-operation with the MRC created a covered secondary channel for input. However, even this detached form of input has to be considered as minimal given the MRC's would not argue for something it was against during such meetings, it also expressed clear dissatisfaction over their

dealings with the EP, and given the following point it is unlikely the departments would have diverted their resources to such a task.

Secondly, fundamental *internal problems* in the EP, both real and perceived, have created a wide-spread perception within the departments that – even if they get their views across to the MEPs – by the time the EP formed its opinion they would have been lost in a sea of inconsistency, compromise and political flag-waving.[45] Of the one instance of OST-approved direct contact with MEPs over the structure of FP5 by a DTI actor, the conclusion was that the were negligible and it was not seen as an area of contact that was likely to be increased in the future. (Unattributable Departmental E, 1999: Interview)

Finally, the relative value of other point of access, particularly the OST and even the Commission, in terms of influencing the FPs are clearly much higher than for the EP. Thus, given the inevitable scarcity of lobbying resources, it is unsurprising that the EP is virtually ignored by the government departments.

Overall, the main limitations in the direct departmental lobbying of the EP concerns the institutional limits centred on the OST's strong *gatekeeper* role. However, even if such limitations were not present, the poor reputation of the EP and its remaining fundamental internal problems would still severely limit the extent to which the departments were willing to invest time and effort to have their views heard, particularly given the availability of the more fruitful options of the OST and the Commission. (Dennis, 1999: Interview)

In conclusion on the EU actors, the Commission and the EP indicate that limits to the Europeanisation of *policy networks* can also lay outside the member states, and cannot be fully explained by a simple lack of 'pull' to the EU-level. A theoretical guide must also direct towards an examination of the receptiveness and responsiveness of the EU institutions to national actors.

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[45] Developed in greater detail in Chapter Nine, political flag-waving involves a perception amongst certain actors that MEPs are frequently too quick to demonstrate populist credentials, for example, 'green politics', without giving issues their full consideration.

Contact with other Member States

The departments were in contact with their counterparts in the other member states in relation to the formation of FP5 – however this contact was clearly limited in terms of the range of states they engaged in discussions with and the intensity of the interaction. The limited nature of this contact was due to a combination of the relatively low value of interaction at the early stages given the relatively strong position of central national (e.g. OST) and European Union-level (e.g. Commission) actors.

The UK departmental actors did have a degree of unofficial contact and co-ordination with the richer northern EU states. Departmental actors commenting:

> "We tend to have more in common with the Dutch, the Danish, the Austrians, the Irish and the Germans to some extent and some of the Nordic states. But it will vary." (MAFF, 1999: Interview)

> "We will co-ordinate with other member states to some extent. This is something that has been changing quite dramatically over the last year and a half." (MAFF, 1999: Interview)

A DoH official commenting:

> "Clearly, we want to have good relationships with the big hitters and so where we can and where the situation is right we will interact well with people like the Germans, people like the Dutch, the French, the Italians." (DoH, 1998: Interview)

However it is clear that the departments do not have a concerted strategy to develop such links as they do, for example, with the Research Councils, the OST and the Commission; the links exist on a largely ad hoc and personal level. MAFF again commenting:

> "It does depend on the individuals within MAFF, certainly from the time that Miles Parker took over he spent a lot of time dealing with other member states and establishing relationships, but it was quite a personal exercise." (MAFF, 1999: Interview)

With one departmental official commenting:

> "There is also the contact that we have ... with other member states, often on a personal relationship basis. Some are more friendly and open than others, you know, meeting up the night before a formal meeting in Brussels – it is actually another good way of keeping people informed of the main concerns that people

have. It is not a good way to spread information on specifics." (Unattributable Departmental C, 1999: Interview)

Overall it was clear that no planned and concerted effort was being made to utilise this potentially lucrative route. The main reasons for this appear to be threefold. Firstly, interaction in this external arena is limited by the institutional need to follow the OST-approved line. Secondly, the departments perceive that their resources are best spent on other actors which will provide higher relative returns. Thirdly, there is a clear, almost ingrained, perception of dissatisfaction with certain of the member states.

Much of the dissatisfaction with certain member states emerges from meetings within the running of FP4, specifically at the PMCs stage, where the member states are frequently represented by their relevant departmental experts. The development of policy networks in this area is limited by the degree of frustration evident in the UK government departments at having to deal with a diversity of member states that do not all operate their standards. As one senior departmental actor stated:

"You have got a few member states who send policy-makers, but others will come such as professors representing individual laboratories and all they are really interested in is making sure that the Framework includes the bit that they want so that they can put in the project proposals and get the money." (Unattributable Departmental C, 1999: Interview)

Another commenting:

"I see it on the Programme Management Committees that I sit on in Brussels, ... you will always get ... because of different ways people operate in different member states, [representatives pushing for policies that should not be EU priorities - if indeed they should be a priority for the particular country that is pushing the proposal at all]. The Italians, for example, will often put up an academic to sit on a Programme Management Committee as opposed to a government official. So he is going to turn around and say, [for example]: "I am an academic and I've got an interest in kidneys. Right, we need to put more European money into kidney research." I mean you can hear it and you can see it and that is the way it happens, and [unfortunately if they] shout loud enough and long enough someone will eventually hear." (Unattributable Departmental A, 1998: Interview)

Clearly, the Italian referred to in the above quotation would be unlikely to be welcomed into even a relatively loose *issue network* with the departmental actor, due to a sense of mistrust based on his 'outsider' status: Not only was he pushing for what was perceived by the departmental actor to be 'an unnecessary policy area' to be included in the FP, he also lacked an 'insider' status in terms of his being an active academic, not an established Civil Servant. As the UK actor stated:

> "If they are an academic then it depends on their area of expertise, if they are a government official then it's a lot easier for me to make contact.". (Unattributable Departmental A, 1998: Interview)

These views were reflected with remarkable consistency across the government departments. (Unattributable Departmental B, 1999, Interview) Thus the departments create their own limitations on transnational contacts in terms of their perceptions of the other actors, these clearly exist beyond the more institutional limitations, such as OST restrictions on departmental 'official' lobbying. Ultimately it is actors' *perceptions* of each other's resources, intentions and status that determines where along the policy community / issue network spectrum a relationship rests, not the hard reality of those factors.

The development of transnational policy networks is also held back by the 'Rubber Stamping' nature of the PMCs leaving little opportunity for the actors to develop solid contacts. As on MAFF official comments:

> "Part of the problem is that the PMC meetings tend to be fairly short. It is something that we have discovered over a number of years of negotiating in Brussels, a meeting once it is held is usually only a rubber stamping exercise. The real negotiation has gone on behind the scenes, very often on a bilateral basis between the member states and the Commission." (MAFF, 1999: Interview)

In conclusion, for UK civil servants – particularly those that only deal with EU issues on a sporadic basis – establishing policy networks with their European contemporaries is a difficult and frequently undesired task given the actual and perceived 'cultural' differences and limited potential returns. Such interactions are therefore generally limited to similar 'like-minded' actors within the institutional arena of the PMCs. There is some indication that certain of the

departments, such as MAFF and DoH were engaged in establishing greater contact with their peers in the other member states through the PMCs , but at the time of the FP5 negotiations such relationships were not playing a central role.

Conclusion

Whilst the findings of the chapter indicate a degree of Europeanisation – represented in an expansion in the number and quality of EU-level links held by the UK government departments – the weight of evidence clearly rests with the continued dominance of the UK *policy community*: the government departments sitting alongside the Research Councils, with the vast majority of their FP input organised in direct relation to the UK core-executives' dominant OST.

Thus, whilst it is accurate to state that the departments interact with FP developments through a series of links at the UK and EU-levels, they remain firmly embedded in the national-level *policy community*, with EU relationships only existing in the weaker *issue networks,* which are specific-issue dependent and hold relatively fluid memberships with weak or heavily unbalanced dependency relationships. At the UK-level the key players in the departments' policy community are the OST and the Research Councils with a clear strengthening of relationships where sectoral interests are similar. At the EU-level the departments' primary routes for information and influence are the utilisation of the OST and direct 'unofficial' contact with the Commission. Their direct participation in the implementation of FP4 provided the departments with the opportunity to expand their *policy network*s into both the Commission and their equivalent institutions in other member states, yet it appears that only the former of these was acted upon with any concentrated and organised purpose.

The explanation for the *limited Europeanisation* of the policy networks is based *less on a lack of 'pull' to the European level* and more on a range of *counteracting factors* that restrict or limit interaction beyond the UK-level. Three main factors have limited the Europeanisation of UK policy networks in the FP5 negotiations. The first of these is, *opposing-pull* at the national level, for

example other departmental commitments, such as the demands of nationally-based research programmes or the presence of efficient UK channels of influence. Basically, the UK policy community has proved extremely attractive to the departments, particularly in relation to the strong convergence of preferences on such subjects as subsidiarity, stability of funding, and improved administration.

The second factor limiting Europeanisation is *barriers* at the national level, such as restricted 'official' channels of communication and the restrictive *Europes*-attribution system. In this respect, once again whilst *Europes* appears to be a highly successful budgetary control instrument from the Treasury's perspective, one has to question its largely negative impact on the ability of UK actors to lobby to their strengths in Europe.

Finally, the *negative experiences* of the European level resulted in perceived low level of returns-to-investment from EU-actors, particularly when contrasted with the perceived efficiencies of lobbying at the UK-level. For example, the greater two-way flows of information between the OST and the government departments when contrasted with those between the government departments and the Commission. Also the greater perceived honesty of appraisal from the OST when contrasted with the Commission, as evidenced by the following quote:

> "They may be quite accommodating and you really get the message that you are getting the message through and everything is going fine, but what comes out at the end may be completely different." (Unattributable Departmental C, 1999: Interview)

Of course the complexities faced by the Commission in having to deal with such a large number of member and associated states does not help its situation.

Overall, the dominant findings of this chapter relate to the restrictions on the Europeanisation process, in particular the UK Treasury's *Europes*-attribution system and the central *gatekeeper* role of the OST, and failures of the EU-level actors to take advantage of their position in tempting the UK actors into advantageous European-level policy communities. The findings thus highlight a

clear need for an understanding of the potential impact of internal state political structures, individual institutional resources, and most crucially, the importance of actor perceptions alongside capabilities and intentions if the Europeanisation process is to be understood.

The following chapter examines the role of the second major group of predicted UK FP5 policy community members under the OST – the Research Councils, as depicted in Figure 1: Initial Perceptions of the UK FP5 Policy Community, page 5. Taking a similar format to this chapter, it assesses both the role of the Research Councils as a whole and establishes their individual traits in relation to the FPs. Emphasis is given to the degree to which the UK core-executive represented the Research Councils' interests in the creation of FP5 in respect of their individual traits and dependency relationships with the other policy actors and institutional mechanisms. Of particular interest is the extent to which the factors that have held back the Europeanisation process for the government departments – such as institutional loyalty to the core-executive, *Europes* attribution and the problems of Commission feedback – have held a similar impact on the Research Councils.

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7) UK Research Councils and the Creation of the EU's Fifth Framework Programme

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Introduction

On the surface, the formulation of the European Union's Fifth Framework Programme represents an ideal vehicle for the partial Europeanisation of the United Kingdom's Research Council RTD policy links through encouraging a shift of their lobbying resources from the national to the European level in order to ensure that the programme suits their needs. This chapter examines the processes behind the formation of Research Council lobbying strategies in relation to the creation of the FP5, specifically assessing the extent that they remain focused on the UK government as a source of influence as opposed to directing their efforts to the European level in the form of contact with other member states, the European Commission and the European Parliament. The chapter also focuses on the extent to which institutional differences between the Research Councils have produced varying approaches to the FP negotiations.

As with the previous chapter, the analysis is based on a modified *policy networks* approach with a strong institutional emphasis. In particular, two extremes of policy network formation, close-knit 'policy communities' and loose 'issue networks', are utilised to establish the nature of policy relationships, with three variables - stability of membership, permeability to new members and extent of resource dependencies – determining where on the spectrum a network should theoretically be placed. (Peterson, 1995: 77; see also Rhodes and Marsh, 1992, 12 – 15) As indicated, the analysis takes the hypothesis that the RTD funding shift to the European level will have altered Research Council 'resource dependencies' producing a 'Europeanisation' of their lobbying activities, and sets it against the reality.

The pre-existence of a strong British RTD network, as noted in the previous chapter, acts as a barrier to European-level entrants. However, for limited Europeanisation to occur the existing UK actors need only increase their

European contacts, there is no requirement for a UK policy community to be significantly altered (though inevitably there will be some impact on the existing resource dependencies). Again, for the purposes of this analysis – to cope with the European level – the policy community requirement for 'insulation from ... other networks' (Rhodes and Marsh, 1992: 13) has been relaxed and is only considered relevant where another network significantly alters the structure of the main UK policy community.

Research Councils

The Science and Technology Act 1965 laid the foundations for public funding of RTD through the Research Councils, alongside cover for general Government R&D expenditure and result dissemination. As noted in the Cabinet Office *Review of allocation, management and use of government expenditure on science and technology* RTD policy in the UK is still largely based around these funding arrangements. (1993: 3.2) The Sectoral Research Councils consist of the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC), Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), Medical Research Council (MRC) Natural Environment Research Council Research Council (NERC) and the Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council (PPARC).

The main source of funding for the Research Councils is provided by the UK government through the OST. However, the Research Councils exist as institutionally distinct and autonomous bodies, largely free of government interference in the setting of specific research programmes. Indeed, the Research Councils' Royal Charters profess their independence of action within a broad mission statement.

In basic terms the Research Councils are designed to fund basic science, some applied science, and some post-graduate training in line with the requirements of their particular RTD sectors. (Willis, 1997: Interview) As Figure 9: Expenditure on SET by the Sectoral Research Councils in Cash Terms 1998-99 demonstrates, the sums involved are substantial, indeed the largest Research Council alone

accounts for only a few million under the total UK indicative contribution to the FPs per year.

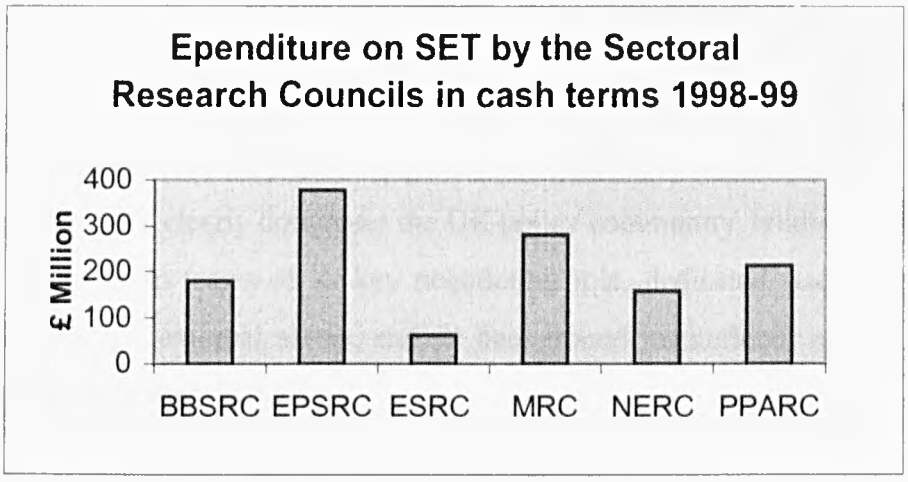

Figure 9: Expenditure on SET by the Sectoral Research Councils in Cash Terms 1998-99

Adapted from OST, 1988 Table 2.1

Many of the Research Councils are heavily involved with international RTD collaboration independent of the FPs, with total international subscriptions paid in 1996-7 reaching £138.9m or 10.6 per cent of their total expenditure. The most heavily involved by far being PPARC with international subscriptions of £114.0m or 53.3 per cent of their total expenditure, the European Space Agency and European Laboratory for Particle Physics (CERN) taking the dominant proportion of these funds - both of which exist outside the political arena of the EU. Despite these figures, PPARC is not heavily involved in the FPs because they do not really cover its science area. Part of the reason for this is that projects such as CERN are established by European co-operation outside the realm of the European Union.

The following sections examine key influences on the Research Council lobbying strategies for FP5. Firstly, the role of two UK government factors, the OST and the '*Europes*' mechanism are analysed. Secondly, the impact of the individual traits of the Research Councils are evaluated. Finally, the impact of the European level, including the two main EU institutions, the European Commission and European Parliament, and the role of other member states and the United Kingdom Research Office are evaluated.

The OST

As noted in Chapter Five, the International Science and Technology Affairs section of the OST was the linchpin of UK interaction with FP4, and was responsible for the formation and the bulk of the delivery of the UK negotiating position for FP5 (bar the formal stages in the Council of Ministers). From this position the OST clearly dominates the UK policy community, holding by far the most resources in terms of its key negotiating role, dedicated staff, access to information and external actors, and its background institutional role as a co-ordinating body for UK RTD.

In terms of its dependence within the policy community, the OST is as heavily reliant on the Research Councils as it is on the government departments for the scientific and political information required to establish valid and persuasive negotiating positions. The OST's first consultation paper on FP5, delivered to the Research Councils along with the other key UK actors in 1995, very early in the process, clearly indicates this need for information. This symbiotic relationship is perfectly described by Fletcher of PPARC:

> "The OST groups are well versed in matters of politics and the way in which government departments work and the briefing of ministers and so on, we are well versed in the management of science and delivery of a science programme – actually we need each other. They couldn't advise ministers without our expert advice, but we couldn't deliver our programme without the political leadership of ministers, so it is a good partnership." (Fletcher, 1997: Interview)

On an equal footing, the OST also requires the co-operation of departmental and Research Council actors in the implementation stages of a Framework Programme. As noted in Chapter Five, the existence of this mutual dependency acts as a variable constraint on the OST's negotiating position – it needs to be seen to be representing the key actors it is reliant on for information and co-operation in order to retain strong working relationships – providing the Research Councils with a strong line of access.

Obviously, the need to represent the interests of your policy community is a tall order when many of their interests are naturally going to be in opposition to each other. However, the OST appears to have mastered the ability to turn down a

request from the Research Councils without damaging its relationships. As Fletcher comments:

> "OST has a trans-departmental role, which means in the end it represents the UK government ... So in the end OST is the final arbiter of UK government policy on science. ... In the end I acknowledge that they [the OST] have to take the political judgement about what is acceptable or unacceptable in the context. I can say what I think is right in terms of a scientific view or science management view, but they may have to compromise, there may be other reasons why they say this is acceptable or unacceptable. It's not a source of a problem. We are working together, we have different sets of drivers in some situations but ... over the whole spectrum it's a strong team' (Fletcher, 1997: Interview)

This extremely understanding view, reflected across the Research Councils contrasts markedly with the view of the same actors in relation to the European Commission and the European Parliament. Whilst the Research Councils do know that the Commission and EP are frequently facing even more conflicting submissions than the OST, they appear unwilling to accept their failures to gain influence in the same way.

Part of the explanation of what, on the surface, appears to be double-standards on the part of the Research Councils in their treatment of the different actors can be explained through the OST's consistent willingness to clearly outline the reasons for its actions to the actors within the policy community. In contrast, the Commission and the EP, to the frustration of the Research Councils would frequently not even respond to submissions, let alone explain their actions.

One aspect of the process that may have helped the OST keep the trust of the Research Councils was the fact that, whilst many of the smaller UK actors were cut out of the OST's information gathering process following the publication of the UK consultation paper, the Research Councils were still very much involved. Indeed, they remain in contact with the OST on a permanent basis regarding the FPs given their involvement at all three levels of the policy process. The ongoing dialogue would certainly have made it easier for the OST to explain the reasons for its rejection of certain proposals.

Of course a high level of consistent dialogue is a possibility between the Research Councils and the Commission, both being permanently involved in the FPs. However, it appears that the extra burden of fourteen other member states

means that explaining its decisions to all the potentially relevant actors would not be possible. It is also the case that the level of trust built-up in the UK policy community is such that the OST is willing to take a more open and honest approach with the Research Councils than the Commission, as it can be confident that discussions over compromises and strategy will not become public knowledge. In an atmosphere as potentially highly charged with national tensions as the European Commission's area of operations, such an open approach is seen to be particularly risky. (Baig, 1999: Interview)

As noted in Chapter Five, the OST was willing to suggest to the Research Councils that they foster European-level contacts to increase their chances of success, even when their goals did not collate – a strategy they did not take with the government departments. Whilst this approach may appear extremely generous and even potentially counter-productive for the OST, it has to be remembered that there is little that the OST could do to restrict Research Council access to the European level. In institutional terms the Royal Charters of the Research Councils state that they are designed to operate independently and therefore do not operate under the same restrictions as the government departments which are institutionally obliged to follow the government line. Thus, the OST's 'encouragement' of the European contacts is more politically expedient than generous, given the weaker institutional relationship between the actors in this area – whilst it appears as though the OST is granting them a special freedom, in reality they already hold it. Of course, the actions of the OST in this area could also be seen to display a scepticism over the alternative European-level routes of access.

Europes

As analysed in Chapter Five, *Europes* is HM Treasury terminology for an attribution based financing practice unique to the UK's approach to the FPs. In short, the '*Europes*' mechanism involves the UK Treasury attempting to retrieve funds allocated to the FPs via reducing related domestic expenditure. *The Treasury therefore sees Europes* as a useful tool to force the publicly funded

RTD actors to only push for responsible increases and changes in the EU's RTD budget and to pressure them to avoid the duplication of research efforts.

Crucially, to date, the OST has absorbed all of the *Europes* impact intended to be attributed to the individual Research Councils within its overall budget, a factor that has further solidified its policy community position at the top of the hierarchical relationship. However, despite the fact that no single Research Council has been directly attributed, *Europes* has remained at the forefront of the factors on which they decide their negotiating strategies. In this respect, as with the government departments, it is largely the fear of *Europes'* potential impact rather than the actuality of it that is holding such a profound effect on the lobbying activities of the targeted actors. Dr Dukes, Head of the International Section of the MRC comments:

> "Now in actually fact the MRC's [attribution] is the Office of Science and Technology's, which is fronting the *Europes* for that rather than us directly. But of course we are always concerned that if we had an increase in the BIOMED programme in Framework Five that that would eventually trickle down to a cut to our budget. So *Europes*, in the background, does influence the way we argue in Brussels." (Dukes, 1998: Interview)

Another official commenting:

> "I don't *think* that we have suffered *apparent* reduction due to attribution or *Europes* but clearly there are *some mechanisms*, and as Rob Wright has said *they're not always obvious*, ... there *will be some effect*, [potentially] a *significant* effect." [Emphasis Added] (Unattributable Research Council C, 1997: Interview)

The evidence points to the fact that the uncertainty over both the extent of the OST's protection of the Research Councils from *Europes* and the confusion over the calculations of the system are holding back the Research Councils from supporting the FPs to their fullest desires. Indeed, the Research Councils frequently played down their FP5 interests during the negotiations for fear that they might be successful and thus be hit by a higher *Europes*. In addition, actively supporting a RTD area in the FPs is perceived by the Research Councils to provide the Treasury and other *Europes* actors with ammunition by increasing the difficulty of arguing that FP research is not replacing what would otherwise be their national projects.

Being cynical one could suggest that the Treasury is more than happy for this doubt and uncertainty to continue to exist if it means that the Research Councils

will continue to be put off pushing for FP budget increases. However, as a senior OST official comments, in creating such negative lobbying incentives *Europes* clearly:

> 'does influence the way in which departments [and Research Councils] help us develop a UK position ... skewing what would otherwise be sensible positions in the UK.' (Unattributable OST, 1997: Interview)

Indeed, the OST is occasionally put in the position of arguing for FP funding to move into specific science areas against a backdrop of less than enthusiastic potential recipients. For example, despite its inevitability, as with the government departments, no Research Council supported the funding top-up FP4 received towards the end of its life and they were all against its distribution in 'their' areas.

Overall, it is essential to grasp, in relation to *Europes,* that a single trait can hold an immense impact on lobbying activities. Equally important, however, as noted in the previous chapter, *Europes* was found to have held a variable impact on certain actors, the Department of Trade and Industry divisions, for example, being relatively immune when contrasted with the Research Division within the Department of Health. The same is true for the Research Councils, with the impact varying from Council to Council; this aspect is examined in following section.

Individual Traits, Individual Impacts

On the surface, the Research Councils represent broadly similar institutions with similar mission statement philosophies. However, differing institutional resources and differing institutional perspectives exist between the bodies that have led to significantly variable approaches to FP5 lobbying, this is particularly the case regarding the impact of *Europes*.

The important point to recognise with *Europes* is that it holds a highly variable *perceived* impact on the individual Research Councils and therefore a highly variable *real* impact on their lobbying strategies. As Neil Williams, of the EPSRC states:

> "*Europes* is one of the reasons why, I feel ... we try and keep at arms length from the Framework programmes in EPSRC. ... we are also driven by, I wouldn't say a fear of *Europes*, but a concern / a watching of *Europes*." (Williams, 1997: Interview)

This contrasts sharply with the BBSRC's more engaged approach despite its wariness of *Europes* the difference being based on the differing institutional resources of the two Research Councils; the EPSRC being more vulnerable to *Europes*. For example, the EPSRC does not 'sponsor' its own research institutes, therefore it is not in the direct interest of it to lobby for FP5 to move further into its areas of science as it has no prospect of recouping *Europes* induced cuts through direct participation in the FP. As Williams comments:

> "We no longer have any responsibility for laboratories or establishments – so we, the Research Council, are not going to get any income from the Framework Programme. ... we have no particular interests as an organisation – we couldn't receive money from [the EU]." (Williams, 1997: Interview)

In stark contrast to this position, the BBSRC's eight formally sponsored research institutes[46] received over 10% of their funding through FP4. Hence it was in the direct interest of the BBSRC to lobby at all levels for FP5 to be focussed on the areas that its' laboratories are most likely to benefit. Though of course *Europes* still left the BBSRC unwilling to argue for significant increases in the overall FP biotechnology budget – its call being for a focussing of priorities, not an expansion.

The MRC's position on *Europes* is interesting as it falls between the stance of the BBSRC and EPSRC, claiming that the attribution system had not 'unduly constrained' its lobbying actions. (Dukes, 1998: Interview) This is despite the fact that the MRC, like the EPSRC is not able to directly benefit from FP funding via sponsored institutes. The main difference for this approach appears to be based on the differing cultures of the Research Councils, as examined below.

The ESRC's position is informative on the extent to which *existing* resources need to be already in place at the European level in order for the 'pull' to be sufficient for national actors to become engaged in the lobbying process. Given the limited scope for the social sciences in FP4 the ESRC appears to have

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[46] BBSRC sponsorship accounting of over 50 per cent of three of the institutes' funding and between 24 and 39 per cent of the remaining five. Total turnover for the eight institutes is £120 million.

decided not to invest significant lobbying resources on the FPs, beyond those requested by the OST, despite the prospect that existed for increases in funding for their area in FP5. (ESRC, 1997: Interview) Indeed, the ESRC's position appeared to be least well-informed of all the Research Councils. The main reasons for this seemed to be a general lack of understanding on the FPs, largely due to the lack of social sciences funding in what was the existing FP at the time. Also, the ESRC viewed itself in danger of having its budget, the smallest of the Research Councils, hit in a disproportionately hard manner by the potential of *Europes* contributions. In terms of future research it would be informative to analyse the degree to which the existence of increased social science funding in FP5 has increased the ESRC's awareness of the programmes and therefore increased their lobbying activities in relation to the forthcoming FP6.

Interestingly all the Research Councils were against reductions in present FP funding levels due to a lack of guarantees that any decline would be matched by a corresponding *Europes*-induced increase in UK funding – particularly as the attribution has not been fully applied. For example, any such FP decline would be of concern to the EPSRC for its general science area. However, for the BBSRC, *ceteris paribus*, its impact would potentially be much greater as it would hold a direct institutional impact given the increasing reliance of its sponsored research institutes on FP funding. Once again the BBSRC clearly holds greater incentives for establishing a strong lobbying stance at both UK and EU levels.

Another aspect of the Research Councils' lobbying process is their relationship with their 'partner' department – i.e. the department that works in the same RTD area. As one MRC official comments on their relationship with the Department of Health:

> "We work quite well together, we don't quarrel, but I guess if the chips were down we would quarrel." (Dukes, 1998: Interview)

As noted in the previous chapter, in this respect *Europes* holds a clear capability of weakening the strong policy community ties between two key public sector actors by pushing them into opposing positions. For example, if the Department of Health decided *Europes* was too high it might start lobbying for decreases in

FP funding against the wishes of the MRC whose *Europes* contribution was still being shouldered by the OST. As one official comments:

> "It may be that the Department may move in that direction, and if they do then it will be bad news for us, because what will tend to happen is that the political message from the department will be, as it rather is from the old Department of Environment, 'We don't like Europe, we don't like Framework Five, we'd rather have the money and spend it ourselves." (Dukes, 1998: Interview)

The BBSRC also suffers to an extent from this phenomenon over its relationship with MAFF:

> 'If you look at MAFF and their relationship with BBSRC, MAFF is always trying to ensure that it pays as little as possible, but that as much of the Framework Five programme is relevant to its own programmes as possible. At typical Whitehall thing of trying to get someone else to pay your ...' (Unattributable Research Council A, 1998: Interview)

A further area of contention relates to 'duplication'. Despite relative institutional independence, the Research Councils are effectively duty bound to take account of FP activities to avoid duplication of research. At the time of FP5 negotiations none of the Research Councils had been in a situation where they had to alter their programmes to make way for FP projects. However, fears remain that increases in FP activity may reduce the scope for 'national' projects, and in doing so impinge on their operational independence. (Willis, 1987: Interview) Again, the EPSRC appeared to hold a more negative stance than both the BBSRC and MRC in this area. As the issue here is one of control, the institutional cultures must play a part alongside the inevitable resource explanations for this difference. As one senior Research Council official comments:

> 'It partly would be the flavour and priorities attached by the senior management levels ... They will obviously vary from Council to Council with different emphases.' (Unattributable Research Council D, 1997: Interview)

For the EPSRC it was clear that the prospect of losing their influence over the UK science base in their area was a major disincentive to supporting the FPs. It should be stated that the EPSRC was not opposed to international collaboration *per se*, rather they were opposed to greater FP collaboration as they held little control over the allocation of funds. (Williams, 1997: Interview) A similar position was present for PPARC, which as noted earlier in this chapter allocates over half of its budget to international collaboration projects, yet was reticent to encourage the FPs given their lack of strong direct influence. (Fletcher, 1997: Interview) The

BBSRC, in contrast, whilst not eager to cede control and influence to the European level appeared more accepting of this dimension.

The EPSRC's rational assessment of its role in relation to the FPs – developed out of the afore mentioned lack of a direct monetary stake in FP projects and the potential impact of *Europes* – appears to have developed into a negative cultural perception resulting in a highly defensive approach - the FPs being seen as a direct competitor rather than a potential ally. As a senior EPSRC official stated:

> "Our primary purpose is the support of a national programme. [The] EPSRC will be extremely unlikely to lobby ... we are not in a position of seeking to get a particular area established in the Framework Programme. ... The decision was [that] we should not, as a single organisation, go and set our stall out within the Framework Programmes to say this is what we think we should do." (Williams, 1997: Interview)

The theoretical benefits of a cultural approach for an explanation to their differences are reinforced by the MRC's more positive approach to EU-lobbying, despite a similar lack of potential returns and a similar potential penalty in the form of a high *Europes*.

Overall, for the ESRC and PPARC with little 'pull' incentive from the European level in the form of FP funding, there was little evidence of them investing time and resources on lobbying the programme – as would be predicted under policy networks theory and concepts of Europeanisation.

Whilst the ESRC was likely to gain greater funding in its area under FP5, the limits of its existing interaction also held it back. For example, it had very little opportunity to participate in the PMCs of FP4 and therefore, as an institution, had a relatively low level of knowledge of the workings of the programme as a whole. In recognition of its limited RTD sector interest, PPARC's main involvement was in relation to co-ordinating the combined Research Councils' input into FP5 in relation to one cross-sectoral aspect of funding, the Training and Mobility of Researchers (TMR) programme. Whilst this does show the extent to which the Research Councils are willing to co-operate under the FPs, it is even more telling for the fact that it demonstrates that resource incentives are necessary for the fostering of networks beyond just an open collaboration outlook. That is PPARC, despite being the Research Council with the greatest

degree of bi and multi-lateral international collaboration and holding existing contacts at the European level in respect of the TMR programme, had little input into the supranational FP5 as at no stage did it look likely to stray into its science area to a significant degree.

For those Research Councils that did have a 'pull' factor to the European level, the extent of their involvement was largely dictated by their internal institutional and resource-based calculations. For example, the EPSRC remained firmly tied to the UK policy community in FP5 lobbying at this first negotiation level, with its European links being largely limited to formal contacts and responses. The uncertainty and potential threat of *Europes*, fear of FP policy encroachment, and the lack of opportunity to directly gain from any FP funding providing little incentive for lobbying beyond the OST. Factors that are compounded by the fact that its sceptical outlook would inevitably receive a cool reception from the Commission and EP who would not look to favourably on a proposal that FP5 should not be larger than FP4 in terms of either funding or scope.

Conversely, the BBSRC's greater familiarity, existing involvement, and prospects of financial gain in relation to the FPs have acted to reduce its image as an external threat. This more positive view has resulted in a pro-active multi-level lobbying style, with opportunities opened up by the participation in the PMCs of FP4 being exploited.

The European Level

European Commission

As noted in the previous chapters, the Commission is a central player in the FP policy process; whilst it does not have a vote on the finalisation of FP5, the Commission's power is derived from its institutional position at the centre of the negotiations, responsibility for devising the FP5 structure and programme specifics, experience in implementing previous FPs, and future responsibility for FP5. Given this position the Commission appears to represent an attractive target for Research Council actors attempting to influence the FP5 negotiations.

The Research Councils co-operate with the OST to forward the UK's line on the existing Framework's PMCs, fulfilling the same role as departmental officials when their expertise is deemed by the OST to be more appropriate. Clearly, direct participation in the PMCs has provided the Research Councils with a clear opportunity to expand their policy networks with the Commission and their equivalent institutions in other member states. However, whilst relatively close links exist in the Programme Management levels of the existing FP at levels Two and Three on the scale discussed in Chapter Two, pages 83 & 84, the links that are present between the UK actors and the Commission at Level One exist only as relatively weak issue networks – indicating the utility of Peterson's levels of analysis proposition. (1995)

Many of the factors governing the establishment of policy networks between the government departments and the Commission are also common to the Research Councils, however there is one main area of difference. As noted earlier, the Research Councils are not institutionally bound to follow the OST's line in their individual negotiations, and are therefore able to engage in direct contact to with the Commission and lobby their own views at an official level.

However, despite this institutional freedom several factors have conspired to limit the building of solid networks between the Research Councils and the Commission. These factors are examined in greater detail in Chapter Nine, however in short they include the following. Firstly, the impact of *Europes* in reducing positive input, that the Commission would be receptive to, into the FPs. Secondly, the lack of a solid two-way dependency relationship – whilst the Research Councils want to influence the Commission, the Commission has only a very limited need to acknowledge the Research Councils (relating to the need to desire a legitimacy of its actions). Basically, whilst direct actor contact is vital to the Commission as a method of strengthening its legitimacy in negotiations, it has a lot of actors to choose from. Thirdly, the gap between FP negotiations of around two years puts a clear strain on those relationships that are not ongoing within the lower levels of the FPs. Finally, failures on the Commission's part are largely due to the fact that it has a much wider political spectrum to take account

of than the OST. In this respect the Research Councils are, on average, almost certain to be more disappointed with the responses of the Commission than the responses of the OST.

European Parliament

The use of the co-decision procedure for the overall FP5 structure provides the major UK actors with a strong incentive to lobby MEPs, particularly UK MEPs, and particularly those on the Committee on Research, Technological Development and Energy. However, the EP still suffers from some fundamental internal problems that have limited the extent to which UK actors are willing to invest time and effort to have their views heard, leaving it far from fulfilling its potential. As one Research Council official comments:

> "I have been involved in two briefings of MEPs. They turned out to be very disappointing really." (Unattributable Research Council A, 1998: Interview)

The continued reluctance to use the EP as a vehicle to influence FP5 is based on a combination of experience and hearsay. The reluctance of actors to deal with the parliament stems from a wide-spread perception that even if they get their views across to the actors in direct meetings, by the time the EP forms its opinion they will have been lost in a sea of inconsistency, compromise and political flag-waving. As one senior UK official states:

> "Because there are such a wide range of views from such a wide range of different countries ... no one is very clear what parliament is going to say until it has said it and sometimes it looks surprised itself at what it has said. So it is a bit wayward in this respect – not a reliable vehicle in which to get your views expressed.'" (Unattributable Research Council E 1998: Interview)

The lack of scientific expertise on the part of the MEPs and their research assistants, although providing an opening for interest representation, severely limits the ability of the EP to contribute successfully to the debate. As Dr Dukes states:

> "I suspected that quite a lot of the writing is done by the assistants that you meet when [you] go over there, who have got no science [and] are not necessarily there for a very long time – the few I met all seemed to be leaving, I presume there is a high turnover." (Dukes, 1998: Interview)

For most of the UK actors this disillusionment with the EP has created a perception that, even if they did succeed in gaining the approval of the MEPs,

their efforts will most likely be wasted through poor application in the EP final opinion. Interestingly, however, the MRC has taken this failing as a possible opportunity for future lobbying. As Dr Dukes comments:

> "If we went to do this again we should put a lot more effort into making contact with them [the MEPs], and educating them as to what our [United Kingdom Research Office] office could do for them. [For example suggesting:] 'So don't you try and amalgamate amendment 137 and 163, we will do that for you and we will make it scientific sense for you'. (Dukes, 1998: Interview)

This is a rather interesting phenomenon where in the inadequacies of the European institutions, in this case the EP, can lead to increased opportunities for the Europeanisation of the policy processes as actors try to use institutional failings to their advantage. However, in qualification, the MRC was the only institution that had taken this line, all the other Research Councils viewing the EP as a relative waste of lobbying resources.

The perceptions of an inadequate European parliamentary system are also heightened to a large degree by confidence in the workings of the UK parliament. As Dr Dukes states:

> "If you have got the House of Lords Report and then you look at the MEP's amendments to Framework Five that came out in November / December, the MEP's stuff is absolutely ghastly." (Dukes, 1998: Interview)

Whilst the UK parliament is likely to be even less productive in terms of lobbying for FP5, due to its distance from the core of the decision-making process, such stark comparisons clearly weaken the EP's standing. In addition, as with the Commission, the EP suffers from the perception that the odds of success are particularly long due to the increased competition of interest groups and nationally-biased MEPs from the other states.

Overall, a combination of a poor image and an ability to reflect this in reality, summed up by the following statement, severely weakened the potential for the development of strong policy networks between the central UK actors and the EP.

> "The MEPs produced some 600 amendments, largely on the scientific content, and they were almost all completely useless." (Dukes, 1998: Interview)

With perceptions such as this remaining, particularly after resources have been invested in lobbying the EP, it is not surprising that a significant proportion of the UK research community's efforts have not been transferred to the EP.

The examples of the Commission and the EP indicate that limits to the Europeanisation of policy networks do not rest solely within the member states, nor can they be fully explained by a lack of 'pull' to the EU-level. A third factor needs to be addressed, the receptiveness and responsiveness of the EU institutions to pressures for increased levels of interest representation.

Contact with other Member States

Both the BBSRC and the MRC had developed a range of networks with their equivalent bodies in select other member states, both as an information gathering exercise and in an attempt to co-ordinate cross-state approaches thereby increasing their chances of success. As Willis of the BBSRC comments:

> "We exchange information directly with the Germans and the Dutch in particular, and to a lesser extent, the French and the Scandinavians and then the Mediterranean countries. There will often be phone calls and faxing, exchanging, you know, trying to find areas of common ground, trying to identify where achieving consensus will be difficult. Basically the Germans, the Dutch and we think very similarly." (Willis, 1997: Interview)

The similar policy perspectives of the Northern European States offering a good base from which to build an emerging policy network are reflected across the active FP Research Councils.

Interestingly, Willis indicates that the French, despite holding similar policy perspectives to the UK in a range of areas, are largely cut out of their interactions because of the slow nature of their internal consultation process in this area:

> "It is rather difficult to know what the French think because I think they have a rather more devolved system of consultation so they seem less able to predict what the answer is going to be." (Willis, 1997: Interview)

The crucial point to recognise here is that Willis does *not* state that policy differences limit their interaction with the French, rather it is the lack of available information resources early on in the process: the long wait between the start of their consultation process and the conclusion reducing their utility to the other actors in the network. This is in stark contrast to the comments of Willis and

other Research Council actors in relation to the Southern states that are seen as undesirable network partners whatever the speed of their internal consultation processes as their policy *perspectives* are consistently at odds with those of northern states such as the UK.

Overall, whilst there are clear signs of embryonic Europeanisation between the member states, the links clearly remain at a weak issue networks level as they are largely specific issue dependent and whilst membership is rather solidly centred around a selection of Northern states, only weak dependency relationships exist. In particular, the Research Councils and their partners in the other states have little to offer each other in concrete terms beyond a commitment to lobby within their respective national policy communities on areas of common ground.

UKRO

The United Kingdom Research Office (UKRO), formerly known as the UK Research and Higher Education European Office (UKRHEEO), acts as a form of 'staging post' for UK actors in the FPs alongside various other activities promoting European RTD collaboration. Whilst UKRO exists institutionally within the BBSRC, it operates as a separate institution and treats all its sponsors with equal measure. The sponsors include all of the Research Councils, along with the British Council and most universities. UKRO's main networking role for the Research Councils is in finding contact points in the Commission and European Parliament.

Naturally the utility of UKRO is variable depending on the issues at hand and actors involved. For example, it is frequently the case that the FP contact points developed by the Research Councils with the Commission at stages two and three of the policy process, as described on pages 83 & 84, put them at an information advantage to UKRO. (Fletcher, 1997: Interview) However there are occasions where the Research Councils find it necessary to go beyond such known contacts. As one Research Council official states,

> 'I tend not to [use UKRO to find EU contacts]. I tend to go directly because I know who I want to talk to, but I have used [UKRO] to set up a meeting with Commission officials [and with MEPs].' (Dukes, 1998: Interview)

In one example, UKRO was central in making initial arrangements for MRC officials to meet with some of the British Members of the EP's Committee on Research, Technological Development and Energy, UKRO also provided the offices for the meeting. Whilst there is little doubt that the MRC would have been able to arrange such a meeting without UKRO's help, such aids enable the whole process of network building to take place at a great rate by reducing the costs, in particular reducing planning time and the risks of wasting resources through forming arrangements with unsuitable actors. Where the expected returns from a meeting are high the costs will not be of as much significance to the actors, but where expected returns are relatively low, as was the case in this example, the reduction of the costs through such organisations as UKRO can hold a significant impact. Being members of UKRO also provides a two-way street making it more likely that the Research Councils will be contacted by other UK and European actors seeking information on their approach to the FP negotiations.

Conclusion

The Research Councils keep track of FP developments through a series of links at the UK and European levels. However, despite some shifts in lobbying towards the European level the overall policy process within the UK remains primarily directed towards the British core-executive, as represented by the OST. At the extremes, the OST remained almost the sole approach for at least two of the Research Councils, the EPSRC and the ESRC (three if PPARC's involvement with the TMR programme is discounted). Williams of the EPSRC commenting:

> "Our mechanism for getting information in, *is* to all intents and purposes through the OST" (Williams, 1997: Interview)

Even the MRC and BBSRC, despite greater European-level contacts than their counterparts, continued to hold the OST as their primary focal point.

Three main factors are worth highlighting for their particularly strong limiting impact on the Europeanisation of UK Research Councils' policy networks. Firstly, the pre-existence of a close UK policy community has proved hard to

displace, particularly given the strong convergence of their FP preferences on such subjects as stability of funding and improved administration.

Secondly, *Europes* has clearly limited the will of the Research Councils to push for increases of FP spending in their policy areas – one of the few areas where they would inevitably come into direct conflict with the government. Again, whilst *Europes* appears to be a highly successful budgetary control instrument from the Treasury's perspective, one has to question its largely negative impact on the ability of UK actors to lobby to their RTD strengths in Europe.

Thirdly, the Commission and the EP's courting of actor representation, though initially encouraging, left many of the Research Councils feeling detached from the process. This perceived low level of returns-to-investment is particularly heightened when contrasted with the responsive OST. As noted, this is inevitable to an extent; the OST does have the advantage of receiving a more limited range of interest representations. Nevertheless, through its more interactive approach in explaining why it will not lobby for specific proposals, the OST has managed to retain the confidence of even disappointed Research Council actors, whereas the less interactive Commission and EP approaches have not. Both the Commission and EP need to try to address this point if they are to gain stronger links with the Research Councils and take full advantage of their potential contributions. In respect of these factors, the significant movement in expectations to the European level has not been matched by a significant shift of lobbying resources to the extent predicted in the neofunctionalist-inspired hypothesis.

Finally, the variable approaches of the Research Councils clearly highlight that an understanding of the potential impact of internal state political systems, individual institutional resources, and cultural perspectives are essential to understanding the development of a Europeanisation process. If generalisations cannot safely be made across relatively similar actors such as the Research Councils, how can one expect sector-wide, state-wide or even EU-wide generalisations to stand-up to scrutiny?

Completing an examination of the three major sets of groups represented under the OST in Figure 1: Initial Perceptions of the UK FP5 Policy Community, page 5, the following chapter examines the approaches adopted by the major UK FP actors in industry and academia. A key issue examined is the extent to which the greater level of institutional freedom and lower direct financial reliance from the UK core-executive of these actors diminishes their commitment to the policy community structure demonstrated to have been held by the OST, government departments and Research Councils. The chapter also examines the extent to which the negative aspects of government department and Research Council experiences of interaction at the European level are replicated with this third group.

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8) UK Industrial and University Actor and the Creation of the EU's Fifth Framework Programme

Introduction

This final UK-level chapter examines the role that major industry and university actors have played in the formation of the EU's Fifth Framework Programme. As with the government departments and Research Councils, industrial and university actors face a 'pull' to the European level in the form of the incentive to lobby the European Union institutions to tailor the FPs to their needs.

Policy networks concepts are utilised in this chapter to examine the degree to which resource-based factors are dictating actor relationships and to explain the strength of the relationships between the various actors. Specifically the chapter concentrates on the degree of Europeanisation of the policy networks and the factors that have influenced it.

In the previous three chapters, it has been demonstrated that several factors have conspired to hold back the government departments and Research Councils from lobbying to their full capabilities at the European level. It can be assumed that some of these constraining factors are to a degree likely to be common for all UK actors seeking to influence the FPs, such as the problems of political flag-waving in the European Parliament. However, two key factors that were central to the analysis of the previous chapters in restricting the Europeanisation process are simply not present for the industrial and university actors. Firstly, they are not constrained by direct institutional ties to the core-executive / OST as was the case for the government departments, and secondly the *Europes* attribution system does not apply to them. The lack of these two constraints, should all other things remaining equal, free the actors to engage with the European level to a greater degree. The important question is, whilst the industrial and university actors do not have the same constraints restricting the Europeanisation of their technology programmes, do they have a completely different set of constraints, and if so what are they?

The first half of the chapter investigates the role of industry, specifically the pharmaceuticals industry, the CBI and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the British policy process concerning the creation of FP5, with the second half investigating the role of academic institutions in the process.

Industrial Actors

Given the enormity of potential UK industrial interests in the FPs the following text concentrates on one main sector, the pharmaceuticals industry. The sector was chosen because of the key role it plays in the FPs, the key role it plays in the UK economy and the wide variations in the sizes of the companies that exist in the sector, from some of the world's largest multi-nationals to a range of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs).

Large-Scale Industrial Interests

The extent of the involvement of the companies varied quite considerably. For example, of two of the largest pharmaceutical firms, one had extensively lobbied at both the UK and EU levels whilst the other had only gone so far as to gather and disseminate information to its staff on the opportunities available for FP funding. The reasons these divergences remain have not been entirely uncovered, though it does appear that the centralised structure of the involved firm had given it a clearer focus on the public research funds available and their opportunities to influence them. The decentralised divisions of the firm that had not been engaged in lobbying the FPs appeared to have created a incoherent strategy with no one division taking charge of the Company's overall participation. (Company, 1998: Interview)

The staffing resources available to the larger companies for lobbying the policy process were frequently in excess of the Research Councils, for example one of the major UK based pharmaceutical interests, had two government affairs departments, one UK based and European based, comprising six staff in total. (Company, 1998: Interview) However, in practical terms the number of staff the companies tended to have dedicated to the FPs were on a par with, or below,

those of the Research Councils - the rest of the staff being dedicated to regulatory and other issues. (Unattributable Company, 1999: Interview; University of Sheffield Framework IV Information Day: 22/05/96) It is important to remember that whilst the FPs are clearly valued by the larger companies, they comprise only one small part of their overall operations. The sheer size of some of the companies meant that even those with a range of FP projects on the go were in no way commercially reliant on the money. (Unattributable Company, 1997 & 1998: Interview; CBI, 1998: Interview) As one Research Council official comments:

> 'If you just look at industry, the Pharmaceutical industry for example, does it really need these schemes? It has huge resources for R&D, it's a global industry and I suspect that actually they don't care a jot about Framework V and BIOMED - although they have made an input on Framework V.' (Unattributable Research Council A, 1997: Interview)

Whilst this is somewhat of an overstatement of the case given the companies are involved in the FPs, clearly the overall importance of the EU programmes needs to be kept in context.

The companies certainly had a range of factors to lobby. A primary concern was to remove the political considerations from project evaluations. All of the actors interviewed indicated they believed the Commission operated a policy of favouring projects that involved partners from the poorer member states at the expense of scientific excellence and group cohesion. (Unattributable Company, 1998: Interview) This is backed up by a DTI report on Esprit by Hare, Lauchlan & Thompson (1989) in which they highlight the Commission's predisposition for providing each country with *juste retour* from the FPs:

> 'The least welcome, and generally least effective partners were those foisted on project teams by the Commission, either through merging several proposals into one, or when trying to broaden the international coverage of a project.' (1989: 63)

In reality, by the late 1990s, as a senior Research Council official comments, the extent to which the Commission considers such factors is overplayed:

> 'There was quite a perception that we needed to have Greeks and Spaniards and Portuguese, our perception is that this is not so, that the Commission is not driving matters of [positive discrimination].' (Dukes, 1997: Interview)

Yet, it was noticeable that every single industrial actor interviewed over the course of the research held the belief that including partners from poorer states would *ceteris paribus* increase their chances of the proposal being funded. Indeed, it is a rarity in the UK for a seminar on the FPs to be held for academics or industrialists where the question of including a 'southern state' is not asked. (Former Commission Official, 1999: Interview)

Hare, Lauchlan and Thomson also highlighted a major problem with the FPs for UK industrial concerns:

> 'Some firms which were, or were thinking of, collaborating with direct competitors argued that this was possible only when the research was far enough from the market. When the work got to a certain stage, collaboration would stop and further work would be done individually.' (1989: 62)

This situation had not changed one decade later. Indeed, the representatives of the companies that were interviewed stated that there would be little prospect of them ever using the FPs for RTD in a product area that held a clear potential for medium-term production, there are four main reasons for this. *Firstly*, the companies simply were not willingly to collaborate on a project that may provide their direct competitors with any form of advantage. *Secondly*, in terms of the time taken to process the funding of applications, the FPs are seen as far too slow for projects with potential near-market applications. *Thirdly*, the FPs are simply too restrictive in terms of limiting the abilities of companies to change priorities mid-stream, as the science or the external environment develops. *Fourthly*, all of the larger pharmaceutical companies operate on a global RTD basis, rather than a bordered European scale, with this in mind the FPs are often too restrictive for them. In this respect, the companies wished to ensure the FPs would be more receptive to partners from external states, particularly the USA.

Despite the fact that the greater proportion of the above factors are ones that would be dealt with in the setting of the overall FP, the companies have tended to focus their direct attention on the lower levels of the policy process where they can influence specific calls for proposals and work within the pre-defined boundaries. The main reason for this focus is based on a perception that they will have the most impact at this level when compared with the overall FP where

they will be competing for attention with a great deal more actors. It is at this lower-level that the Commission has proved most receptive to their input. (Company, 1998: Interview; Commission, 1999: Interview) Whilst this lower-level of the FPs, concerning the PMCs and 'Calls for Proposals' is beyond the scope of the main analysis of this thesis, it is worth addressing for the insights it offers on the overall policy networks the companies are engaged in.

One of the main reasons why the companies have become involved in lobbying the FPs is the desire of their research directors to improve their application success rates, as one company official commented:

> "The first cycle of FP projects there was a lot of momentum with the organisation, we had not previously done that sort of thing but it had senior management backing ... we had help from the various Research Councils and so on. We came out with a big fat zero." (Company, 1998: Interview)

Given that the company in question could not understand why it had failed, and the senior management had given its backing to the exercise, the research co-ordinators were pushed into making direct contact within the Commission to try and find out how to succeed in the future. It is at this stage that a strong degree of mutual dependency emerged, as the Commission desired the company in question to be more successful as the greater involvement of such a prestigious name would add to the credibility of the policy. The Commission was thus not only willing to offer advice on how to produce successful proposals, it also sought advice on how best to tailor the programmes to suit the needs of the company. Another example, concerning the FPs Training and Mobility of Researchers (TMR) programme held similar results. As a company's Director of Research Policy commented:

> "The difference with TMR was that the management of the programme in Brussels underwent a bit of a revolution and we found a lot of our comments were being paid heed too and welcomed... That was good. ... I think a lot of the intentions for FP5 have been coloured by that dialogue." (Company, 1998: Interview)

The key point is that the company was in direct consultation with Commission officials and received direct feedback. As one actor comments:

> "One of the more interesting developments recently, and I think this is true of may Pharma-companies, historically they have probably been used to going through

> trade associations and intermediaries and more recently many of the bigger ones have become much more involved in these sorts of issues directly. I guess the issue has been to find a happy ground where you don't lose the direct influence and the direct feedback and you don't get the dilution from the associations. ... We try to have both." (Company, 1998: Interview)

Part of the reason for this heightened level of contact was by chance – the company had contacts in the Commission from another environment – and part of the reason was, as previously stated, the Commission perceived it needed input from such a company to improve the success rate of the programme. The Company's research policy director stating:

> "We knew some of the people anyway through other means, so contacts were made and part of the reason that they soon became quite firm was that the programme was very worried about the lack of industrial applications, so they made the effort to come and talk to us and we made the effort to go and talk to them." (Company, 1998: Interview)

Not all the direct experiences with the Commission were positive, particularly when dealing with the main topic of this thesis – the overall setting of FP5. For example, whilst all the companies stated the Commission had been extremely active in seeking their opinions, their views on the Commission's use of those opinions largely reflected those noted by the UK government departments and Research Councils – that there was little evidence that the information had been used. As one company research director states:

> "[The Commission] has been extremely active in seeking views, its arguable whether it has paid much attention to them. There was this enormous exercise in trawling for views ... there was an overt recognition that the programme had to reflect industry needs more. [However,] when the second stage documentation came out as to how they thought Framework Five should be, I think a cynic would say that the only way they dealt with these rooms of paper was to just ignore it all – because it looked exactly like the original document prior to the consultation with a bit more flesh on it. ... You did get the feeling that they weren't particularly listening." (Company, 1998: Interview)

The issue here once more moves back to one of resource dependencies, the Commission when dealing with the first level of the policy process – the setting of the overall FP – is much less dependent on any single group of actors than at levels two and three of the policy process (as set out on pages 83 and 84). Not

only were there a greater number of actors all submitting their opinions at the same time during the FP5 negotiations, the big-hitters, in terms of the member states' core-executives and the MEPs, were naturally gaining the vast bulk of the Commission's attention. The Commission, holding only limited time and staffing resources, let some of its consultation procedures slip to the dissatisfaction of the other actors. Given this, the companies tended to concentrate their attention on lobbying the existing FP4, though this would inevitably include some mixed commentary on the different policy levels relating ultimately to FP5, one company official commenting:

> "A lot of the documentation we have produced mixes between a commentary of how we see FP4 and recommendations for FP5." (Company, 1998: Interview)

European associations have remained relevant to the lobbying companies, as one company research director comments:

> "We have been involved with EFPIA, which is the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industry Associations - which is a sort of umbrella organisation - we are in contact with them directly. ... Some of the most recent attempts to influence FP5 have been with and in some cases through EFPIA." (Company, 1998: Interview)

It is through such groups that the companies direct their some of their proposals for the overall Framework, believing that although their proposals are likely to be watered down to a degree they will still stand a chance of holding a significant impact on the main EU actors as they will be forwarded by a industry association, rather than a single company. However, the utilisation of these Euro-level associations is still easily overshadowed by the companies' interactions with the CBI who they more as 'their' actor and hold more faith in being able to get follow their lobbying line.

At the UK-level, much of the input from the companies would be transferred through the Research Councils and the government departments - particularly through the DTI's *Technology Foresight* exercise. As noted in the previous two chapters, *Technology Foresight* has proved a key policy in providing the UK public actors with information on the direction of UK RTD. The companies also indirectly input into the process through their participation in departmental and

Research Councils RTD projects. Outside the public sector, the companies made use of general interest groups such as the CBI and their specific trade associations, such as the Association of British Pharmaceutical Industries (ABPI), as examined in the following sections. (Company, 1998: Interview)

The extent of the increased fluidity of the industry-based relationships is vividly described in the following quote:

> "We continue to talk with the Research Councils and with Rob Wright and his people in DTI and OST. What is interesting are the shifting alliances – its like Napoleonic Europe. I would say that up until the Commission's formal proposal to the European Parliament we felt that we were working with the British institutions, be they government or Research Councils, "against" the Commission. So, that was the first alliance. What seems now to be the case is that the UK government is keen to reduce the budget on life sciences and the Commission would like to work with us "against" the European Union presidency – i.e. the British government – to avoid that. I guess it is in the nature of the beast that people look after their interests, but it is quite interesting to watch people define what is in their best interests." (Company, 1998: Interview)

However, the company in question did not see this as weakening its strong links with the UK government actors as they had kept their views constant throughout the process. In this respect the Commission's approaches did not encourage them to change their opinions, they just gave them a wider European avenue down which to forward their views whilst the UK avenue was narrowing.

> "I like to think that our stance has been fairly constant and blatant. We have made it clear that we are only interested in certain aspects of this programme that fit our business interests and we will champion them." (Company, 1998: Interview)

Of course, the industrial actors do not have the institutional constrains of keeping the OST's line, as do the government departments, and they do not have the financial constraints of *Europes* as do both the government departments and the Research Councils. In this respect, the relationships between industry and the OST are clearly not as strong as between the OST, government departments and Research Councils.

CBI

A key route for UK industrial actors to influence the FPs is to utilise the lobbying power of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI). Financed by private sector membership fees, the CBI holds two main functions. Firstly, it seeks to represent the views of its members to all levels of government with the aim of creating a favourable business environment and secondly it seeks to assist its members by promoting 'best practice.' In terms of its relationship with the FPs, the CBI focuses on the first of these functions – lobbying government – indeed, they started working on FP5 lobbying as early as August 1995. The CBI does not directly promote the FPs to its members or act as an information point for them in this area. (CBI, 1998, Interview) The CBI's utility to the actors is in its credibility as a lobbying organisation. As one company research director states:

> "If you push your case through an association, be it CBI or whatever, yes it will be diluted a little, but it will also gain credibility. They won't be able to say, "well of course they will say that, it is in their individual company's interest" (Company, 1998: Interview)

Under the CBI Council exist several standing committees that carry out the detailed work of its operations. Of these committees, the Technology and Innovation Committee, consisting of 28 CBI members, is responsible for input into the FPs. For reasons of efficiency, the Technology and Innovation Committee established the *EU RTD Working Party*, which consisted of six CBI members. The working party's task was to concentrate on developing a FP position to be submitted to the full committee for agreement. Responsible to the overall Technology and Innovation Committee is the *Technology Group*, this provides the staff for information gathering and the representation of the committee's views at the UK and EU-levels. Thus, whilst the CBI holds a permanently staffed European Office, the co-ordinating work for its input into the FP5 negotiations was dominated by the Technology Group located in London.

Somewhat surprisingly, the CBI was not closely involved in lobbying the existing FP4 to ensure that 'Calls for Proposals' met its members' direct needs,

nor was it planning to lobby the forthcoming PMC-levels of FP5. Indeed, the CBI's concerns over the content of the FPs did not move beyond the first level of negotiations and agreement on the overall FPs. The reason behind this apparent oversight is that the organisation did not consider their role to be to lobby on specifics, as their members would individually be more effective at that level. (CBI, 1998: Interview)

CBI at the UK-level

The CBI has close links with the UK core-executive across a range of policy areas, for the FPs this link naturally rests with the OST. The CBI requires the OST's co-operation in order to pursue an effective lobbying strategy. Conversely the OST requires the CBI as an information source for establishing a valid and credible negotiating stance on the FPs, this is particularly the case given the relative prestige of the CBI amongst lobbying actors.

Interaction between the OST and the CBI operates at both formal and informal levels. On the formal level, the OST consults the CBI for its opinions, these are formally provided by the Technology and Innovation Committee. A senior representative of the OST - the exact official depending on the topic - also attends the Technology and Innovation Committee's meetings providing open access to the CBI's internal discussions. As a CBI official comments:

> "We have a good working relationship generally with the OST. One of the senior OST representatives comes to our Technology and Innovation Committee. ... We try and be as open as possible on what our concerns are. Sometimes our opinions differ - sometimes they coincide. We don't have agreement all the time on every issue. But allowing them to see sometimes where the decisions occur will also help the OST." (CBI, 1998: Interview)

Given the CBI's limited involvement with the later application of the FPs, its lobbying links with the government departments and Research Councils were relatively limited - there being no need to foster strong relationships to gain influence in the PMCs. Of course, the CBI had strong links with the government departments on other issues, such as government regulation, but these did not stretch to the FPs. Links with the Research Councils were present under another

working group of the Technology and Innovation Committee, called the *Inter Company – Academic Relations Group*. However, this group was established in isolation of the CBI's involvement in the FPs and is mainly concerned with establishing best practice co-operation between industry and academia.

Overall, the CBI's relations with the government departments and the Research Councils exist on a relatively weak level, the lack of common interest in *Europes* and the CBI's lack of interest in the PMC stages of the FPs reducing their common interests and mutual dependencies. However, the OST's high degree of access to the internal working committees of the CBI demonstrates a closeness of links and high level of trust, which combined with the higher degree of mutual dependency (outlined near the start of this section) provide strong characteristics of a policy community relationship, that is only spoilt by the lack of contact with the OST's International Division once the overall Framework is decided.

As with the other industrial actors, the CBI did not just limit itself to the UK-level, indeed it was openly willing to use the European level even where its interests were directly counter to those of the OST. The willingness of the CBI to openly lobby against the core-executive clearly indicates that their relationship is qualitatively different from that held by the government departments and Research Councils, neither of which were willing to publicly oppose the OST.[47]

CBI at the European level

Along with its sister organisations in the other member states, the CBI is a member of the long-standing Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe (UNICE). In its role, alongside the European Trade Union Confederation and the European Centre for Public Enterprise, UNICE makes-up the Commission's "Social Partners" providing it with a relatively strong position in the EU interest group hierarchy.

[47] Whilst the BBSRC was willing to lobby against the OST line it only did so with the policy community's approval and shied away from taking high profile routes.

The CBI represented its views to UNICE via official position papers and it placed a representative on UNICE's *RTD Working Party*. Surprisingly one CBI official commented upon being asked if there were difficulties in establishing a common position within this European-level organisation:

> "Not generally, there hasn't been a problem getting a uniform position through UNICE. Overall there is a broader agreement amongst members than I would have expected." (CBI, 1998: Interview)

Whilst UNICE has proved useful for the CBI in establishing contacts in other member states, no solid bilateral contacts with its sister organisations were utilised by the CBI in relation to the FPs. (CBI, 1998: Interview)

One key access path for both the major industrial actors and the CBI (though UNICE) was the Industrial Research and Development Advisory Committee (IRDAC), seen by the Commission as its main advisory body in the field of industrial RTD for FP5. The Committee consisted of 24 members mainly senior industrialists from firms such as Glaxo-Wellcome, Aérospatiale and Phillips and representatives from 'peak-level' associations such as UNICE. (Peterson & Sharp, 1998: 178) The Committee's job is to advise the Commission on strategic issues related to the shaping and implementation of RTD policy. As the Commission's website comments:

> 'The Commission's proposal for the 5th Framework Programme reflects many of [IRDAC's] recommendations and its advice has been helpful mainly in the development of the EU industry-oriented programmes such as Industrial and Materials Technologies and CRAFT.' (http://europa.eu.int/comm/dg12/irdac/irdtxt.html)

The CBI was in contact with both the European Commission and the European Parliament over the FP5 negotiations. As with the other actors, the CBI expressed dissatisfaction with the Commission's listening abilities and particularly its lack of direct responses to position papers. However, they did recognise the Commission's difficult position in balancing the needs of all the participants:

> "It is harder moving the Commission, because in part you have fifteen member states." (CBI, 1998: Interview)

The European Parliament also came under criticism from the CBI, but again this criticism was qualified with a recognition that the problems were not always of the parliaments making and that certain of the MEPs were highly productive. As a CBI official guardedly comments:

> "Some people are saying they were disappointed with the European Parliament – it could have been a lot worse. Certainly the position they are taking is far more rational than what they have taken in the past." (CBI, 1998: Interview)

On an individual company level, all of the UK MEPs on the Committee on Research, Technological Development and Energy had been in contact with at least one large industrial concern from the UK, however, for the most part this interaction was, again, largely limited to regulatory issues.

In conclusion, whilst the main concentration of the CBI's efforts went to the OST, it did utilise both national and European levels to forward its viewpoint. As one CBI actor comments:

> "To be perfectly honest I think it is in our interests to do both [national and European]. If you just went to the UK government you would fail, if you just went to the European Commission you would fail. What we have to do is first of all put down some early markers to the Commission and UK government together so that hopefully they will both be singing the same tune – though this is inevitably not always the case. ... You have to have a multi-pronged approach." (CBI, 1998: Interview)

SMEs

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) are underrepresented in both their participation in FPs and in their representations to influence its make-up. As one departmental actor comments:

> "SMEs so far have not been a very strong element" (MAFF, 1999: Interview)

The fundamental problem in terms of their attempting to influence the lobbying process is that most SMEs do not have the time or manpower to consider becoming involved in the policy formulation stages of the process. Indeed, many of the SME FP participants only just have enough resources to consider being involved in the actual research.

In light of this, the government departments have employed one firm, Beta Technology Limited, to both encourage SME participation in the FPs, via offering services such as help with writing proposals and 'partner searchers' in both the UK and Europe, and to act as a conduit to forward their views on the policy to the OST. The business started as a consultancy firm renting out scientist to solve technical problems, however the FPs have increasingly dominated their business since the DTI hired their services in 1992. At the time of the FP5 negotiations Beta Technology was running four of the ten national SME focal points for RTD areas. In addition to this, Beta Technology has also successfully bid for money within the FPs to find SMEs suitable for FP participation as part of the Commission's SME stimulation exercise. The main functions of Beta Technology in relation to the FPs are thus promotion, assistance and networking.

Beta Technology's contacts at the UK and European levels of the policy process are impressive, as are their contacts at the different stages of the policy process. In terms of passing information to the OST on SME needs in relation to the FPs, Beta Technology adopts a relatively informal approach alongside the usual position paper submissions. The company is also willing to use the European-level directly and given it is playing a role central to the Commission's goals (SME stimulation) it believes it holds a clear and influential line of communication. (Beta Technology, 1998: Interview) One key point to note is that the company only lobbies in relation to the rules of SME involvement rather than the RTD content of the actual programmes.

There was absolutely no contact between Beta Technology and the MEPs, the company viewing it as moving too much into the realm of politics. In terms of the overall contact between SMEs and the EP, individual SMEs were willing to write to MEPs, though they were not involved in lobbying for the overall setting of FP5, their concerns tending to focus on immediate issues, such as FP applications.

In conclusion, with the crucial exception of Beta Technology's role, the SMEs tended to be policy-takers, accepting the parameters of the given programme on a take it or leave it basis.

University Actors

Whilst the universities are far from dependent on FP funding it does form an increasing proportion of their research budgets. The tight financial situation present in most universities makes FPs an attractive target for researchers, hence maximising FP returns has become a central strategy for departmental and central university actors. This situation is amplified in individual departments, as one Research Council official states:

> "Some department actually get rather a large ... proportion of their research money from Europe. So they as individual departments are actually highly influenced.' (Dukes, 1998, Interview)

Given that "academics don't have the time ... to gather the intelligence" (UK University, 1998: Interview) on the FPs, most research directed universities have created some form of European Research Office dedicated to disseminating information on the FPs to academics, helping with submitting applications and, in the more active offices, lobbying to ensure that their university's main research strengths are included in the 'Calls for Proposals'.

Clearly, the extent of university involvement in the FPs varies considerably from institution to institution, as does the involvement of universities with research generally. In terms of overall funding received from the FPs, the older universities dominate. However this does not automatically equate with the new universities not having much of a stake in the process. In many circumstances the stakes are actually higher as the FPs frequently makeup a greater proportion of their overall funding despite generally totalling less in absolute monetary terms. Indeed, certain of the more research active new universities were more nimble than their older counter-parts in utilising the FPs. Of course, this is not always the case and many of the newer teaching-focussed universities have displayed little interest in the FPs from an applications perspective and no interests from a lobbying perspective. (University, 1999: Interview)

The main input for the Universities to the overall setting of FP5 at the first policy level was via the Research Councils, OST, UKRO and the Commission desk officers. The Research Councils operated as good sources of influence for the universities as, given the close interaction between the two on national research projects, they tended to know each others likely goals for the programme.

University networks with the OST at this level were surprisingly weak; this appears to be because the universities were concentrating on the lower levels of the policy process, where their specific interests were more specialist than what OST was generally concerned with. As one university research office official commented.

> "Obviously we want to get money back [to the UK, like the OST], but we have slightly different objectives in terms of things that we would like to see in the FP. So that is probably why we are increasingly going to desk officers in Brussels as well." (UK University, 1998: Interview)

A decade before the creation of FP5, Hare, Lauchlan and Thompson noted:

> 'Universities ... for the most part, felt that they had not had much influence in shaping the Esprit programme, but *should have done*.' (1989: 76)

By the time of the FP5 negotiations this situation was changing as those universities that had invested resources in lobbying Brussels felt they had been influential to a degree. However, as was the case with the larger industrial concerns, the influence the Universities felt they had was at the lower 'Calls for Proposals' level on the existing FP4. As one university research officer comments:

> "The core themes will not be able to be influenced by [individual] universities." (UK University, 1998: Interview)

Basically, the universities main focus in the lobbying process is after the key actions have been set and the Commission is looking at what specific programmes it wants to make 'Calls for Proposals' on. (UK University, 1998: Interview) As one university official comments:

> "Work programmes is where we can start talking and it is desk officers in Brussels that will be central to those." (UK University, 1998: Interview)

In addition, where the universities were intent on influencing the PMCs they would go directly to the Research Council or the government department that the OST was utilising to represent its views:

> "We are keeping in touch with the OST, they are pushing FP5 at one level. But ... once the FP is agreed [our attention] becomes imbedded in the relevant department within government or the Research Council." (UK University, 1998: Interview)

The more involved universities' research offices hold frequent meetings with the European Commission, to gather information on the best angle of attack for their researchers' applications:

> "We have the European Bureau, [which has] meetings with the European Commission – not as regular as we would like, but quite frequently. For example, if there is a 'Call' out we will take academics proposals across to talk to desk officers to find out about ... what areas they are specifically looking for proposals in, where there is a shortfall in the programme ... We also encourage our academics to get involved as evaluators, so they can offer us feedback." (University, 1998: Interview)

This side of the process is one of lobbying that is carried out simultaneously with the fact finding, this can take the form of pro-active input or simply ensuring that the Commission is aware of their expertise and availability for consultation:

> "So we will try and get intelligence and [try] to get known ... in certain areas. So that if the Desk Officers are wondering how to target a programme that they will give us a call and ask. ." (University, 1998: Interview)

Over 90 per cent of UK Universities are direct members of the United Kingdom Research Office (UKRO). As noted in the previous chapter, UKRO holds a dual role of promoting the FPs amongst its UK members through disseminating information and acting as a 'staging post' for UK actors wishing to contact the EU institutions directly.

For those universities not familiar with the FPs, UKRO acts as a key information point on writing successful proposals. UKRO's main role for the Universities' more acquainted with the FP 'Calls for Proposals' system, but not with the key policy actors in the process, UKRO provides contact points. As with the Research Councils, whilst the universities would be able to find these contact

points without the help of UKRO, the increased difficulties of starting from scratch would make such meetings less likely to happen. Thus via decreasing the costs of finding useful contact points, UKRO increases the prospects of a Europeanisation of the policy networks.

On another level UKRO increases the contact between the UK universities. As a University Research Officer comments:

> "[UKRO] organise a seminar once a year for all the UK universities ... they brought people from the Commission to talk about FP5." (University, 1998: Interview)

Whilst the meetings primarily serve to bring the Commission into direct contact with the universities, they also serve as a useful networking opportunity between the universities. In particular, the participants found the events useful in comparing notes on their successes and failures in gaining information on the FPs and influencing 'Calls for Proposals'.

UKRO is seen as a valuable institution by the universities for forwarding their views in the policy process. As one university research actor states:

> "We also use [UKRO] to keep them informed of our thinking and where our priorities are so that they can reach out for us." (University, 1998: Interview)

This utility comes from the natural contact that the universities have with UKRO in information gathering – there being no need to form new time-consuming relationships and, more importantly, UKRO is seen to be held in high regard by the Commission. For example, Alison Douglas, the head of UKRO was on first name basis with several of the top-level FP Commission officials:

> 'We see UKRO very frequently. We know Alison by name. It is all very productive.' (Unattributable Commission Official, 1999, Interview)

Indeed, UKRO has played by far the largest role outside the OST in forwarding the views of UK academia to the European Commission. UKRO also served to pass information from the UK academic institutions to the other actors at the UK-level, particularly the OST and the Research Councils. For example, Williams of the EPSRC commented that, alongside its operation as a 'listening post' for information on the development of FP4 and FP5, UKRO also acted as a

'listening post' for information on the views of the UK research community for his office. (Williams, 1997: Interview)

Conclusion

The lack of a strong institutional link to the OST, combined with the lack of a fear of *Europes,* has left the industrial and university actors free to engage in a European-level strategy with little concern over possible conflicts with the core-executive. The OST could withdraw its lobbying support from actors that did not follow its line, but it would be acting in direct contravention of its mandate to push for the best deal for the UK as a whole. In addition, intervention in the private sector in such a manner would be considered against the general ethos of the OST. (OST, 1999: Interview)

The policy network between these actors and the OST is not as strong for several reasons. *Firstly*, the OST does not utilise these actors as its representatives on the PMCs of the existing FP. As noted in the previous chapters, the interaction between the government departments and Research Councils on the PMCs was a key facet of their strong relationship. This factor both reduces the opportunities for developing strong relationships, given the lower level of contact, and reduces the dependence of the OST on the actors, therein weakening the two-way dependency aspect of the network. *Secondly*, neither the industrial nor the university actors are institutionally bound to look out for the UK interest, rather they are dedicated to look after their direct self-interests. In this respect, the actors are likely to be less willing to accept the OST's rejections of their positions on the basis of the 'national interest'. *Thirdly*, university and particularly the industrial actors hold much narrower definitions of their self-interest, a factor that is likely to lead to them lobbying particularly hard on a few key issues, and thus being insistent that their line is the one that reaches the Commission. If they were to rely just on the OST they would run the risk of this line being diluted and the essence of their specific points lost.

Both industrial and university actors have utilised their freedom to lobby at the European level to a degree, however their lobbying has been held back by a

range of factors common to their particular needs. Significantly, the individual companies and universities clearly do not have the same incentives to lobby the overall formation of a FP given the relatively limited returns available to them. Whilst government departments have a mandate to ensure the whole country benefits from the FPs, as noted, the companies and universities are only concerned that their particular projects are included. As the specifics of particular projects are not discussed in the setting of the overall FP, these actors see little utility in expending their lobbying resources at this policy level. This is compounded by the fact that the actors rightly perceive influencing the overall FP to be a much more difficult process, particularly given the more detached stance adopted by the Commission (forced upon it by the sheer weight of representations). However, of course, it should be remembered that the ongoing contacts developed at the lower levels of the policy process will have been utilised for forwarding general input along with the more specific input on 'Calls for Proposals'. Whilst some of the actors considered in this research were of a substantial size – indeed the turnover of most of the companies interviewed well exceeded the income of the Research Councils – they did not feel they would have a great impact on the negotiations for the setting of the overall parameters for FP5 due to their acknowledgement of their relatively small constituency bases. That is to state, the Commission would be more interested in input from actors that represent wider-interests, such as the Research Councils, CBI and UKRO.

The main surprise of the findings is that the actors are not more closely linked to the UK FP policy community. Factors such as their lack of focus on the setting of the overall framework, being content to focus their lobbying within an existing FP, and their lack of direct susceptibility to attribution leaves them much less dependent on the OST than either government departments or the Research Councils. In respect of this, Figure 1: Initial Perceptions of the UK FP5 Policy Community, page 5, is in need of amendment to take account of the different nature of the relationship held by industry and university actors – whilst they are not members of the policy community they do exist on its close periphery.[48]

[48] This concept is developed in further detail in the concluding chapter.

This examination of industrial and university actors concludes the individual chapters on the major UK policy actors. Chapters Five to Eight do cover the perspective of the UK actors on the roles played by the EU institutions, however to fully understand the nature of the policy system it is also necessary to directly analyse the resources, actions and intentions of the EU actors. The following chapter provides this analysis by focusing on the actions of the European Commission, European Parliament and to a lesser extent, the Committee of Regions and Economic and Social Committee. Given the findings of Chapters Five to Eight concerning the relative detachment of the EU-level from the UK FP5 policy community, the main issue addressed in the following chapter is the apparent failure of the EU institutions to take advantage of what on the surface appear to be institutionally strong positions within the FP5 policy arena to encroach to a greater degree on the OST's central role in feeding UK actor representations into the programmes.

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9) EU Institutions and UK Policy Networks

Introduction

The creation of the Framework Programmes for Research and Technological Development provided the EU's institutions with new areas of power and influence. Focusing specifically on the European level, this chapter examines the role of EU institutions in the formulation of the Fifth Framework Programme and the extent to which they have attempted to and have been successful in integrating their policy networking activities with UK-based actors. In this respect the chapter does not deal in great detail with the incentives for UK actors to contact the EU-level actors – as these areas have been covered in the earlier chapters.

Retaining the modified policy networks approach, as outlined in Chapter Two, this chapter focuses on factors that have promoted and restricted policy links between the EU and UK-levels. Whilst the basic hypothesis that FP funding incentives would shift UK 'resource dependencies' to the EU, therein producing a marked Europeanisation of lobbying activities, has been challenged to a degree in the previous chapters, it remains the case that significant incentives for lobbying EU institutions existed. Within the same process European-level institutions and actors hold similar incentives in gaining the opinions and support of UK actors to further their FP aims. There are three main strands to this aspect of the analysis. Firstly, EU-level actors require a degree of national-level contacts in order fulfil their roles in policy formation, legislation and implementation. Secondly, EU-level actors desire national-level contacts in order to legitimise and strengthen their roles and policy positions. Finally, pushing against this trend, EU / national contacts are inherently more unstable because of a range of unavoidable problems, such as the inherently wider-ranging, competing and frequently varied views held across national boundaries.

The following sections examine the European Parliament's relationship with the UK actors, followed by an analysis of its relationship with the European Commission. The role of two peripheral institutions, the Committee of the Regions and the Economic and Social Committee are then briefly examined, followed by an analysis of the role of the European Commission.

European Parliament

Decision-making Power

In its initial guise, the EP, was little more than a 'purely consultative body composed of representatives delegated from the national parliaments' (Nentwich and Falkner, 1997: 2) very much submissive to the will of the Council of Ministers. However, the growing power and influence of the EU combined with a perceived democratic deficit has led to a number of treaty and perception-based changes resulting in a directly elected chamber that, on a range of issues, holds potentially equal powers with the Council in the FP decision-making process. Yet the EP, in its position as the democratic counterbalance to the 'unelected Commission and an indirectly elected Council of Ministers', (Hooghe and Marks, 1997: 6) has yet to achieve parity of influence with either institution.

As examined in the Historical Development chapter, the SEA provided the EP with the co-operation procedure for use with the FP negotiations, followed by the introduction of the stronger co-decision procedure under the Maastricht Treaty. The particular variant of co-decision applied to the FPs was modified to require unanimity in place of Qualified Majority Voting (QMV) in the Council of Ministers in an attempt to ensure that the member states held onto control of RTD policy. (Nentwich and Falkner, 1997) The Amsterdam Treaty introduced full Co-decision (with QMV) for the FPs, however whilst the FP5 deliberations took place following the signing of the Amsterdam Treaty, it was prior to its full-ratification, thus the decision-making procedures that applied were those outlined in the Maastricht Treaty.

In 1992, prior to the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty, Peterson made a particularly critical assessment of the EP's role and credibility in the FPs when he stated:

> 'In short, the EP generally lacks the expertise, technical information, or political weight required to challenge the Commission's management of Framework. In this area, as in many others, it has influence, but very little power.' (Peterson, 1992a: 241-2)

The text will return to this quote at the end of the EP section to assess the extent to which it has held true for the FP5 negotiations.

Oversight: Monitoring and Scrutiny

In common with national parliaments, the EP operates a functional-based committee system to enable a degree of specialisation and detailed scrutiny from its MEPs. (Kohler-Koch, 1997: 2) The *Committee on Research, Technological Development and Energy* is responsible for the EP's input into the FPs alongside its other duties in such areas as nuclear safety and renewable energies.

The amount of time spent by the Committee on the FPs varies depending on the legislation cycle. In the run-up to the final negotiations with the Council, the FPs comprised the vast majority of the Committee's business. As McNally MEP comments:

> "It varies of course according to the cycle in legislation. Last year up until the decision it was fairly obsessive, we spent most of the committee's time discussing it. ... But there is a rhythm of course; the emphasis [now] will be much more on the other aspects of our work, until we start in two years time preparing the Sixth. " (McNally MEP, 1999: Interview)

Whilst the actual implementation of the FPs following the formalisation of the overall Framework is outside the scope of this thesis, it is important to note that 'the EP has virtually no say in [the] distribution of EC spending among projects and firms.' (Peterson, 1992a: 241-2) However, whilst the EP loses virtually all control over the process at this stage it does maintain an interest, largely limited to monitoring, that offers a potential area in which a policy network with UK actors could begin to stabilise.

The main areas that the Committee covers on a continual basis are the established role of financial oversight, common to all EU programmes, and a more general, less established, system of oversight for the specific research programmes. The MEPs also act in their traditional role as contact points for aggrieved FP participants to get their views a hearing, providing a quick and productive route for FP participants to have their complaints considered and where appropriate passed directly to the higher-level Commission officials – the Commission officials being more likely act with haste to a request from an MEP than from general FP participant.

The EP Committee's programme oversight system was developed towards the end of FP4. Basically, each available member of the Committee was appointed to follow a specific programme within the FP and report on its fortunes to the whole group. In the words of one MEP:

> 'The idea being to check progress to see whether there have been problems in spending the money, to see whether the Fourth Framework Programme as originally devised has been actually executed in the way intended.' (McNally MEP, 1999: Interview)

The system also had the added benefit of creating a, albeit limited, degree of specialisation within the Committee, therein reducing their reliance on 'watered-down' Commission texts. As McNally MEP comments, as each member reports their findings they begin...

> 'to act as a sort of proselytiser for that particular work ... people get very interested in their work and find out about individual projects in their own areas and act as someone who can explain to the rest of the Committee what goes on.' (McNally MEP, 1999: Interview)

The success of the system though is highly debatable with many of the Committee members indicating that not all of the reports were conducted with adequate vigour. For example, one member stated:

> 'I have to say that not all members of the Committee take this work as seriously as they would do straight forward legislative work. That's a shame and its an ethos that has to be built-in, we have to give more emphasis to our scrutiny work." (Unattributable MEP A, 1999: Interview)

Adam MEP recognising that the steps taken so far are not adequate to their needs:

> 'There is a need to bring the appraisal of current programmes under continuous review, so that all those involved in the decision-making process can be much better informed in coming to conclusions about future developments.' (Adam MEP 1997: 2.2)

However, as noted in the conclusion to this chapter, page 253, this argument is likely to be largely lost given the changes proposed to the Committee structure which will effectively subsume the Committee on Research, Technological Development and Energy within the policy areas of Industry and External Trade, therein diluting the levels of specialisation and time available to the members to devote to the FPs. In short, whilst McNally MEP may state:

> 'I don't think we can start discussing the Sixth Framework Programme unless we have been following the Fifth.' (McNally MEP, 1999: Interview)

There appears little prospect that the EP will be able to devote sufficient time or resources to its study.

Overall, the main points to gain from the degree of EP oversight lean towards the negative. Whilst the Committee has positive intentions it lacks the time, devotion and consistency to provide an effective level of parliamentary scrutiny. Importantly, it also takes time and frequent contact with actors to develop a policy community, and as the MEPs are not able to devote a great deal of time to this area of their work it is not a surprise to note that no long-term contacts between UK actors and the MEPs have emerged relating to the oversight issues.

European Group Party Lines: Compromise for all?

> 'MEPs may in principle see themselves as representing one of the following: the party group in the EP, the national party, the constituency or member state, the whole European Union, or specific sectional interests. However, the most likely answer is that MEPs regard themselves as representing multiple interests.' (Raunio, 1996: 359)

Party structures in the EP are certainly weak in comparison with the majority of the national parliamentary systems. Kohler-Koch goes so far as to state:

> 'There [are] ... no transnational political parties worth that name.' (Kohler-Koch, 1997: 2)

Significant policy decisions taken by the EP Groups occur in their executive committees, that, as Hix comments, 'play a more significant leadership and agenda-setting role than the 'party leaders summits' of the EU party federations (that meet at least twice a year)' (Hix, 1998: 37) However, once decisions are taken at the group-level the party structures hold little power over their national delegations and individual members. Hix commenting:

> 'The EP groups have some sanctions against individual members but little sanction against defection by a whole national delegation. ... when national party interests are mobilised, the level of EP Group cohesion falls dramatically for those parties were [sic] the national party interests are in conflict with the position of the EP Group.' (Hix, 1998: 39)

Whilst the statements by Kohler-Koch and Hix are correct on one level – there is a remarkable *lack* of ideological cohesiveness between the national parties that make-up the European parties – it is important not to overstate this position, as the parties in the EP are *increasingly* co-ordinated and hold *increasingly* high levels of cohesiveness. As will be demonstrated, this includes the policy area of the FPs where issues of sufficient importance and controversy to push a national party to vote against their European grouping have been overwhelmingly the exception rather than the rule.

Decision-making within the European parties in non-contentious or technical areas is usually taken at the lower level of the related individual policy committees, it is at this level that much of the policy direction for the parties takes place in relation to the FPs. For example, the Socialist group's executive committee (the Bureau) will only become involved in FP decision-making on those rare occasions where it is likely to interfere with other policy areas or it wishes to make issue linkages with other policy areas – such an occasion did not arise with either the Party of European Socialists (PES) or the European People's Party (EPP) during the FP5 negotiations. (Adam MEP, 1999: Interview; Chichester MEP, 1999: Interview)

One of the most important points to note about the party political lines in the Committee is the lack of confrontational politics over the general aims of the FPs. For Ford MEP, the whole process was much less confrontational than its equivalent would be in the House of Commons. (Ford MEP, 1999: Interview) However, whilst there exists a generally consensual approach by MEPs, there have been a range of issues which have created tensions between the major European groupings, the main of which are noted in Table 7: Socialist and EPP Areas of Divergence.

Table 7: Socialist and EPP Areas of Divergence

	Socialists	EPP
Budget	Increase	Maintain status quo
Distance of RTD from Market	Move closer	Maintain status quo
Nuclear Research	Gradual reduction	Maintain levels
In-house research	Issue dependent (UK Labour generally against)	Issue dependent

(Ford MEP, 1999: Interview)

The other parties represented on the Committee tended to follow the general consensus, the only real bugbear being the Greens, as one MEP scathingly stated:

> "Perhaps in some respects the Greens will have a more distinctive line because they are against so many things ... a lot of the problems will come over research on biotechnology, research on nuclear issues, Euratom, and to a lesser extent the role of the Joint Research Centre." (Adam MEP, 1999: Interview)

However, despite the above, there was a decided lack of 'Politics' in the Committee with, in the final scenario, a surprisingly united front being presented amongst the major players on their goals for FP5. The reason for this surprisingly united front was the recognition by all the MEPs that such an approach was virtually essential if they were to hold any impact on the process, as McNally MEP states in relation to the later stages of negotiations:

> 'We spent hours and hours preparing conciliation meetings and in inter-party [meetings] because when something is co-decision the parliament has to be [virtually] united and that means a lot of give and take. [We would be meeting] during the frantic parts daily.' (McNally MEP, 1999: Interview)

One example of this 'give and take' is the bargaining between the Socialists favouring socio-economic research and renewable energy programmes and the EPP favouring the fusion programme. In this example the Socialist group offered their continued support of the fusion programme on the condition of the EPP's support for expanded socio-economic and renewable energy programmes. (McNally MEP, 1999: Interview) Compromises such as this were conducted to a degree in the formal environment of the Committee, though more informal environments were adopted for the substantive debate. As McNally MEP comments:

> '[Debate was] outside the committee and inside the committee, but the real discussions and the deals were done outside the Committee.' (McNally MEP, 1999: Interview)

Whilst disagreement over such issues indicates that there is no complete consensus in the Committee, the fact that both groups strove for compromise is telling in that it points to a mentality that the parties' main opponents are generally not seen to be their political counterparts sat across the arc of seats, rather they are the other institutions, specifically the Council of Ministers and the European Commission.

The fact that the Committee's deliberations go largely uncovered by the media serves to make any compromises between the parties politically more acceptable as they are not going to be made into key news items and portrayed as signs of weakness. This involuntary veil of secrecy is thus in many ways a great benefit to the work of the Committee.

As is highlighted later in the text, it is ironic that this quite admirable compromising nature of the Committee comes across as one of the main reasons that the UK actors proved so unwilling to invest too much in the way of lobbying resources on the EP. Quite simply many UK actors saw little point in investing their time with the UK MEPs given the high likelihood that their comments would be lost to compromise in the final drafts.

UK Parties in the EP

In relation to the FPs, none of the UK's political parties had been subject to being overridden by their national structures. This aspect can be put down to a number of factors. Firstly, the FPs are a relatively obscure area of the EU's activities thus are unlikely to attract the interest of nationally based politicians. Secondly, the FPs are not of significance to the national press and, under normal circumstances, can in no way be considered a factor in terms of electoral politics. Thirdly, even alongside other EU programmes the FPs are a relatively complex area of EU policy. This complexity acts as a barrier to general national party interest in the FPs, particularly given the relative public obscurity of the programmes. Indeed, such is the lack of interest of the nationally-based UK party structures that Adam MEP notes that:

> "In the main the [national] party lines are not terribly clear." (Adam MEP, 1999: Interview)

Such a statement would rarely be made in relation to a domestic UK programme of any nature.

Prior to the 1994 EP elections UK Conservative members of the Committee numbered just one full-time and one part-time. Following the 1994 elections this number fell to just one full-time member, Giles Chichester MEP, who naturally acts as the party's official spokesman for the area. As with the Labour Party, there was no nationally dictated line for the Conservative MEP to take in relation to the FPs. Therefore, given that the Conservative party line on the Committee is set and applied by one member the question of a whipping system does not apply beyond affiliation to the EPP. In terms of the EPP, the only area in which the Conservative MEP challenged the line was in relation to pushing a stronger view on holding the FP budget at its existing levels.

An area in which party politics did hold a role was in relation to the change of the UK governing party from Conservative to Labour in 1997. Whilst the number of party MEPs on the Committee did not change (the National and European elections being held at different times), it is the case that the relative importance of the MEPs as perceived by other actors changed. Indeed, it was

noted by representatives of both parties that the Conservative member of the Committee experienced a perceptible decline in importance, with the Labour members experiencing a relative increase in importance.[49] (Chichester, 1999: Interview; Adam MEP, 1999: Interview) Whilst not one of the UK MEPs could point to an example of this perception of changing importance filtering through into actual policy, it does appear that the change in government did force the UK actors to reassess the value of the UK MEPs, with the Labour representatives gaining greater attention for a limited period given their increased perceived worth.[50] However, as the UK actors were to find out, this perceived increase in influence, at least as far as the UK government was concerned was largely illusory given the extremely limited contact between the MEPs and the UK core-executive, as examined in the following section.

The initial voting-line taken by the UK Labour MEPs is drawn-up at committee-level by the Socialist group members of the Committee. The adoption of this line has only been rejected on rare exceptions by the UK Labour MEPs where they felt the desired UK position differed substantially from that of the overall Socialist group. Minor differences of perspective are usually overlooked by the Labour MEPs for the 'greater programme' in an attempt to keep the goodwill of the other group members both within the Research Committee and within the EP as a whole. As one Labour MEP comments:

> '[If the line] is problematic for British Labour members there could be some withdrawal from the full group position – which is not popular and we do it as rarely as we can. Occasionally there will be UK interests or a different perspective which mean that we cannot follow the line.' (McNally MEP, 1999: Interview)

Such differences of perspective have occurred with for example a Labour withdrawal from a strongly worded Socialist group amendment to embryo research[51] and an aspect of the classification of renewable energy sources.[52] However, as Adam MEP comments, there were no dominating areas of

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[49] This would have been amplified by the fact that the Socialist groups, of which they were members, were the largest group in the EP.

[50] I.e. their increased worth in relation to their potential influence on the line taken by the government of the day.

[51] The amendment was deemed 'much harsher and much more prescriptive than the UK position.' (McNally MEP, 1999, Interview)

discontent between the Labour MEPs and the actions of either the Socialist group or the Committee as a whole in relation to FP5. (Adam MEP, 1999: Interview)

One interesting aspect of the research on the MEPs was the willingness of the Labour members to break with the UK government's line on issues.[53] The most high profile example of this was in relation to the overall budget for FP5, particularly during the UK Presidency when the government Science Minister had consistently argued for a limit to FP5 spending far below that desired by the EP. As Ford MEP commented:

> 'John Battle[54] as the Presidency representative, is being driven by the Germans, French and Swedes plus his own Government to officially claim a ceiling ... of 14 Billion ECU' (Ford MEP, 1998: Interview)

This left the official line of the Labour MEPs, as reflected through the Socialist group, in direct opposition to that of the UK Labour government which clearly wanted to restrict any budgetary increases. Indeed, the divide was such that one Labour MEP went so far as to state:

> 'Certainly Labour's Science Minister is either kept well away from MEPs or is heavily chaperoned.' (Unattributable MEP B, 1998: Interview)

Basically, the UK Labour MEPs completely ignored the UK government's line and fully-backed the proposed increases in the budget. As McNally MEP Comments:

> "In that case there was no problem [in terms of dissenting from the European party's line, as] we didn't follow the government's line" (McNally MEP, 1999: Interview)

As noted earlier, one of the major reasons that such opposing lines could be taken is that the FPs are not media or electoral issues, thus there would be little to benefit for the government in attempting to force its line on its Labour Party MEPs when compared with the potential damage that would be done between the two. This willingness to go against the government line opened the UK MEPs to contact from UK actors that were trying to push a line that the

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[52] The Labour MEPs wished to gain renewable energy status for electricity generated from waste incineration against the Socialist group line.
[53] Given the existence of a Labour government during the main rounds of negotiations.
[54] The UK Science Minister during the end stages of the negotiations.

government had failed, or was unlikely, to adopt. However, as will be examined, for various reasons this opportunity was never fully exploited.

The UK MEPs are disposed to giving some extra weight to UK issues within the FPs, as would be expected, as Chichester MEP comments:

> 'I would tend to have more contact with UK players than with others, for linguistic and national interest reasons.' (Chichester MEP, 1999: Interview)

However the level of bias present in UK MEPs was relatively low. Indeed, in some areas the UK MEPs appear to have lost a degree of focus on what the government would see as the UK national interest for the sake of European unity. For example, Adam MEP writes:

> 'The less developed countries do not participate as much in Framework as the more developed countries. Therefore, dissemination, innovation and technology transfer is where the balance can be redressed. Within the countries with the lower technology activity more of the technology transfer facilities should be made available to them.' (Adam MEP, 1997: 4.7)

It is difficult to imagine a UK minister taking such a line.

The commonly referenced figures of the UK's relative contributions versus inputs into the programme appear to have left the MEPs content that the UK was getting its 'fair share' / *juste retour* and feeling they did they did not need to push UK interest too hard. This lack of pushing for greater UK participation is interesting because it indicates that they had taken on board the concept of *juste retour* for all member states even if it meant limiting returns for the UK. For example, it could quite feasibly be argued that as UK representatives they should be fighting for the UK to gain a higher proportion of the funding that was available, not just a level return on its investment. To use an analogy, one would hardly expect to see a United States Congressman settling for a *juste retour* on military investment in his state. On balance though, it should be noted that several of the UK MEPs indicated that they would try to block any further attempts to strengthen the cohesion aspect of the funding criteria at the expense of the scientific content - a move which would disadvantage UK participation.

Also, they were united across UK party lines on some issues, such as limiting the EU's in-house RTD that was not open to competitive tendering.[55]

Hooghe and Marks' comment that territorial identity as the driving force behind European politics is increasingly on the decline, certainly appear accurate with respect of the MEPs and their relationship with the FPs.

> 'Territorial identity (and, in particular, nationality) is important, but it is not all-important, as a source of individual preferences with respect to EU institutions and policy.' (Hooghe and Marks, 1997: 5)

However, it needs emphasising that not all nationalities of MEPs take such a relatively open issues-based view as opposed to territory-based view on the FPs. For example, the Spanish MEPs appear to have taken a much stronger territorial line in linking their FP support to the Structural Fund negotiations and frequently argued their government's line almost verbatim in committee. (McNally MEP, 1999: Interview) In this respect, the level of national bias taken by the MEPs appears to depend heavily on the extent that the respective national governments are willing to use the EP as a vehicle for pushing their interests and the extent that the MEPs are willing to comply.

Overall, the UK MEPs' aims for FP5 were general in nature and were for the most part focused on goals that would benefit Europe as a whole, as opposed to the UK in particular. Of the suggested improvements offered by the UK MEPs very few called for a greater focussing of the programmes on UK specific issues or issues that would be specifically more suitable for UK applicants.[56] This willingness of MEPs to compromise on issues could be seen as compromising the UK national interest. However, the more balanced way of looking at the practice is in comparison to cross-issue voting in the Council – whilst they may 'lose' on specific topics they are able to use this as bargaining capital in other areas when the UK line may be against the perceived interests of other nationals.

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[55] In this respect the JRC came under continual criticism.

[56] Note, this is not to state that the UK MEPs did not promote specific programmes, they did, however these programmes were generally more likely to be of benefit to the overall European economy.

UK actors and the EP

Given the Co-decision role of the Parliament, even in its modified form, there was clearly an incentive for the UK actors to contact the MEPs, both in terms of gaining *information* and in *influencing* the outcome of the negotiations. Importantly, it should be recognised that the incentives are not all one-way; the MEPs also desired contact with UK actors in terms of representing their constituency interests, defending the general national interest, and simply fulfilling their aim to be more effective policymakers. Ford MEP comments:

> 'An ill-informed or poorly briefed Parliament could result in a less effective agreement, given that the Framework will be a negotiated programme.' (Ford MEP, 1997: 6.8)

Indeed, all of the UK MEPs interviewed during the research indicated that the policy process required in-depth contact with national actors in the form of policy-makers and end-users. However there is a serious question over the extent of the contact that actually occurred. The follow sections outline the relationship between the MEPs and the main UK actors.[57]

UK Core-executive

Contact between the UK core-executive (in the form of the OST) and the MEPs was in evidence, though it was much weaker than initially predicted given the presence of co-decision as an incentive for co-operation and the greater links present in a range of other member states.

A significant point uncovered during the research is that there was no attempt by the UK core-executive to strongly direct the actions of the UK MEPs. This stands in stark contrast to actions of various other governments, such as the Spanish, which held very close links with their MEPs. As McNally MEP commented when questioned over the extent to which the UK government had attempted to direct the MEPs in the process:

> "Not at all, not at all. There is no [direction] whatsoever ... from [our] national government or national civil servants. That would only happen if you specifically

[57] For more a detailed analysis of the actors refer to their individual chapters.

went and asked them. That is the case actually in some member states, but certainly not in ours." (McNally MEP, 1999: Interview)

Adam MEP commenting:

"We certainly get that from various organisations. The government is a bit more formal in its approach on these things, not quite as up front as some other governments might be." (Adam MEP, 1999: Interview)

Chichester, the Conservative MEP, when asked about contact with the OST commented:

"I am not particularly aware of it, but of course there was a change of government around about the beginning of the process, so that would have meant that the government input would have primarily gone to the Labour MEPs." (Chichester MEP, 1999: Interview)

Conversely, the Labour MEP, Ford, commented that as the process started whilst the Conservative government was in office and that the primary interest of the OST would have already been spent on the Conservative MEP. (Ford, 1998: Interview) Clearly both of these positions cannot be correct, demonstrating that whatever the actual level of links there is a great deal of confusion over the process even amongst senior members of the Committee.

In reality the Labour MEPs did hold limited contacts with the OST, one member commenting:

"We have a link with the DTI[-OST], so we have meetings with government ministers and civil servants arranged through that." (McNally MEP, 1999: Interview)

Adam MEP stating:

"We did have quite a number of meetings with the DTI[-OST] people in the earlier stages, ... probably more than on previous occasions." " (Adam MEP, 1999: Interview)

However, 'on more than previous occasions' is not stating much when contrasted with the MEPs past record in this area and there was certainly no consistency or depth evident in these links.

The strength of the links between the MEPs and the UK appear even more superficial when one takes into account the views of key OST (Wright, 1997: Interview)

and UKRep (Jones, 1999: Interview) officials, neither of which considered their contacts with the MEPs to be in any way frequent or a part of their central focus. Indeed, one DTI actor who represented the views of the OST to the MEPs commented that the net benefit of their meeting was likely to be negligible and that they would not be pursuing such contacts in the future. (Unattributable Departmental E, 1999: Interview) The differences between the government perceptions and those of the MEPs in this area highlight a clear gap between what the MEPs believe they are worth and the perceptions of others.

Part of the reason for the detachment is that, as with the general government department actors, those in the core-executive do not relish the prospect of dealing with non-government politicians, even if they are members of the ruling party. The detachment is also due to a genuine belief in the UK core-executive that the likely outcome is going to be well-suited to the UK – with or without the support of the UK MEPs. Interestingly, of those MEPs that recognised it, some were clearly proud of the detachment, viewing it as a positive point whilst frowning on the close links between government officials and MEPs from certain other member states. This strong independent streak goes even further towards highlighting the lack of a developing community between the actors.

Overall, there was little evidence of either consistency or depth in relation to the MEP and core-executive links. Arguably, the UK core-executive's relative lack of activity in terms of lobbying UK MEPs has potentially reduced the national bias of those MEPs who are left to build their own picture from other sources, which, given the prevalence of Commission and Euro-groups are by definition likely to be slanted to the European level. In this respect, it does appear that the government is missing a potentially productive path of influence.[58] The one area of certainty is that, at present, there is no place for the MEPs in a policy community map that includes the UK core-executive.

[58] The issue of MEP contact with UK public sector actors outside the core-executive is addressed in the later sections.

Europes: A Hidden Factor

Evidence of the lack of two-way contact between the UK MEPs and public sector actors is noticeable in the general lack of understanding of the UK Treasury's *Europes* attribution system by MEPs.

The majority of the UK members of the Committee believed that all FP funds were held additional to national funding, whilst a significant proportion believed that the FPs operated under a similar system to the Regional Development Funds with additionality being the rule and attribution outlawed. As one MEP commented upon being questioned on the impact of the *Europes* attribution system:

> "I am not aware of that – it sounds like something that shouldn't happen." (Chichester MEP, 1999: Interview)

Of those longer-standing MPs that did hold some understanding the system, there was a clear condemnation of *Europes*:

> "I don't approve of it. I even question if it is in line with the spirit of the legislation. I am sure it must be legal, but in practical terms... It has been made absolutely clear as far as the structural funds are concerned that if there is not additionality, if this is not on top of national funding, then, it is not on. I obviously have every faith in Tony Blair and the British government, but I really have very grave doubts about whether this is in the spirit of European funding. ... Its not very European, its something I would hope our government would revise very soon." (McNally MEP, 1999: Interview)

> "I have heard about it and I know it is a nuisance. I don't understand it very well. I find it extraordinary that this sort of problem exists." (Adam MEP, 1999: Interview)

Indeed, Adam MEP wrote on this very issue near the start of the FP5 process:

> 'There should be a firm rule that Community funding cannot be used as an excuse for a cutback in national effort.' (Adam MEP, 1997: 2.3)

Upon being presented the facts of the *Europes* system, all of the UK MEPs interviewed expressed that they believed the practice should be stopped in the same way that attribution is stopped under the terms of the Structural Funds. (Bache, 1998; 1999) However, despite indicating their objections to the *Europes* system, not one of the UK MEPs was willing to make a challenge against their government over the practice, for example by attempting to push a rule change

through the apparatus of the EP, or through a challenge in the European Court of Justice – quite simply they were unwilling to invest the political capital to fight the case. Indeed, upon being asked if they intended to take any action to restrict *Europes*, one MEP even went so far as to state:

> "I suppose I could get myself disqualified from being a Labour MEP by challenging them in the Court of Justice; that would not be wise, but it would be interesting to see what would be the result if there were ever a challenge." (Unattributable MEP A, 1999: Interview)

The general lack of knowledge of *Europes* amongst all the MEPs is understandable to an extent – the attribution being a domestic policy of the UK government. However, it is surprising that a policy that holds such a profound potential and actual impact on UK input and participation in the FPs has gone relatively unnoticed and unchallenged amongst the UK MEPs. In this respect, *Europes* inadvertently provides a clear indication of the low level of interaction between the UK MEPs and public sector actors – it being highly unlikely that it would not be a topic for discussion, especially if the MEPs were interested in why departments and Research Councils are generally so reticent about gaining FP funding for their policy areas.

The following section examines the interaction between the MEPs and UK actors below the level of the core-executive, before moving onto look at the role of the Commission in the process.

Government Departments

As discussed in the departmental chapter, direct contact with the UK government departments, below the core-executive, was very limited for both of the main UK parties in the EP. For example, whilst the EP Labour Party operates a linkage system with UK government departments – each department assigned an MP – the only cited area in which this was operational for with the FPs was in relation to the previously mentioned links between the OST via the DTI. (McNally MEP, 1999: Interview) There was no evidence of this link being used to gather information on the sub-sections of the DTI, that is, levels below the core-executive.

One area where the transfer of information from the departments to the MEPs was a success was in the government's *Technology Foresight* exercise, which several MPs cited as key a source of information on the needs of the UK with the FP. However there was no direct follow-up by the MEPs in relation to the *Foresight* reports.

Of course, one of the main reasons for the lack of contact was the fact that the departments are institutionally constrained against lobbying away from the government line, thus if the departments believed that the OST would be covering the MEPs, they saw little reason to invest their own resources in duplicating the effort.

A further factor holding back the departmental / MEP networks appears to rest with the institutional culture of the UK departments and their unwillingness to engage with substantive policy discussions with non-government politicians. As noted earlier, this fear of '*entering the political*' was certainly a primary factor holding back the development of contacts, the lobbying of MEPs being seen as a taboo area by the departmental actors. Whilst the Commission at least holds the pretence of being apolitical, the EP Committee, despite the highly technical nature of much of its work, holds no such claim. (Dennis, 1999: Interview; White, 1999: Interview)

Finally, common with most UK actors, the departments believed that contact with the EP would be largely unproductive because of the perceived prevalence of hashed compromises and political flag-waving that takes place on the Committee. In basic terms, the departmental actors did not trust the MEPs to be able to take any representations that they may have made and translate them into a credible legislative stance. Given their confidence in the OST of completing such a task, and to a lesser extent the Commission, it is not surprising that the EP did not figure high on their list of routes of FP influence.

UK Parliament

Contact between UK MEPs and the UK Houses of Parliament concerning the FPs is extremely limited. Indeed, the only example offered from the UK MEPs interviewed was on one specific interest area, and did not concern the programmes as a whole. Even this meeting was more one of chance than effort. As McNally MEP comments, her meeting was...

> "with some women MPs on the question of the gender perspective of science, including in the Fifth Framework Programme. ... Otherwise no, we didn't have meetings with UK MPs. That is something we can probably improve on." (McNally MEP, 1999: Interview)

This meeting and McNally's submission of written evidence to the House of Lords paper 49-I on the FPs, the only major examination of the projects by one of the UK Houses of Parliament, can only just be considered a contact and hardly registers on a network scale.

One has to conclude here that the lack of contact is unsurprising given the range of competing issues and contacts facing the UK MEPs and MPs. In particular, the MPs would have to invest a considerable amount of time studying the complexities of the FPs in order to provide worthwhile input. In this respect and given the lack of public political controversy surrounding the programmes the lack of contact is not surprising.

Non-governmental UK Contact:

The MEPs on the Committee indicated that they preferred contact with umbrella organisations as opposed to individual companies, perceiving that they would receive a more balanced view. As one MEP comments:

> 'People here listen to the Europe-wide umbrella organisations more than they will to, certainly to individual companies, or, national associations. ... I would say the large bodies, the better organised bodies, have taken on board the need to work through Europe-wide organisations as the best means of communicating with and influencing the Commission and [the EP].' (Chichester MEP, 1999: Interview)

The only real exception to this general rule was in respect of contact from their own nationally-based, and particularly constituency-based organisations, whom

they saw it as their duty to represent their particular individual interests. Chichester qualifying his previous statement with the following:

> 'On the other-hand, obviously MEPs are bound to be more responsive to their own national organisations than to those of other countries." (Chichester MEP, 1999: Interview)

Interestingly the UK MEPs were approached directly by organisations from other states, including certain governments and publicly funding bodies. As McNally comments, the information was...

> 'not simply from the UK. [For example,] the German government and all sorts of German science organisations sent us materials in English and French. Sweden was also very good in providing us information.' (McNally MEP, 1999: Interview)

Ford MEP indicated in 1989 that contact with private organisations was improving following the changes enacted in the SEA, particularly in relation to Single Market measures:

> 'What the Commission tends to do, particularly on the amendments, is to take Parliament's views on board very often and we are finding ourselves now being used as a channel for lobbyists from trade unions and industry in a way we were not in the past, because we can actually have an influence on the final outcome of the legislation where it is not seen as a major political battleground.' (Ford, 1989: 160)

However, the MEPs indicated disappointment with the breadth and depth of their contact with UK industry actors. As noted earlier, much of this was deemed by the MEPs to reflect a lack of knowledge of their role in the wider RTD community. Adam MEP, upon being asked the extent of UK private sector interaction with MEPs, stated:

> "Not as much as I think they should. [They may hold a] mistaken view, I think industry ... people underestimate what the parliament can do and after all it is a matter of co-decision." (Adam MEP, 1999: Interview)

McNally MEP may have been the exception here, noting:

> "very considerable contact with industry ... [For example I] had contact with the biotechnology firms. [For Example,] SmithKline Beecham, they are fairly good lobbyists. Because there was lobbying from all-round, in a sense this didn't give a particular advantage to any of the aspects, our priorities were much more based upon our political views and our perception where the needs were, since the research is meant to cover societal problems as well as the needs of industry." (McNally MEP, 1999: Interview)

Though as Chichester MEP comments, much of the MEP contact that existed with UK private industry was more concerned with regulatory issues and tended to overlook the FPs. (Chichester MEP, 1999: Interview) This view was directly reflected by SmithKline Beecham, which focussed its EU RTD lobbying firmly on the regulatory side. (Harper, 1998: Interview)

For some firms though the EP still holds problems of association, as one representative of a large pharmaceuticals company commented:

> '[My predecessor] did get rung-up by an MEP once who asked about our involvement, but I have had no contact directly from any MEP, and I don't see it as my role to lobby directly through them, there would be other ways if I did see fit to lobby - there would be better ways of doing it.' (Unattributable Industry A, 1998: Interview)

Whilst this is the case with a range of issues the parliament deals with, contact in relation to the FPs remains at a level far below its potential, with actors preferring the national route or direct approaches to the Commission.

Whilst outside the scope of this thesis, the other main area of contact with the private sector was in relation to helping with Calls for Proposals, such as providing advice on Commission contacts, partner searches, etc. As Adam MEP states:

> "We do get [companies coming to us as MEPs for help with calls for proposals (getting on a call and winning submissions)]. Although I think in some respects they are better off doing it themselves now. Its changed, you might get new-ish organisations or new-ish European-wide organisations coming for advice, but in the main I would say that is something we may get a little bit less of." (Adam MEP, 1999: Interview)

These contacts also tended to be 'one-offs' and were not generally related to a wider-relationship.

The primary vehicle for the limited University and Research Council contact with the UK MEPs was through the Brussels-based offices of UKRO. As McNally MEP comments:

> 'UKRO certainly organised extremely useful events where we met people from the various Research Councils ... Very useful ... and in showing us how things were going in the UK.' (McNally MEP, 1999: Interview)

The extent of University contact, covered in greater detail in the University and Industry chapter, was however surprisingly limited and non-productive in the eyes of the MEPs who considered that their lobbying priorities were not suitable to the likely programme outcomes. For example, Chichester comments:

> 'We were lobbied by the Universities and Research Councils [through UKRO], they ... made a rather curious pitch for more spending on education which is not really a Community competence and is not in my view a function of the research fund of the EU - but of course we live in an age where universities are looking for funding from all manner of sources, clearly research funding helps cover their overheads.' (Chichester, 1999: Interview)

There were some positive experiences reported in this area. As McNally states:

> 'I also have found scientific institutions in the UK [useful], the Royal Society for example, and my local universities more than willing to give me information and advice. Once they know of the existence of MEPs on the research committee and their interest, there is certainly no reluctance to be helpful.'" (McNally MEP, 1999: Interview)

The lack of contact between the Research Councils and the EP was of particular surprise given the importance of the Research Councils in the UK RTD community, the dedicated staff employed by the Research Councils and their generally high level of knowledge of the FP programmes and the political processes surrounding them. As noted in the Research Councils' chapter, clearly here was an example of a group of actors opting not to concentrate their efforts on the EP despite knowledge of its modified co-decision powers in the process.

There is a need for the MEPs to follow-up key contacts after the Committee's final submissions to gain direct feedback and attempt to address any problems that may have arisen. For example, whilst McNally highlighted a meeting with the MRC through UKRO as a very useful exercise, the MRC's views of the meetings differed. As noted in the Research Council chapter, whilst the MRC did value the contact in terms of getting general points across, they believed the

MEPs failed to get the important details of their points in the submissions to the Council.

Perceptions of Value

On one level the EP was relatively successful in gaining representations from the various RTD areas covered by the FPs, as McNally MEP comments:

> "There were very few sectors that didn't actually send us information." (McNally MEP, 1999: Interview)

However, whilst the majority of sectors may have provided the Committee with some information, the view from UK RTD sectors was that the EP was extremely low on their list of lobbying priorities. In fact, the research findings indicate the links between the MEPs and UK actors are generally quite weak, particularly so given the key role of the EP and the indicated desire of the MEPs to foster and maintain such links. The following sections examines why the EP was not taken more seriously by the UK actors.

Awareness

One of the primary reasons cited by the MEPs for the lack of interaction with UK actors in relation to the FPs is a widespread and general lack of knowledge of the Parliament's role in the process from both public and private actors. As Chichester MEP comments:

> 'The world is full of people who don't understand the role of the European Parliament.' (Chichester MEP, 1999: Interview)

Adam MEP commenting:

> "I think a lot of it boils down to a lack of appreciation of what influence we do have." (Adam MEP, 1999: Interview)

McNally MEP commenting:

> "There is certainly a great lack of awareness of the Parliament's role ... There are many people who had they realised our influence and our co-legislative importance probably would have directed their attention to us. ... So its not so much that the Parliament doesn't do its job adequately, its that people simply don't know what its role is and what it does." (McNally MEP, 1999: Interview)

In defence, Ford MEP offers a valid partial explanation of the low profile of the EP when he states:

> "I note with astonishment that none of the documents I have seen relating to the Fifth Framework Programme makes mention of the decision-making process. The role of the Parliament must not be overlooked." (Ford MEP, 1997: 6.8)

McNally MEP makes a similar point:

> "I have been to presentations given by slightly less senior Commission officials where they have not mentioned the Parliament at all. They have given the impression to the audience, who are usually researchers and potential users of the Framework Programme that it is the Commission entirely who decides what will happen." (McNally MEP, 1999: Interview)

Basically, the Commission logically concentrates its information packs and presentations on the end-users / grant applicants who do not *need* to know the intricacies of how the FPs are created; given the EP has no role at this end of the policy process it is quite natural that its role is not highlighted. To use an analogy, one would not expect to see UK technology policy promotional literature highlighting the role of the UK parliamentary process and detailing the relative powers of each area of government.

Of course it is relatively easy for those actors well versed with the EU to find out the role of the EP, however, for actors primarily concerned with the national policy process and / or their own unit's research projects the process is not quite so simple. Therefore, including the fact that the negotiation procedures have been in constant change since the emergence of the RTD programmes in the early 1980s and the large breaks for most actors between involvement in a new round of FP negotiations, the lack of knowledge of the EPs role is understandable.

Claims that the Parliament does not get the attention it deserves because of a lack of understanding by its potential users are common throughout its history and present policy areas. However, it appears a somewhat weak argument to blame national actors for their lack of knowledge of the EP's role, rather one has to question its self-promotion and the role of the MEPs in seeking representations. As McNally MEP went on to comment:

> "A lot of it depended on how proactive we wanted to be." (McNally MEP, 1999: Interview)

Given this, it is largely up to the EP to do more to promote its role – a job it was not doing successfully in the FP5 negotiations. For example, it could have taken a more pro-active role in seeking interest representation from the Research Councils rather than relying on the limited, though useful, success of the UKRO. To be fair, certain of the MEPs did go out and try to gather support and information. Ford MEP made a series of requests for help for information in speeches to universities in his constituency, an extract of which is provided below:-

> 'Co-decision poses problems for the Commission. The Commission has to accept that it requires a closer consultation with the Parliament in the preparatory stage than normally would be the case. It also means that for the universities which are concerned with the outcome of the framework, there is, in fact, an added reason why you should be working closely with the Parliament, advising, helping the debate that will go on with the Council. The Council have all the experts in the world backing them up, helping them in their decision-making process. The Parliament, by comparison, has little.' (Ford MEP, 1997: 6.8)

However, such a direct, but low-key approach can only touch the edges of the problem. Unfortunately, for the majority of the members on the Committee the benefits of proactively seeking representations are relatively small in relation to the time-consuming costs of the process, particularly when contrasted with their other political, parliamentary and constituency commitments.

'Entering the political'

A further problem for the MEPs, at least in relation to UK actors, was the unease expressed by both public and private actors in terms of '*entering into the political*.' For example, whilst it was recognised by the departmental actors that the MEPs are not in the main fighting party political battles, it remained the case that the lobbying of politicians was alien to their environment. This is not to state that the departmental actors did not recognise the potential benefits of lobbying the EP – in the main they did. However, in a cost-benefit equation of lobbying resources, the prospect of becoming involved in 'politics' and the greater perceived attractiveness of both the Commission and the OST left the

MEPs sidelined. Similar feelings were expressed from a range of industry actors who believed not only was the EP a relatively inefficient route to influencing policy, but that it was also a relatively undesirable one in terms of association. (Unattributable Departmental A, 1998: Interview)

Given their wish to establish stronger policy networks, the desirability of association is a key factor that needs to be addressed by the MEPs. In this respect they need to emphasise their strong role under co-decision and the largely non-political and technical nature of the discussions both within the Committee and outside with Commission actors, if they are to strengthen their value to others.

Flag-waving and Pet Projects

One of the strongest criticisms of the EP was the belief that any proposals made by it were almost certain to be poorly drafted and non-selective – that is the parliament was seen to be a body that would ask for everything from the Council and Commission with the result that they would get to 'pick and choose' from the EP's wide-ranging list. This belief was surprisingly held not just by national actors, but also by some of the MEPs, as Ford MEP comments:

> 'Parliament may be long on additions to Framework V, but it's short on subtractions.' (Ford MEP, 1998: Interview)

Thus even if national actors are successful in gaining the parliament's support, there is little to no guarantee that their policies will be adopted without further lobbying of the Council and Commission.

Adam MEP comments that there is some validity in the criticisms that the EP is too much involved in flag-waving and supporting pet-projects at the expense of the overall picture. (Adam MEP, 1999: Interview) The Parliament also doesn't help its case as it allows non-RTD issues to influence its input, as one MEP stated:

> 'We have got to see the wider context. The programme came at a time when there was a lot of change in the European functions, there was the question of enlargement, the reform of the finances of the European Union, what would happen to the Common Agricultural Policy, how much money would there be for

> the structural and cohesion funds. All these issues which are ... part and parcel of the background in which we were negotiating.' (Adam MEP, 1999: Interview)

These factors, recognised by all the MEPs interviewed are relevant to the overall policy process, the problem is that they put off national actors which are looking for focussed forums in which to efficiently express their ideas. Whilst it is fair to say that the UK core-executive had similar problems to the MEPs in this area, its main contact point, the OST, was able to keep these out of sight from its policy community actors therein increasing the perception of an efficient and focussed process.

It is particularly interesting to note the similarity of terms used in interviews with actors within the UK *policy community*, such as 'flag-waving', that reflect a clear indication that many of the actors are forming their views of the parliament on received group wisdom. Further evidence of this lies in the fact that the most of the UK policy community had only limited contact with the EP and certainly not enough to have developed strong negative views in isolation - i.e. one would expect a higher degree of ambivalence given the limited actual contact.

McNally MEP did defend the Parliaments role in stating:

> "I would say we improved the structure. We certainly clarified the rather vague fourth thematic programme and put it clearly into its two component parts." (McNally MEP, 1999: Interview)

However it is necessary to come back to the point that, as far as the development of policy networks is concerned, it is *perceptions* that are important, not the factual reality of the situation. Hence, even if McNally MEP is correct the reasons for the lack of interaction, based on perceptions of worth, remain largely the same.

Scientific Knowledge

A clear problem for the UK actors in relation to their lobbying efforts with the MEPs is both the *perceived* and *actual* lack of knowledge and expertise in specific RTD areas. As one Research Council official commented, much of their time spent dealing with the MEPs, though initially promising, had been wasted

due to the lack of scientific knowledge of the MEPs and particularly their staff. (Dukes, 1997: Interview)

The MEPs came up with varying responses to this criticism, though most indicated that it was not, at least in their minds, a question of limited resources:[59]

> "Every MEP is quite at liberty to employ such researchers as they want, I would say that is not a problem." (McNally MEP, 1999: Interview)

> "It would be too easy to say 'no I don't have sufficient resources'." (Chichester MEP, 1999: Interview)

However, given the varied demands placed on MEPs in the Committee and the fact that most hold other policy concerns alongside the FPs, few would consider employing scientific specialists – even MEPs have budget limitations and are not able to employ a team of specialist researchers for each policy area they cover. Nor, it appears would they want to:

> "I have one research assistant, I am not a scientist, I don't claim special knowledge or expertise. I see my job more as looking at [a proposal or lobby position that comes through on the FPs], and forming a judgement as to whether it makes sense or not – whether it should be factored in or not. I am not sure that would be assisted by having more resources – that means staff basically. As an MEP one has to confront a wide-range of issues, [the FPs are just] one of them." (Chichester MEP, 1999: Interview)

Whilst this is undeniably true and is the case in parliaments across the world, it is of little comfort to the average Research Council representative when trying to put across a point of fine science. Though as noted in the Research Council chapter, Dr Dukes of the MRC did indicate that in future they could use this factor to their advantage by actually drafting the detail of the proposals rather than simply passing the ideas forward and leaving the drafting work to the MEPs' assistants.

The MEPs are also supported by the EP's Scientific and Technological Options Assessment panel (STOA). To a degree STOA limits the MEPs' dependence on national government and Commission sources of information providing unbiased information on specific issues in a 'usable form' (McNally MEP, 1999: Interview) STOA is

[59] Generally the first defence of backbench UK MPs.

basically designed as a resource centre for MEPs wishing to seek information on, or a greater understanding of, a specific scientific and / or technological area. That is to state, STOA is a useful tool for providing the generalists with comprehensible information, though it remains the case that the MEPs have to know what to ask for in the first place and the FPs form only a small part of its actual activities. All of the EP's Committees are represented on the 22 member STOA panel which holds responsibility for the focus of its work.[60] Unfortunately, this has meant that much of STOA's work falls outside that of the Framework Programmes – for example, it is particularly concerned with regulation in the fields of biotechnology, biodiversity, and the Information Society. Thus, whilst STOA may be going down the right track its effectiveness can be questioned when an MP who actually sits on its advisory board is left stating:

> 'It would be helpful to have a more popular version of results, rather than the long reports which are provided though the official system. For the politician, the material is almost indigestible, and is certainly so for the non-specialist in the different subject areas.' (Adam MEP, 1997: 2.2)

The Future: Institutional Parity?

As noted in the introduction, the Amsterdam Treaty has basically revised the EP's co-decisions powers for the Framework Programmes into line with those for most other co-decision areas, removing the policy's 'special' institutional position and reflecting the increasing acceptance of the EU's role in RTD.

The move to full co-decision will in effect weaken the powers of the individual states in the Council by removing their veto and enforcing QMV for the setting of an FP's overall priorities and budget. Nentwich & Falkner (1997) argue that these procedural reforms have finally placed the EP on a virtual level with the Council in procedural terms.[61]

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[60] Administrative responsibility is held in a 14 member STOA team of permanent and short-term staff.

[61] One qualification was introduced in terms of the member states retaining the right to restrict the EP's involvement on the adaptation or supplementation of the FPs. This was also the case with

> 'In fact, the *changes eliminate the procedural imbalances* between the two major players, i.e. the Council and Parliament, to a very large extent. Remaining differences can be assimilated to a useful distribution of roles, while the overall political weight of the two institutions within the codecision procedure may now be considered equal.' (Nentwich and Falkner, 1997: 1)

Whilst the essence of this statement is essentially correct, it needs to be heavily qualified in relation to the FPs. The new procedures offer the prospect of greater influence for the EP and a smoother process overall. No longer will a single state be able to hold the process to ransom. As Adam MEP writes:

> 'within the Council of Ministers [they] had to have a unanimous view. This meant that any country could hold the whole process up and we went very close to the wire in getting our final decision." (1997: 4)

Indeed, the removal of the anomaly of the unanimity-based Co-decision in favour of the standard QMV procedure *has* redressed much of the imbalance between the two institutions. However, although they may be moving to a paper parity as far as institutional power is concerned, given the evidence in this thesis of the negative perceptions of the EP and some of its inherent difficulties, this balance is unlikely to transpire in reality by the next FP negotiations. As has been stressed throughout this chapter, whilst it may be the case that the MEPs do an excellent job on the Committee, they are not going to gain the full benefits of the UK policy networks unless they address actor *perceptions* of their roles. Finally, even if the EP's problems were to disappear overnight there is still the chance that the new procedures will make little difference, Ford MEP, for example believes the outcome would have been much the same with full co-decision under FP5, stating:

> 'Some MEPs, greedy for more, want[ed] to delay the decision until early 1999 when the Amsterdam Treaty will have been ratified and in consequence unanimous decision making is replaced by Qualified Majority Voting for Framework V. However the numbers don't add up. Even this new lower threshold cannot be reached without a change of heart by at least a couple of those countries with their pockets sewn-up.' (Ford MEP, 1998: Interview)

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other areas such as emergency immigration measures and recommendations on employment policy. (Nentwich and Falkner, 1997: 3)

It is ironic that just as full Co-decision is introduced, changes in the EP's committee structures are likely to effectively downgrade the importance of RTD policy and lead to a decrease in the actual level of parliamentary oversight at all stages of the process, including the Co-decision stage. Following the wholesale change in the Committee mandates throughout the European Parliament after the 1999 elections, the Committee on Research, Technological Development and Energy has in effect been subsumed into a much larger Committee on Industry, External Trade, Research and Energy (INDU). Given the high profile of the Industry and External Trade sectors within this new committee and the importance of these issues to the functioning of the EU it is likely that RTD policy will, at the very least, take a backseat in the Committee's proceedings. As McNally comments:

> "There is a slight risk that with the forthcoming reorganisation of parliamentary committees that insufficient attention will be given to research. [It] would be probably the biggest and most influential committee in parliament – and it could be that the research aspects get swamped." (McNally MEP, 1999: Interview)

The danger that the composition of the Committee will be dominated with members concerned more with high-profile issues, such as external trade relations, holds an obvious impact on its ability to provide adequate oversight of the programmes and input in the legislative process. For example, one only needs to look at the media interest in the EU dispute with the US over bananas or GM foods and contrast it with the minimal coverage of the FPs to see where the political priorities of the Committee will be focused. A decline in specialisation from its already low levels would only leave national actors even more frustrated with their MEP contacts than is the case at present. Given this, the institutional increase in the MEPs powers is highly *unlikely* to be reflected by an increase in the perceptions of those powers, at least in their ability to utilise them effectively.

To return to Peterson's quote from 1992:

> 'In short, the EP generally lacks the expertise, technical information, or political weight required to challenge the Commission's management of Framework. In this area, as in many others, it has influence, but very little power.' (Peterson, 1992a: 241-2)

Whilst the EP's situation may have improved over the decade, particularly in the area of its relations with the Commission, despite the introduction of Co-decision the same statement can be made about its level of input today, with little in the way of qualification.

If the reasons for the EP's lack of involvement in the UK technology policy networks had to be summed up, three words could suffice: perceived Opportunity Cost. Whilst a lobbying approach covering all of the relevant actors and institutions would be likely to produce the greatest level of returns, the limited lobbying resources available to all of the actors forces them to take opportunity cost decisions on their best routes of access. Unfortunately for the MEPs, for the reasons outlined in this chapter, their opportunity cost is just too high in comparison with other actors such as the OST and Commission.

Commission – MEP relations

The one clear area of success for both the Commission and the MEPs in networking terms was in their relationship with each other – both sides being satisfied with the level attention and responses they received.

The European Commission provides the greatest source of information for the MEPs, giving it a considerable level of influence. Indeed, the Commission appears to have gone out of its way in terms of its consultation with MEP's, certainly going much further than its legal obligations under the treaties. As with other actors, the Commission's consultation of the MEPs takes part on an ongoing basis throughout the implementation of the FPs (despite their limited oversight role) as well as during the creation of a new FP. However, the Commission, at least at its senior levels, appears unique amongst the main actors in appreciating the potential of the EP under the modified co-decision rules.

In terms of seeking specific input from the MEPs for the FP5 consultation process the Commission arranged a series of roundtable meetings with MEPs prior to the publication of its first position paper. This clearly enabled the MEPs to gain an advantaged position over that of the official input into the programme

through co-decision, as they were able to influence the Commission's position prior even to the member states taking their official stances on the programme. As Mény *et al.* comment in relation to the general process:

> 'Often the most effective results are achieved through controlling the initial stages of the development of a policy.' (Mény *et al*, 1996: 5)

Given this basic rule that the most influential policymakers, *ceteris paribus*, are those involved in the earliest stages of negotiations the Commission's receptiveness at this early stage gives the MEPs a strong policy role well before that recognised by most UK policy actors.

The MEPs were unanimous in their statements of the Commission's overall responsiveness and relative openness to their enquiries. Indeed, several of the UK MEPs went so far as to state that they received much greater support and aid in their work from the Commission than UK MPs would ever receive from government departments under normal circumstances, the following being just a selection of their positive comments:

> "All the experience that I have had is that the Commission is a very open organisation." (Adam MEP, 1999: 5)

> "The Commission are very good indeed at keeping in touch with us, we are regularly given briefings. ... It's informal and formal contact, they attend every Committee meeting, they speak on every item, they are very open, if you have questions, if there is any problem, then they are very willing to meet MEPs." (McNally MEP, 1999: Interview)

> 'There is a degree of willingness to talk to and meet with Members of the European Parliament that seems to be stronger now than has been in the past. ... and there is a willingness to provide information to MEPs which would be remarkable in British parliamentary terms.' (Ford MEP, 1989: 166-7)

> "Of course one has to make the general observation that the Commission is more approachable than Whitehall. Not withstanding our desire to sack the Commissioners,[62] the actual people within the Commission are more approachable. ... I clearly observed that [in some UK departments, the] Civil Service culture ... seems to view the Official Secrets Act as being tailor-made for them – not overtly,

[62] This statement was made near the end of the Santer Commission.

but I mean they are very close-mouthed about things, this contrasts with the relative openness of the Commission." (Chichester MEP, 1999: Interview)

Such views indicate that if the UK MEPs are in a relationship with any actor, it is the European Commission.

Of course the network between the Commission and the MEPs was helped by the fact that they shared a general consensus on the content of the proposed programmes and that both institutions supported an increase in the total budget (though the Commission was more conservative in this area). This contrasts with links between both institutions and the UK actors where the goals were frequently at odds making a strong policy network difficult to establish.

COR and ESC

The Economic and Social Committee (ESC) and the Committee of the Regions (COR) didn't even register on the policy networks scale of interaction where UK actors were concerned. Whilst most of the senior actors interviewed had heard of the institutions, only the OST had been engaged in limited contact with them. At the EU-level, the Commission actors interviewed professed their support for the institutions, but were unable to state the last time that either committee's input had held an impact on the process. The MEPs on the other hand were quite willing to admit to their general disregard of the institutions, as evidenced in the following quotes:

"I wouldn't have thought it had much of a role. It has to be consulted. At one time it was even more important than the parliament, at least in theory. But, I mean [ESC] is really a non-event as far as the Parliament is concerned." (Adam MEP, 1999: Interview)

"Very little, we receive their opinions automatically and look at them. We have had one or two meetings with them, but I would say this is an area we could improve. Similarly with the Committee of the Regions." (McNally MEP, 1999: Interview)

"I have been along and spoken to the relevant members of the Committee of the Regions and arranged a meeting with the UK members. But I would say that their reports don't really inform our thinking." (McNally MEP, 1999: Interview)

Interestingly, the lack of interest of both COR and ESC receive does not appear to be down to the poor quality of their reports, a traditional criticism levelled at them, rather it is down to the their limited institutional role. As McNally MEP comments:

> "No [it isn't down to the angle they take], it's our perception of the relative importance of the institutions. Since we are co-legislators I think we put more weight on our opinions than theirs." (McNally MEP, 1999: Interview)

Overall, as stated, neither institution can be considered to have made a significant impact on UK RTD policy networks given the general disregard in which they are held.

Commission of the European Communities

To avoid simply repeating the analysis of the Commission's role and its relationships with the individual sets of actors in the previous chapters, the following sections concentrate on the more universal factors influencing the Commission's place in the UK policy network.

The creation of FP5 to a great extent remains a set of negotiations between the member states, the European Parliament, and the European Commission. The Commission is clearly much more than a negotiation facilitator in the process, rather it is a powerful actor with its own policy goals. Whilst it does not have a vote on the finalisation of FP5, the Commission's power is derived from its institutional position at the centre of the negotiations, responsibility for devising the FP5 structure and programme specifics, experience in implementing previous FPs, and future responsibility for FP5. Given this position the Commission appears to represent an attractive target for actors attempting to influence the FP5 negotiations, particularly given the wide-spread acknowledgement of its role amongst the UK policy networks.

The responsibility for the FPs was shared across a number of the Commission's Directorate-Generals during the FP5 negotiations. DG-XII, the Science Directorate, took the lead followed by three major interested DGs and seven lesser DG interests. Despite this diversity a number of key themes emerged from

the Commission in its position papers indicating an agenda clearly separate from that of the nation states. The three main strands of this agenda included more near-market research, an in increase in the total funding levels and a greater freedom of action under the overall FP.

It is interesting to note the Commission's clear divergence in terms of RTD funding compared with the UK's position. Whereas the UK government has generally pressed for a reallocation of existing resources to specific areas, the Commission has continually pushed for resources to be both increased and reallocated:

> 'At this stage, the new approach to R&TD policy must be supported as much by the increase of financial resources to be allocated, as by the identification of the specific budget for the different activities.' (CEC, 1992b: 8)

This central plank of the Commission's strategy throughout the development of the FPs has consistently put it at odds with the UK core-executive and, indeed the government departments and Research Councils given the presence of *Europes*.

The Commission's push for an even greater role in the later stages of the FPs was to be achieved by larger FP policy areas to enable the FPs to be more re-active to changes in the various requirements of the research fields. (Routti, 1997: 1) As Routti, Director-General of DG-XII commented during the FP5 negotiations:

> 'You have to try to guess in advance what are the real key areas for scientific and technological development. ... However this means that many areas will be left outside the scope of certain specific programmes. There would need to be a mechanism to support that. Concentration must be complemented with a rather liberal treatment of the other areas not covered by a specific programme area.' (Routti, 1997: 1)

In other words the Commission perceives a need for its role in setting FP objectives to be substantially increased to allow it to move outside those areas agreed in the main Framework. These sentiments are also reflected in the Commission's 12 February 1997 working paper on FP5 that states:

> 'The Fifth Framework Programme will also have much greater flexibility, due to the reduced number of programmes and the gradual commitment of financial

> resources which makes it possible to mobilize funds at any time in response to unforeseen needs (such as the BSE and spongiform encephalopathies problem which arose in 1996).' (*CORDIS Focus*, 24/02/97)

Whatever the practical RTD intentions of these aims there is a clear policy-making impact on the role and power of the Commission. Given the relatively high level of Commission autonomy at this level in the existing FP4 and given that the Commission's success in attaining this goal for FP5, its strength in this area is perhaps more than for any other major policy area. The greater leeway clearly offers the prospect that actors will increasingly concentrate their efforts to influence the programmes after the first policy stage where the overall FP is set – therein increasing the breadth and depth of the Commission's connections to national actors at the second stage of the policy making process.

Consultation

The Commission's consultation procedures follow a similar path to those of the OST including consultation documents, seminars and direct links with key national and EU-level actors. UK actors are also represented to the Commission through European interest groups, such as the United Kingdom Research Office (UKRO). The Commission placed a high ranking staff member, Mike Rogers, to oversee the UK's place in the FPs and it sends staff to UK RTD conferences both to gain support for the FPs and to gain information on UK actor view points.

The Commission is willing to engage in unofficial contact with key national actors, as one UK departmental official comments, the Commission will say:

> ""Okay, here is our draft of the Framework. What do you think about it?" That is when the official sort of interaction starts, because, now, here the Commission is saying: "Here is an official draft and we want an official response from the member states."" (DoH Official, 1998: Interview)

The Commission is also in direct formal and informal contact with many of the key UK actors during the implementation of the existing FP, holding working relationships with departmental and Research Councils actors on the Programme Management Committees (PMCs). Indeed, relatively close links have been

established between the Commission and UK departmental and Research Council actors at these lower Programme Management levels – Levels Two on the scale discussed in Chapter Two, particularly when contrasted with the loose issue networks in existence at Level One of the policy process.

CREST

One avenue of access direct to the Commission for the member states is CREST – the Scientific and Technical Research Committee. Established in 1974, CREST forms a key part of the Commission's consultation strategy acting as an advisory body to assist the Council and the Commission in RTD policy and aiding in the co-ordination of national programmes with those of the Community. Although clearly established well before the FPs were created, CREST's most important function is as a forum for information flows between the member states and the Commission on the evaluation of existing FPs and the formation of new ones.

CREST's membership comprises of representatives from the Member States and Commission in the RTD sphere. Importantly, though staffed by the General Secretariat of the Council, CREST is chaired by a Commission official. (Council Resolution, 95/C 264/02) *Cordis Focus* (06/10/97) even goes so far as to state that CREST effectively determines the content of the FPs before they reach the Council; whilst this may be somewhat of an overstatement, CREST is certainly an excellent arena for the member states and the Commission to exchange ideas. Overall, the forum is generally seen as a successful part of the Commission's strategy, providing an active place for interaction and debate. However, its naturally limited membership means that access to the body is restricted to the higher members of the UK RTD policy community sanctioned by the OST to represent UK interests. As such it does little to circumvent the OST's central role in the UK policy process.

CORDIS: Help and Hindrance

CORDIS was launched in 1990 as a database to help promote the results of EU-funded research. Going online in 1994, as an access non-subscription service,

the system expanded its content to cover promotion and information distribution. (CORDIS focus, 2000, No. 143: 24) The range of services offered on the CORDIS website increased vastly during FP4, visitors being able to browse or download documents ranging from background legal texts, to the general FP outlines, to specific manuals describing how to write proposals and how the proposals will be evaluated. (CORDIS focus, 22/03/99: 2) Indeed, the Commission claims that:

> 'The CORDIS FP5 Web Service will provide all of the information and resources necessary for potential participants to put together a proposal in response to calls published by each of the specific programmes.' (CORDIS focus, 1999, No. 129: 1)

The importance of CORDIS for the success of FPs should not be underestimated. In March of 1999 the site's average monthly number of users reached 134,000, with vast increases in the number of documents downloaded. (CORDIS focus, 22/03/99: 1) For the Commission, CORDIS offers a relatively cheap and efficient way of keeping the research community up-to-date with FP information. Indeed, given the need for quick access to information on Calls for Proposals and partner search facilities, the CORDIS site has become the primary vehicle for many actors seeking FP5 information. As the Commission recognises:

> 'Many research groups are now relying on the CORDIS website ... as a one-stop shop for news and reference materials on FP5.' (CORDIS focus, 22/03/99: 1)

The CORDIS website has attracted consistently positive feedback in terms of the information present on it and its accessibility from all of the UK actors connected with the FPs during the research. On the negative side its success has led to a few indirect problems, for example a range of UK actors were experiencing difficulties in getting hard copies of documents as the Commission was increasingly relying on them downloading the documents from the site. CORDIS does make it easier for relatively inexperienced actors to find contacts in the Commission, making the initial contact more simple. However certain UK actors feel the Commission is over-relying on the site to cope with the expansion of the programmes rather than investing in sufficient staff. (DETR Official, 1999: Interview)

The main problem that has become apparent is the one-way nature of the media in terms of information dissemination with several of the departmental actors

indicting that CORDIS appeared to be contributing to limiting the growth of the networks. (DETR Official, 1999: Interview' DTI Official, 1999: Interview) Basically, CORDIS' success in acting as a key source of information for the UK actors has reduced their direct contact with the Commission therein reducing the 'unofficial' avenues for these actors to push their views and for the Commission to solicit them. In short, whilst a successful policy tool, CORDIS has contributed to keeping actors at a distance from the Commission.

Perceptions of Consultation

The Commission's view of the consultation process is, unsurprisingly, extremely positive, with one official commenting:

> '[There is a] very high utilisation of UK actors by the Commission because of the history and practice [of science] in the UK.' (Rogers, 1999, Interview)

However, whilst this appears to be the case at the lower levels of the policy process – dealing with the application of the FP – the UK policy community does not believe that it is the case at Level One where the overall FP is set. One DTI actor, for example, commented that the Commission's listening abilities improved once an FP was set at the first level. (DTI Official, 1999: Interview) Such experiences were common amongst the UK actors active at this level with a common feeling being that the Commission was more interested in simply getting their names in its books as consulted actors, than taking note of what they were actually stating. The reasons for this divergence of opinion between the UK actors and the Commission are examined in the following sections.

There is a clear divergence of preferences between the *Europes* susceptible UK public actors and the Commission. For example, the Research Councils and government departments are inevitably going to receive a cool reception from the Commission in arguing that FP5 should be constrained in terms of funding and scope. Given that common goals are essential for the formation of a strong policy network it is not surprising that links are somewhat weak at this level. At Level Two of the policy process, where *Europes* is less of a factor – having already been set on the overall FP following the conclusion of Level One

negotiations – the divergence of preferences naturally declines allowing scope for stronger networks to develop.

A crucial factor in the relative weakness of the links is the fact that the Commission also has interests from 14 other member states and the associate states to take into account. This lack of solid two-way dependency relationships limits the ability of actors, such as the government departments and Research Councils, to gain their views comparable consideration to what they receive from the OST.

Even where the Commission is providing unofficial information it is clear that the UK actors are not convinced they are getting the full story. As one UK departmental figure comments:

> "You will get things said very indirectly to give you a feel for what is going on, even in meetings you get that as well, you couldn't quote someone and make it make sense ... they are very garbled ... they will tell you exactly how much they want to tell you." (MAFF, 1999: Interview)

Even when dealing with UK citizens in the Commission, the UK actors tended to feel that they were talking to 'outsiders,' to the extent that they use the traditional 'going native' description:

> " Even UK people tend to go native, so you can not even rely on UK people working for the Commission to 'spill the beans' because they are protecting their backs. It does make it so very, very difficult." (MAFF, 1999: Interview)

From the Commission's perspective the UK actors are occasionally unreasonable in their demands for attention because of their inability to take into account the presence of the other member states. As one official comments:

> 'The UK is not as good as others at appreciating that there are fifteen countries [in the EU].' (Commission Official, 1999, Interview)

Of course this should not be overstated, most of the UK actors do fully understand the Commission's predicament, one UK official commenting:

> "The Commission do clearly have all sorts of pressures put on them ... for the determining the structure of the programmes: they have to give a balanced view of

> the scientific content, but they cannot ignore a big hitter like Germany or the UK when it comes along and says "We really want to see this in the programme" and equally so they cannot ignore the cohesion countries and say "On your bike, you are small and totally insignificant and we don't really want to hear what you have to say."" (DoH Official, 1998: Interview)

However, even where this understanding is present there does appear to be a profound lack of sympathy for the Commission's predicament.

It is also the case that the Commission appears to hold a lack of understanding on the pressures facing the national officials. For example, it is a frequent complaint amongst UK actors that the Commission does not give them adequate time to conduct their consultation procedures after a request for position papers. One UK official commenting:

> "Very often the Commission will want official responses at incredibly short deadlines ... Really you've got to be one step ahead of the game. You really have got to get your intelligence about what the Commission is likely to produce possibly a couple of weeks ahead of the game. ... And that means that you get unofficial texts that 'fall of the back of a lorry', texts that suddenly drop on your desk that are French or German." (DoH Official, 1998: Interview)

To be fair to the Commission, it is often their officials that are throwing these documents 'off the back of the lorry' to the national actors to enable them to prepare for the short official response times. (Commission Official, 1999: Telephone Interview, DTI Official, 1999: Interview) The fact that not all of the actors recognise the Commission's positive actions in this area reflects the lack of a solid policy community. If the same situation were to occur with the OST the UK actors would predictably be more understanding of the time constraints and more grateful for the draft documents.

There is a danger of confusing quantity of contacts with quality of contacts. For example, the MRC purposely limited its contacts with the Commission to ensure that the inputs it made were of high quality and are therefore more likely to be noticed. As Dr Dukes of the MRC's international office states:

> "I have talked to people in the Commission as well, and been over to see people in the Commission, but I ... try to be careful, rather than pushing things down their throat, like ... a timely paper arriving." (Dukes, 1998: Interview)

However, even this example does not bode well for the Commission, as, the same actor was also critical of their responsiveness at this level. Indeed, the Commission's perceived lack of responsiveness to its own consultation procedures was reflected across the UK policy community and was one of the primary factors limiting the emergence of a more solid network.

The Commission is to a degree constrained by its environment in terms of the feedback it can provide to national actors. Explaining the reasons for refusing to support a national actors submissions would be akin to walking through a political minefield. Whilst the OST is able to do this on a national level, it has the advantage of a pre-existing strong policy community where trust is high, the Commission on the other hand at this stage of the policy process exists in a loose issue network where trust amongst partners – and thus the willingness to share sensitive information – is relatively low.

The gap of around two years from the end of the FP4 negotiations to the start of the FP5 negotiations clearly did not help the network creation process, putting a clear strain on those relationships that are not ongoing within the lower policy levels of the FPs.

Overall, whilst it may be the Commission's view that:

> 'Contacts at all levels with the UK is frequent and productive.' (Commission Official, 1999, Interview)

The general consensus over the FP5 negotiations was that the Commission was talking-up the extent it fully utilised the information sent to legitimise its actions and was therefore not taking full account of the views of the UK actors. Even if this is not the case, the *perception* has limited the degree to which actors have shifted lobbying resources from the OST to the Commission. As a senior OST official comments:

> 'because there are so many voices out there they can claim that they are always paying attention to somebody else when you tell them that you don't like what they are doing.' (Wright, 1997: Interview)

On one hand the Commission's failures in this area are down to actor perceptions as much as the reality of the situation, however it is also the case that the fact that it *does* have to take account of far more political, sectoral and state-based interests than the OST. In this regard, it is highly unlikely that concurring policy perspectives, even when found, will remain to the extent that the beginnings of a policy community will emerge - the relationships are inherently less stable at this level. Despite a range of existing access points and the UK actors' universal acknowledgement of the strength of the Commission, the network links during the FP5 negotiations at best tended to exist in the form of a loose network - the UK OST remaining by far the preferred vehicle for UK actors attempting to influencing the policy process.

Finally, it should be recognised that even without the establishment of a strong policy network between the Commission and the UK actors with regard to the setting of the overall FP, it remains the case that the Commission *did* take a large amount of direct and indirect representations for the UK policy community. Thus whilst the OST may be firmly dominant in the UK RTD community it is not in a position to act as a dominant gatekeeper on information passing to the Commission beyond the limits it can place on the interaction of the UK government departments.

Conclusion

Overall the story of the EU institutions and UK policy actors is largely one of missed opportunities. Significant opportunities do exist for UK actors to influence the creation of a new FP through the EU institutions, with both the Commission and Parliament offering useful channels of influence. Equally, both the Commission and EP were keen to receive interest representations from the UK actors. However for both institutions, whilst the will is there, a combination of the sheer number of actors they have to deal with from all the member and associated states tied to their resource constraints and poor reputations at the UK-level have left them largely out of the UK policy networks loop. Once again, as much as any other resource, actors' reputations have been crucial in determining their role in the policy networks.

The following chapter brings the thesis to a close by concluding on the main theoretical findings and looking at the potential utility of the approach taken and results gathered for the wider EU field of study.

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10) Conclusion

> "A fascinating but very frustratingly complex area." (Unattributable Departmental C, 1999: Interview)

This thesis has investigated the development of UK RTD actor strategies to influence the European Union's Framework Programme. Specifically it has sought to determine the extent and nature of British actors' involvement in the formation of the overall Fifth Framework Programme and the degree to which the actors are focussed on the national or European levels of policy-making. This concluding chapter brings together the main findings of the empirical research with broader conclusions on the utility the key concepts of 'policy networks', 'gatekeeping' and 'Europeanisation' in the wider EU context.

Policy Networks

For a policy community to exist, as outlined in Chapter Two, three factors should be clearly present: stability of membership, limited permeability to new members and strong resource dependencies. (Peterson, 1995: 77; Rhodes and Marsh, 1992, 12 - 15) In the initial stages of the research it ***appeared*** that the UK FP5 policy network would form a neat pyramid-shaped policy community as depicted in Figure 1: Initial Perceptions of the UK FP5 Policy Community, page 5. This pyramid contained a policy community based on a consensual hierarchical structure, with the OST above three main groups of actors: Government departments, Research Councils and major interests such as universities, large-scale companies and interest groups. Below the policy community, a looser issue network was seen to exist composed of wider RTD actors of a generally smaller scale and / or with a reduced interest in the setting of FP5. The contribution of these actors was predicted to be participation in the existing programmes and sporadic submissions of opinion when invited by the larger actors in the policy community. Of the main EU-level actors, the Commission and EP were expected to have only limited interaction with the UK actors, with the OST playing a strong gatekeeper role that would enable it to filter information flows to the European level.

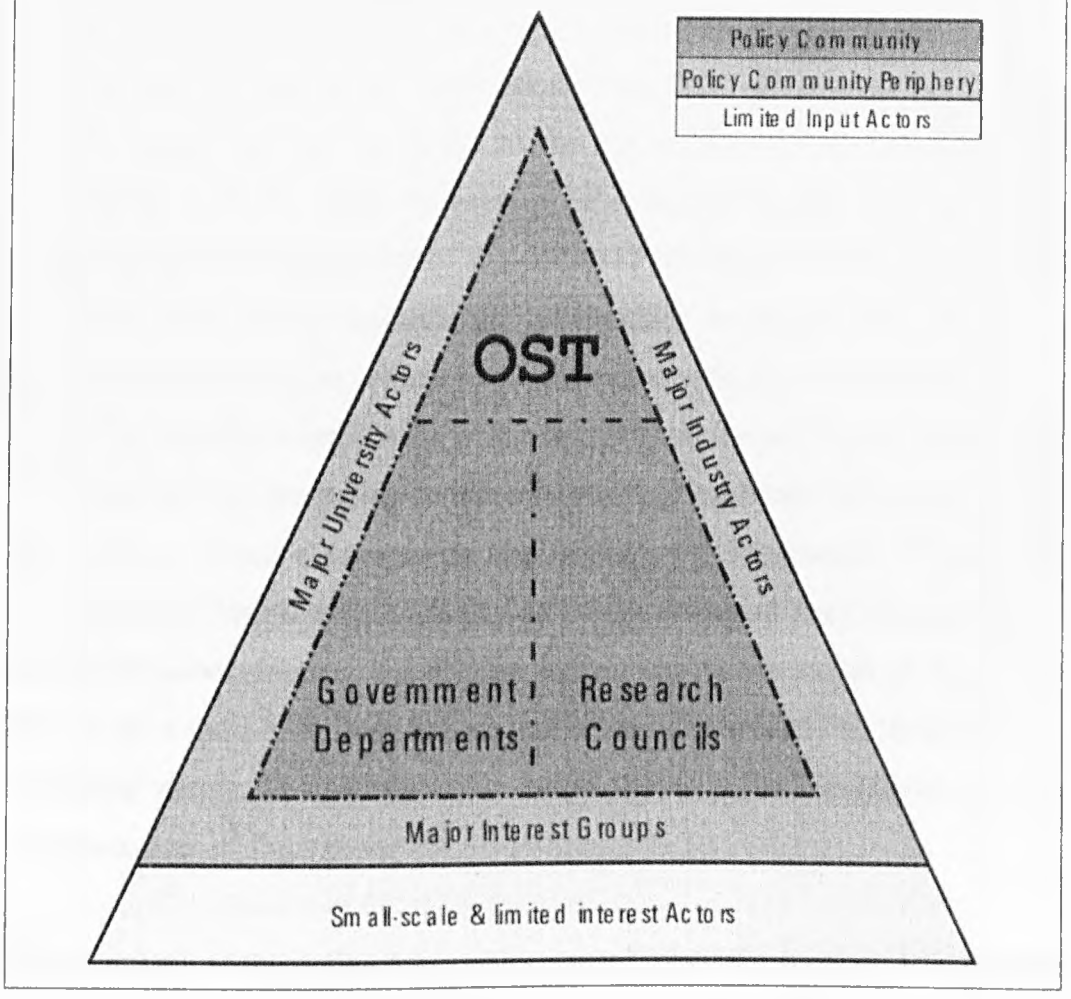
The main empirical research did uncover the existence of an extremely strong and solid UK FP5 policy community. However, the final form of the actors' relationships differed significantly enough from that displayed in Figure 1, page 5, enough to render the initial depiction of the policy community and associated loose issue network as misleading.

The policy community that existed during the creation of FP5 was limited to three groups of key public-sector actors. The initial predictions of a community based on a consensual hierarchical structure, dominated - though not ruled - by the OST, proved to be correct. However the main research uncovered that the core policy community, rather than holding four members, held just three: the OST and the two other main types of public actors - government departments and Research Councils. The predicted fourth group of members of the policy community - composed of universities, large-scale companies and RTD interest groups - turned out to be on the periphery of the main grouping. Whilst these actors were closely tied to the three members of the policy community, they were not sufficiently 'on board' to meet the criteria to be considered full members. The role of the smaller actors, predicted to interact in a loose and temporary issue network over the calls for input into FP5, were largely as predicted. Expectations about the role of EU-level actors, initially predicted to be distant from the UK policy arena, proved to be largely accurate, though different factors than those initially forecast were at play in limiting their influence and involvement.

In respect of these findings, a revised diagram, Figure 10: Depiction of the UK FP5 Policy Networks, below, graphically represents the final depiction of the UK FP5 policy-network relationships. As can be clearly seen, the OST, government departments, and Research Councils existed in a tight policy community - their close links being represented by the breaks in the separating barrier lines. The major university, industry and interest group actors are depicted sitting on the policy community's close periphery - holing relatively close links with the three policy community actors, though not of the same intensity - as represented by the smaller breaks in the barrier lines. The small-

scale and limited interest actors are depicted as existing completely externally to the policy community, with the solid line representing the general lack of interaction between them and the major actors.

Figure 10: Depiction of the UK FP5 Policy Networks



The following text examines the factors that have led to the particular actor relationships as outlined above in Figure 10: Depiction of the UK FP5 Policy Networks. The first area examined is the policy community between the OST, government departments and Research Councils.

Policy Community with a Gatekeeper?

The OST, government departments and Research Councils met all of the main criteria to be considered a functioning policy community, as examined in the policy networks section of Chapter Two, page 36 onwards.

Although new Frameworks are only established every five years, the relationships between the UK FP policy community and direct periphery actors exist on a permanent basis. This *permanency* is derived from three main sources. Firstly, the FPs do not constitute the only forum of interaction for the main actors; they have constant contact over domestic RTD policies. Secondly, the main actors retain strong permanent relations during the implementation of the existing FP. Indeed the co-operation of the OST, government departments and Research Councils is critical to the UK's approach to influencing the distribution of funds within an existing FP. Whilst national RTD policy co-operation and the management of an existing FP, in this case FP4, fall outside of the direct remit of this research, the relationships made and sustained during these activities helped to cement those concerned with the setting of the overall FP5. For example, a key finding of the research was the willingness of the three main members of the policy community to freely exchange taking the lead in representing Britain's interests in the existing FP Programme Management Committees (PMCs), thereby displaying a high degree of trust in shared goals and professional abilities. Finally, the intense negotiation stages of the overall FP are not a short-lived phenomenon, rather they last around two to three years, providing plenty of time for close relationships to be established and re-established.

The members of the policy community proved relatively *loyal* to their partners when in contact with actors outside the community, and all displayed a high degree of trust of each other's actions and intentions. Whilst contact with the EU-level actors does occur, there is an evident lack of depth in these relationships, and the policy-community actors all indicated that their ultimate loyalty lay with the other policy-community actors. In such circumstances contact with actors outside of the policy community cannot be seen as a sign of its lack of integrity. Much of the loyalty of the members of the policy community is based on a sense of belief that it is their professional duty to support the government's line, backed by a genuine believe that this line emerges through a fair and representative merging of their interests on the great majority of topics. In this respect, the policy-community actors were remarkably willing to put their interests to one side on particular issues in the strong belief

that they would receive a fair hearing overall. A possible exception to this rule is that the Research Councils were willing to take their interests to the EU-level on occasion. However, where this was the case they were doing so with the knowledge and acceptance of the other members of the policy community.

Crucially, as required under the definition of a policy community, solid *mutual dependency relationships* exist between all the three main groups of actors. The most obvious direction of this relationship is the reliance of the government departments and Research Councils on the OST to give their positions a credible hearing when negotiating on behalf of the UK government. In return, the OST is heavily reliant on information flows from the government departments and Research Councils to establish an FP negotiating position that will allow it to fulfil its mandate of defending and promoting the UK's RTD interests. Strong dependency relationships also exist between the government departments and the Research Councils who are reliant on each other in various aspects of RTD policy in general and the FPs in particular. For example, both actors are frequently given responsibility to represent the OST on the Programme Management Committees of the existing FP, and as such are responsible for representing the others, along with a range of UK interests at those meetings. Evidence was also uncovered that they were willing to co-ordinate their roles to increase their influence on the overall process.

It has been stated throughout this thesis that the OST is the dominant partner in the UK policy community, sitting at the top of a two-layer hierarchy with strong *gatekeeper* powers over information sent to the European level. As policy communities are intended to be largely consensual, one has to question how this analysis can be justified. The answer to this question lies in the ultimately consensual nature of the OST's domination.

The OST is in a clear position of institutional dominance over the FPs in relation to all the UK actors, as it is the one body that has the formal power to determine the official UK negotiating stance and determine who will carry that stance to the EU. However, the OST's role as a gatekeeper is a complex one that is highly dependent on which actor it is being examined in relation to. The government

departments, for example, are institutionally bound to abide by the OST's official line when dealing with external bodies, providing it with a clear power to guard departmental submissions beyond Whitehall. However, here a difference emerges with the other main policy-community actor, the Research Councils, which profess independence of action within a broad mission statement according to their Royal Charters. This institutional buffer reduces the institutional gatekeeping authority of the OST – yet the Research Councils are still, in practical terms, subject to the OST as a gatekeeper on their effective input into the negotiations, for reasons explored in the chapter on the Research Councils. One example is that the Research Councils know that their future budgets are subject to a high degree of influence from the OST.

However, in practical terms the OST does not have to resort to such conflictual tactics to act as the gatekeeper because, to a large degree, whilst the OST holds the institutional reins, its position at the top of the UK RTD policy community is *consensual*. Its institutional powers may have set the original parameters for interaction, but its day-to-day actions are dependent on the continued support and confidence of the government departments and Research Councils, without which its position would become gradually untenable. This is particularly the case given that it is reliant on the superior technical knowledge and direct interests of its 'partners' in the policy community. Both sets of actors were highly confident in the OST's ability and recognise the need for a body to take the lead when dealing with the occasionally conflicting goals of individual actors before moving to the EU-level negotiations. It is this largely consensual aspect of the hierarchy that allows the relationship as depicted to sit firmly within the definition of a policy community.

It is worth emphasising that the OST's gatekeeper role is extended in just one direction: positions flowing out of the country. It is neither able nor willing to act as a gatekeeper over information flowing *from* the European level to the national level. Firstly, the involvement of these two institutions in the implementation of the existing FP on the Programme Management level provides them plenty of opportunities to gather information directly from the EU. Secondly, the OST actually values and promotes such links as they provide

it with another source of data given that its partners in the policy community are keen to pass on their information.

In respect of these hierarchy and gatekeeper findings, it is important that the concept of a policy community is not too restrictive in terms of bluntly stressing the equality of the actors: the UK FP5 policy community is a prime example where a policy community exists whilst containing a clear hierarchy. As long as the hierarchy is based on some degree of willing consent, the definition should still be applicable where the other criteria are met. The same logic also applies to gatekeeping. Within the UK FP5 policy community, the gatekeeping role of the OST is carried out on a largely consensual basis with all the actors recognising the value of producing a unified view when negotiating with the EU actors.

It should also be recognised that the blanket term 'policy community' can be slightly misleading if it is seen to imply that the actors within it are consistent in their relationships with each other. Whilst such a vision may represent an ideal, it is not likely to be found in reality. As has been highlighted, the OST is clearly the strongest of the actors within the policy community; but differences exist even between the roles of government departments and Research Councils. For example, the government departments have the aforementioned institutional hold placed over them limiting their ability to lobby 'off-message' from the core executive at the European level, whilst the independent charters of the Research Councils shield them from such restrictions. Also, the Research Councils' reliance on the OST to carry their *Europes* contributions puts another form of pressure on them, if it were needed, to act in the OST's favour where possible. Further, even within the relatively cohesive individual groups, such as the Research Councils, there exist variations in their roles within the policy community. These variations are significant enough to require recognition if an accurate model of the relationships between the actors is to be established. For example, as analysed in Chapter Seven, the Research Councils' individual characteristics – including their institutional cultures, varying prospects of returns from the FPs, and extent of past FP involvement – all influenced the

degree of their involvement with the European level and their willingness to question to the official core-executive line.

Given the above, limits have to be clearly recognised on the extent to which generalisations can legitimately be made across even sets of actors, such as the government departments and Research Councils, let alone the whole policy community. Indeed, warnings over generalising from groups to specific actors should be placed on all policy-networks analysis. This does not however weaken the utility of policy networks as a descriptive tool; rather, as with all such tools, a judgement needs to be made on the degree to which the boundaries for meeting a definition within a model can be met. The very notion of policy communities and issue networks is based on simplifying a set of complex social interactions down under a set of labels. The question of where that simplification process can reasonably end without making the process meaningless is a judgement that has to be made by all policy-networks analysts.

Another trait of policy communities was clearly evident between the group of the OST, government departments and Research Councils: the *commonality of actor views* and perceptions across the whole community. All of the policy-community actors held remarkably similar views on the pros and cons of the policy, and even where differences were present the level of understanding between the actors was extremely high. One clear indication of the permeability of the individual actors to the policy community's group ideas was the high level of dissatisfaction expressed with the European Parliament as a route to influence policy, and the *language* in which this was expressed: there were repeated references to terminology that is not in widespread use outside of this policy community, such as political 'flag-waving' by MEPs. As the vast majority of the actors had not been in contact with the European Parliament to experience it at first hand, it appears they had gained their views from interaction with the few members of their policy community that had lobbied MEPs. The fact that the other members of the policy community were so willing to accept this discouraging evaluation of a potentially useful ally offers two key insights into the strength of the UK FP policy community. Firstly, the actors held a high degree of trust in the information they received from the other members, to the

extent that they did not feel the need to test their conclusions. Secondly, the fact that the actors were willing, if not eager, to embrace a negative assessment of an external body ties in directly with the sceptical view of outsiders generally held by policy-community members in all policy areas. This second point offers some insight into the difficulties in breaking into such a close-knit community.

The expectation expressed in the theory chapter, page 39, that actors' perceptions and preferences would be coloured and not just enhanced by the networks to which they subscribe was sustained. These findings also go on to validate the continued emphasis on actors' perceptions beyond those of traditional policy-networks analysis, alongside resource realities, when judging the factors behind specific relationships – findings that clearly carry over to other work on mapping the EU policy networks.

Policy Community Periphery & Issue Network

The research also found that a group of large UK RTD actors, consisting of the heavily research-active universities, large-scale individual companies, such as SmithKline Beecham, and private-sector interest groups, such as the CBI UKRO, were closely involved in the UK FP5 policy process. These actors' stable relationships and dependencies with the members of the policy community initially indicated that they would be part of the main FP5 policy community. However, as their lack of insularity, relatively low perceptions of loyalty to holding a 'group line', and focus on the existing FP became apparent, it was clear that they had to be excluded from the policy community definition.

The OST gives this group of major actors almost as much direct attention as it does the government departments and Research Councils when forming the UK's initial negotiating position for an FP. Equally, as the government departments and Research Councils had a mandate to gather information from their RTD areas, they also gave this group of actors a great deal of attention. This strong information dependency from the policy-community actors was reflected back from this group in terms of their desire to have their opinions heard and influence felt on policy decisions. In this respect a clearly mutual

dependency exists between this group of actors and the policy community members.

The permanency of the university and company actors in relation to the UK FP policy community is derived from their high levels of access to the members in relation to the ongoing management of the exiting FP4. Indeed, it is at this level that this set of actors are most interested in lobbying the FPs. Decisions taken within an existing Framework on the more detailed aspects of programme funding are the ones that are going to have most direct impact on these actors. For the universities and individual companies a major factor accounting for their lack of integration into the UK FP5 policy community during the initial negotiations was their keen focus on the running of the existing Framework and the problem of limited resources. Whilst these actors were interested in the setting of FP5, they had calculated that it was not worth spending a large proportion of their resources lobbying for the overall settings framework when the individual programmes that they would be able to bid for were set at the lower policy levels in the PMCs and 'Calls for Proposals.' However, as discussed in Chapter Eight, again we can see variations within a group, as the larger interest groups such as the CBI did not play much of a role at the Programme Management level – keeping their focus on the more global overall FP – though their political weight and role in other RTD areas ensured that they were in frequent contact with the policy-community actors on a range of issues and thus did not suffer any access problems.

As a potential avenue for future research, this thesis has demonstrated that the implementation stages of an FP at the Programme Management level are likely to reveal a different set of dynamics to those for the creation of an overall FP. In particular the role of the periphery actors would almost certainly be seen to be much higher for most actors at both the UK and EU-levels.

Another strong link with the policy community was displayed in the remarkably similar traits in terms of the terminology they used and the frequency of remarkably similar pros and cons of the policy process that came across in the interviews. For example, yet again, the view that the EP was not a very

productive route for influencing the policy process was widespread with frequent references to political 'flag waving'. Given that most of the actors had not contacted the EP directly the logical assumption is that ideas and perceptions filtered quite freely between the policy community and its periphery.

Moving them away from the policy community group, the actors on the periphery were willing to openly use the European level to forward their views even where their interests were directly counter to those of the OST – even the more Europeanised of the Research Councils were reticent to do this. Overall they were clearly comfortable operating directly with the European Commission with little reference to what the 'official' core-executive line was on an issue. This display of openness goes directly against some of the more insular traits and the sense of 'loyalty to the line' of the policy community actors. However, to reinstate the perceptions of mutual dependency, as discussed in the main analysis, the OST was quite happy with these actors lobbying against its line in Brussels to the extent that it was even willing to point them in the right direction at times.

Overall, whilst the periphery actors maintained solid relationships with the policy-community members, the intensity of their interaction within the FP5 process was either periodic, as with the CBI, or focused at the lower policy levels, as with the universities and large-scale companies. However, when called on to submit position papers to the OST, all were given and felt that they received a high degree of attention. The actors were also much more willing to foster relationships with new 'external' actors such as the Commission, much more so than the government departments and Research Councils.

The inclusion of the periphery groups was analytically necessary, as whilst they clearly did not fall into the policy community definition, their relationships with the members of the policy community were of such a high quality that they needed to be clearly separated from the other actors involved in the fleeting issue network that is described below. In this respect whilst sticking rigidly to set policy-networks definitions of policy communities and issue networks may make

for tidy analytical models, where they do not fully encapsulate the main features of the relationships within a network they should be adapted.

At the bottom of the network exists a plethora of minor actors, as depicted in Figure 10, page 271, which form a fleeting issue network with the other major actors early in the policy process. This issue network runs for a short period *parallel* to the main policy community and its periphery. The issue network is built on a disparate range of RTD connections between small actors in industry and academia that have a generally participatory interest in FP5, and larger industrial organisations that do not hold a major interest but whose views are sought as key representatives of the British RTD-base. Early in the policy process, a range of these actors is requested by the OST to submit their views on the FPs to contribute towards the development of the early UK position paper.

The OST also encouraged the government departments, Research Councils and major interests to seek the opinions of these actors when producing their submissions. Interestingly this placed these three groups in the powerful position of being sub-gatekeepers on information forwarded to the OST. If the information they received from the periphery actors did not fit their institution's view they could simply ignore it due to the lack of a strong dependency relationship with the issue-network actors. Whilst the major actors require the views of a range of such actors, they are not reliant on any single one, or even just a small selection. Further, given the complex nature of the policy process the actors making the submissions at this low level are highly unlikely to find out the extent to which their ideas have been taken on board by the larger bodies.

The ad hoc nature of the way in which these contacts are made, and the fact that not all were willing to take the time to even send a submission, leads to picture of a highly permeable, fluid membership group with weak dependency relationships in this particularly policy area. The issue network is also short-lived, unlike the policy community, which although it contains members common to both should be viewed as a separate entity. Just as it is sparked into action by the first call from the OST for interest representations from the UK actors, the issue network ends just a few months into the whole process when the

OST sees its goals to have been met. (See Chapter Five, Section: The Formation of the FP5 Negotiating Position, Page 121)

Europeanisation?

The following section concludes on the extent to which this has occurred in relation to the UK and FP5. The section first examines a neofunctionalist view of Europeanisation, of actors moving their focus to the European level, it then utilises the main definition adopted by this thesis that Europeanisation is the impact of a European policy competence on the domestic structure of governance in that policy sector.

A neofunctionalist view of the FPs would indicate that the existence of a large distributive programme at the European level would create a strong pull of actors to lobby the EU institutions for funds to be placed in their areas, creating a strong Europeanisation of the policy process. However, whilst this thesis has demonstrated that this pull is present, it has also demonstrated that for the UK actors there are strong factors holding back the Europeanisation. Indeed, the OST has clearly re-established itself from the position of a relatively weak central domestic RTD policy actor to a strong FP actor widely perceived by the UK actors to be the best route for those wishing to influence the creation of a new FP. The following section examines some of the main reasons behind the limits on the pull to the European level.

At the UK-level, the impact of HM Treasury's *Europes* attribution system has undoubtedly proved to be one of the most important findings of the research – highlighting the ability of one single institutional factor to heavily influence the approach of those in its shadow. *Europes*'s role was entirely restrictive in terms of the Europeanisation of UK RTD network. For example, not one of the *Europes*-susceptible actors had lobbied for an increase in overall FP spending, despite the fact that it would bring more money into their science areas. This was due to the fear that more FP money in their science area would lead to more *Europes* attribution – even though *Europes* had not at that time held any direct

impact on any of the actors' RTD budgets. If any single factor had to be outlined as restricting the Europeanisation process it would have to be *Europes*.

The other major finding at the UK-level in terms of restrictions on the Europeanisation process was the success of the OST in promoting itself to the UK actors as the best channel of influence into the FPs. This finding is somewhat at odds with what one would expect when looking at the history of UK RTD policy, where strong central co-ordinating institutions have not been a feature.

At the European level the 'pull' certainly existed, with many actors wishing to influence the shape and direction of FP5. However the EU institutions failed to capitalise on it. Failures in both the Commission and the European Parliament during the consultation processes certainly weakened actors' confidence in their abilities and motives, and thus reduced the amount of resources they were willing to spend lobbying them.

Whilst many actors did send position papers directly to the Commission, they were frustrated when they could find no evidence that any attention had been paid to them, and were thus discouraged from making further submissions. Indeed, all of the UK actors interviewed indicated their belief that the Commission simply did not have the time or resources to take adequate account of all the position papers it received – beyond those from the national core-executives and certain select Eurogroups – for the setting of the overall Framework. This left the bulk of their effective input during the negotiations resting in the hands of the OST, giving it a gatekeeper power on *effective* submissions by default.

In many instances the Commission gave the sub-core-executive actors the impression that it was simply going through the consultation motions: only asking for their opinions in order to fulfil its requirement to take note of the interests of the RTD community. In contrast to this, the OST's more developed feedback system acted to strengthen its relationship with the major UK actors. The OST also dealt with the potential of being flooded with position papers

differently to the Commission, by cutting off contact with the less important actors at an early stage. The Commission's desire for credibility in representing the needs of all European RTD meant that it did not take this option, a clear mistake given the resentment of actors who suspected that their submissions had simply been ignored. Of course, as developed in the main analysis, the Commission could not be blamed for all of the problems that the actors placed at its door. However, the fact remains that it is the perceptions of actors that matter in the formation of policy networks, and the UK actors' perceptions of the Commission were not particularly positive during the negotiations. The European Parliament also suffered from a combination of negative perceptions of its role and some genuine inadequacies. For example, the MEPs frustrated UK actors to varying degrees with a real lack of technical expertise, a tendency to favour 'pet projects' and a willingness to engage in what were persistently described as 'flag waving' exercises to please non-RTD constituencies. Whilst these problems were not endemic, and the EP did offer a tangible access point, the close-knit UK FP5 policy community and periphery ensured that any negative stories were quickly transferred to all of the major actors, therein reducing the prospect of them being taken seriously as an avenue of influence for resource-conscious actors.

As stated in the preceding chapters, for limited Europeanisation to occur the existing UK actors need only to have increased their European-level lobbying, there is no requirement for the UK policy community to be completely altered, beyond the acceptance of its members interacting with external actors. Thus, to cope with the European level, the policy-community requirement for 'insulation from ... other networks' (Rhodes and Marsh, 1992, p. 13) was relaxed and only considered relevant where the external actors significantly altered the structure of the main UK policy community. If we take this definition as standard for Europeanisation, it is evident that the British policy process has been Europeanised to a degree. Whilst independent (i.e. non-OST sanctioned) government department contact with the EU institutions may not have significantly increased, the Research Councils, particularly the BBSRC and MRC, and the major industrial and academic actors all showed evidence of

increased contact with the European Union institutions, European interest groups, or their sister organisations in other member states.

Further, if we return to main definition adopted by this thesis that, Europeanisation is the impact of a European policy competence on the domestic structure of governance in that policy sector, the evidence of a degree of Europeanisation is indisputable. Even when using Ladrech's (1994) more specific definition of looking at Europeanisation as a as process of EU dynamics becoming a part of the 'organisational logic' of national policy making it becomes evident, once you examine under the surface, that aspects of the British RTD policy process have been Europeanised by the FPs. For example, the 1993 Cabinet Office *Review of allocation, management and use of government expenditure on science and technology* only devotes one small paragraph to discussing the FPs' impact. Indeed, until the mid-1990s EU RTD was rarely mentioned in Government RTD overview literature and virtually never discussed at length. From this it would be easy to conclude that the FPs do not have, or at least are not perceived to have, a significant impact on the UK policy process; however this is clearly not the case. Whilst neither the European Commission nor the European Parliament has fulfilled its potential for attracting and keeping the attention of UK actors, a whole sector of the UK RTD community has forged a specific FP policy community and attracted close interaction with a range of periphery actors. Within this community and its periphery, the relationships between the actors are held together through their involvement in the FPs. For example, although the OST would be in direct contact with the government departments and Research Councils to loosely co-ordinate national RTD, the intense relationships that have developed between the international offices of these institutions are largely a result of the FPs. In short, it has:

> 'become part of the organizational logic of national politics and policy-making' (Ladrech, 1994: 69)

Peterson states that any 'Europeanisation' of British RTD strategy has been by 'default rather than design' (Peterson, 1996a: 239) due to the lack of a focused national RTD strategy. Equally a similar conclusion can be reached about the factors limiting the Europeanisation of the British RTD policy *process* in relation to the

FPs: the limits have occurred by default rather than design. For example, many of the major factors that have restricted the European-level activities of the UK FP actors – such as *Europes* – are present because they serve another function, in this case as a funding control system by HM Treasury. Also it is evident that not all of the actors hold developed strategies for lobbying. As one departmental official commented:

> "I have to admit we don't understand it all half the time, we have to pick and choose and go to the bits that look the most relevant." (Unattributable Departmental C, 1999: Interview)

Such statements make it even more important that their actions are investigated and mapped.

In terms of the wider Europeanisation debate, the main finding of this research is that it is essential not just to look at what is pulling national actors to the European level, but also to look at what is restricting them. Whilst such analysis is common to intergovernmentalist analysis, the main difference here is that much of what is restricting the actors is either from unintentional domestic sources such as *Europes* attribution, or even more significantly from the failures of the EU-level actors to take advantage of their positions. Equally it is also clear that much of the Europeanisation process as witnessed in the UK FP5 policy community has been dominated not by the reality of the resources available at the European level or the responsiveness of the EU actors to representations, but by the perceptions of those resources and the perceptions of their responsiveness.

Conclusion

The policy networks approach directed the research towards a range of fruitful questions and provided the framework with which to turn those questions into research findings. One of the main benefits of policy networks is that it is a flexible approach that can be applied to most policy situations, it would therefore be a particular tragedy the theory itself were to become seen as an absolute whose parameters were not to be altered even where to do so would increase its utility. The modifications made to the policy networks approach in its

application in this thesis increased its utility from both an analytical and a descriptive point of view. In particular the emphasis on the following factors were highly beneficial and are clearly transferable to other areas of study: actor perceptions of resources alongside a factual resource assessment; the use of consensual hierarchies within a policy community; and the option to extend the policy networks' groups to include a new 'policy community periphery' where it is appropriate.

The approach adopted has provided a detailed map of the Europeanisation impact of the Framework Programmes on UK actors' strategies and relationships. In doing so it has highlighted a range of findings that raise issues to be examined in the wider field. In particular, the research highlighted many areas in which the clear presence of a neofunctionalist-type 'pull' to the European level was negated by both national and EU factors. Three issues in particular stand out. Firstly, the unintended impact of the HM Treasury's *Europes* attribution system in removing incentives of UK public-sector actors to lobby to their strengths for increased funds within the FPs. Secondly the impact that the perception and to some degree reality of an organised and attentive national core-executive actor, such as the OST, can have in building and retaining the loyalty its national actors. Thirdly, the impact that the perceptions, and to some degree the realities of inattentive and overburdened EU institutions can hold as a disincentive to national actors when considering relocating their limited lobbying resources to the European level. In terms of the overall Europeanisation question, the central finding was the role of the European-level FP programmes in fostering the development of a strong national policy community in an area where previously none had existed. From this one has to conclude that it is essential that studies concerned with Europeanisation focus on actor relationships within the national level as much as they do on those between the national and European levels.

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Annex 1: Interview Methodology

From the start of the analysis of UK RTD actors and the creation of FP5 it became clear that a lack of existing research would necessitate a large degree of primary interview-based research. The process undertaken to complete the interviews – depicted in Table 8: Stages in the Interview Process– is described in detail in the following text.

Table 8: Stages in the Interview Process

a) Undertake preliminary research to become familiarized with the policy area.
b) Create a topic guide containing the nature of information sought.
c) Determine the general organisations / individuals that hold the information and estimate the sample size.
d) Decide on the best interview method based on information sought, sample size and resources available.
e) Determine who to contact and arrange an interview.
f) Design and test the interview question guide.
g) Conduct the interview.
h) Reflect on the interview process and make relevant changes for the next interview.
i) Repeat stages e) to h) until complete.

Interviews are a varied research tool: they can be structured, semi-structured or unstructured, and qualitative or quantitative. In order to determine the content, nature and scope of the interviews necessary for this research, it was necessary to carry out preliminary research on the background of the policy area. Utilising existing primary and secondary sources with reference to the chosen theoretical path, a topic guide was created and initial interview target organisations were identified.

Specific interviewees were identified by analysing up-to-date primary literature from the target organisations (paper and electronic based), by telephone conversations with organisation staff, and in the later stages by information gathered in interviews with other actors. Given the need to establish UK actor perceptions of the process, the primary focus on identifying interviewees was to gain a spread of the main UK actors involved in the policy and to move out from there incorporating relevant actors at the European level.

Upon completion of the preliminary research, it was clear that the number of actors involved in the policy arena was likely to be relatively small and thus it would be possible, within the given resource constraints, to carry out a series of in-depth interviews. It was also clear that the type of information required from the policy actors would be largely qualitative in nature – looking at complex decisions and the reasoning behind them – with just a few quantitative details required, such as funding and staffing levels.

Based on the need for in-depth qualitative information, the structured interview path would have placed unacceptable limits on the research. A structured approach was simply too rigid to deal with the degree of complex and interrelated issues present. Further, as the policy area was relatively unexplored, there was a strong chance that new questions would arise in the interview process that had not been uncovered by the preliminary research, thus an approach was required that would be flexible enough to account for this. Unstructured interviews would have been suitable for examining the complex nature of the policy area and actor relationships in-depth. However the unstructured approach was rejected as an interview method because the research required a degree of regularity. It was essential if comparisons were to be made across similar actors that certain core questions were asked in each group. Semi-structured interviews were therefore chosen as the preferred interview method as offering the best of both worlds: allowing the interviewee space to express their thoughts and the interviewer the flexibility to adapt to new information during the interview, whilst maintaining enough structure to allow for comparisons to be made across interviews.

First contact with the interviewees was generally made by telephone. The purpose of this contact was not to seek an instant commitment to an interview or to gain material for the thesis, but to check that they were the correct person to speak to and to flag a fax and duplicate letter that would be sent to them requesting their input into the research. The letter, an example of which is on page 295, contained details of who the research was for, what the research was concerned with, who else had taken part in the research and what was being

requested. The approach, which necessitated a break between the initial contact and arranging the interview date, was adopted to reduce the perception of 'cold-calling' which was likely to solicit a negative response and to increase the perception of the research being both legitimate and organised. If the target interviewees had not re-initiated contact within three days they were telephoned to see if a meeting could be arranged. This approach proved highly successful with all of the UK public-sector and private-sector actors and MEPs. Indeed, most of the interviewees were surprisingly keen to talk about the policy area – with many commenting afterwards that the interview process had been useful from their perspective, as they did not usually find the time to sit down and actually think through their activities in such a manner. Arranging interviews with the European Commission was more problematic, with all of the Commission officials being highly suspicious of the nature of the work when first contacted. The aspect of the approach that appeared to work best with the Commission officials was to provide added legitimacy to the research by highlighting the key UK actors who had taken part, such as Rob Wright the OST's Director of International Science and Technology Affairs.

Prior to each interview a set of question sheets was established as a guide for the discussion, with different guides developed for the different types of actors, such as government departments and Commission officials (See Sample Interview Question Guide, pages 296 - 298 for an example). The purpose of the guides was to ensure that the interviews remained focused on the key issues whilst providing flexibility to allow, for example, the respondents to bring in issues that they believed were important to the policy area. No matter how comprehensive the preliminary research, surprises can always arise during the interview stages. In this respect the interview questions were set to ensure that all of the main points were covered in three-quarters of the time available (usually a one-hour slot) with one-quarter of the time held back for unexpected issues and / or more in-depth discussion. Several questions that were less critical to the research, although still relevant, were held back to fill the time-slot if necessary. The guides were piloted with colleagues to ensure that they covered the main areas in a logical order and that the questions were not biased towards particular answers:

retaining objectivity was a crucial goal in the gathering, processing and presenting of the material in thesis.

The start of the interview process involved an explanation and discussion of the research going beyond that included in the contact letter, and a discussion of the basis and parameters of the interview. In particular, it was necessary to establish the interviewees' views on attributable comments and the recording of interviews.

A major ethical concern was to ensure that respect was given to the wishes of the interviewees regarding the use of their comments in the thesis. In particular, concern surrounded the issue of quotations – as to whether they could be on an attributable basis. At the start of each interview, following the explanation of the nature of the research, each of the interviewees was asked if they were willing for their input to be directly attributable to them in the research findings. Those who agreed were also offered the further open option to make 'off the record' comments during the interview if sensitive issues or opinions were brought up that they did not want to be associated with. This both helped to assure them of the research motives and ensured that they wouldn't feel too constrained during the interview.

All of the public-sector interviewees were open in their comments and rarely asked for points not to be attributed to them. The private-sector actors and Commission officials were much more restrictive, with virtually all requesting at the start of the interview that their comments were neither attributed to them nor to their organisation. Of those few in the private sector who did not initially request anonymity, the vast majority of their useful comments were prefixed by a request 'not to be quoted on this'. Discussion with the private-sector interviewees over the issue of anonymity indicated that their concern rested on three main issues. Firstly, they generally worked in highly competitive industries and were traditionally guarded with comments relating to specific research programmes and strategies. Secondly, they were keen to ensure that they were not attributed making comments about their public-sector partners that could be seen in a negative light, for fear of damaging future relations. Thirdly,

they did not like 'their company' being openly portrayed as lobbying the government to gain special concessions. However, once the rules of discussion were set, despite their caution over the attribution of their views, they were surprisingly open and frank about the policy process that they were engaged in.

To ensure that maximum benefit was gained from the interviews, all of the interviewees were asked if it would be acceptable for the sessions to be recorded. All of the UK public-sector interviewees were willing for the interviews to be recorded, with just one of the Commission officials and one of the private-sector interviewees declining. One danger with recording interviews is that the sight of a tape recorder could cause the interviewee to hold back information. With this in mind, all of the interviewees were offered the chance to have the recorder turned off at any time, either for a short period or for the remainder of the interview. Only one interviewee, a Commission official, took up this offer for a few comments near the end of an interview. Another tactic employed was to place the recorder out of the natural line of vision of the interviewee to minimise its presence during the interview. From the open dialogue during the interviews, it is safe to conclude that recording was not a hindrance, indeed the first set of interviewees were asked their opinions on the process and all indicated that they did not even remember that they were being taped once they were a few minutes into the interview.

For several reasons recording the interviews proved to be extremely valuable compared to taking standard notes. Firstly, the recordings took pressure off note-taking, allowing the focus to be firmly placed on interaction with the interviewee. Secondly, the recordings ensured that particular quotations could be checked and their context re-established after a period of time. Thirdly, later interviews occasionally highlighted the importance of certain issues that had been discussed in earlier interviews but had not appeared significant at the time, and the recordings plus detailed transcripts enabled analysis to be made in such areas at a level of detail and context that would not have been possible with standard notes. All of the interviews were transcribed to aid the analysis stages of the research and the tapes were stored for future use.

Factual questions such as budgets, numbers of staff devoted to FP5, etc were placed at the start of the interview, both because they were necessary for the research and because they allowed both parties to start the interview in a straightforward way before moving onto more complex and occasionally sensitive issues. Following this, the interviews adopted a flexible approach, with the question guide being used to check that all important issues were covered.

A key area of concern was establishing the validity of the responses provided. Several checks were put in place. As noted, the pre-interview preparation involved an investigation of the role of each interviewee in the process from available sources, and an investigation of the types of answers the interviewee was likely to provide. If the interviewee's answers varied from expectations, secondary questions could then be asked to check whether there was a communication breakdown and / or to determine why the anomaly had arisen. Clarification of issues was also important, involving the interviewer summarising what he thought was being said during the interview to ensure that the interpretation being placed on it was the same as that intended by the interviewee. Interviews were also cross-referenced with each other to check how the actors' answers related. Of course this process was not simply created to check on the validity of the responses from the interviewees, it also formed a key part of the analysis. It should also be recognised that actors' perceptions of their roles and the roles of the other policy community members did vary, thus the fact that not all of the interviewees came to the same conclusions on certain issues was frequently a substantive finding rather than a reliability problem.

The last part of each interview was largely used to clear up areas of uncertainly and to provide the interviewee with a chance to take a more pro-active role. For example, once the planned questions had been discussed, the interviewees were asked if there were any issues that they considered important to the policy area that had not been covered during the session. The interviewees were also asked to offer suggestion for contacts in the policy area, and to confirm names and contact details of actors discussed in the interviews (such details were not requested during the main body of the interview to avoid breaking the flow). When new or existing contacts were suggested who would make good future

interviewees, the opportunity was taken to request permission to use the current interviewee's name when making the new contact – a tactic which appears to have helped ease access to a wide range of key officials. Finally, the interviewees were thanked for their time and asked if it would be acceptable for the interviewer to re-contact them if new issues came to light.

Sample Interview Request Letter

University of Sheffield Letterhead

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Dear *****

I am enquiring if it would be possible to arrange an interview with you to discuss issues concerning the impact of the European Union's Framework Programmes for research and technological development on research conducted by or in the name of the Department of *****.

I am a researcher working at the University of Sheffield. The title of my project is: An examination of the impact of EU technology programmes on the British technology policy process.

The research is directed towards examining how Britain's policy process has been influenced by its participation in the EU. Specifically assessing the degree to which the EU's Framework Programmes – through altering resource dependencies between the various actors and changing the policy environment – have led to a restructuring of British research and technology policy networks.

I have completed an initial evaluation of both domestic and European Union literature of an official and academic nature in relation to technology policy, and conducted interviews with various Industry, Higher Education, and Civil Service actors – including all the sectoral Research Councils (***** ***** of the ***** suggested I contact you) and Mr Rob Wright, Director of International S&T Affairs at the OST. I am therefore now at a stage where it would be very helpful to talk directly to you to gain the Department of *****'s perspective of the process. More specifically, the scope of the issues I would like to cover concern:

- The regard in which the Department of ***** holds the Framework Programmes
- The impact of the Framework Programmes on the Department of *****'s research strategy
- The means through which the Department of ***** seeks to influence the development of the Framework Programmes at the UK and the EU levels of government
- The extent to which the Department of ***** acts as a channel for other organisations to influence the development of the Framework Programmes

I would be grateful if you would be available to discuss these and connected issues at a time convenient to you. I can be contacted at the above departmental address or (preferably) the following home and e-mail addresses: -

****
****
****

E-Mail: M.S.Hill@Sheffield.ac.uk

Yours sincerely

Martin Scott Hill

Sample Interview Question Guide

Association

What is ***** RTD general mandate / purpose?

What is ***** general mandate in relation to the FPs?
- Do deal with other European / international programmes?

What is the overall ***** RTD budget?
- Your division?

How many Staff?

Amount of time spent dealing with FPs?

Degree of autonomy between different sections of the *****?
- will form part of lobbying section later
- Free to lobby in different directions?

FP involvement

Involvement in the FPs?
- Increasing rapidly?

Are the FPs having an impact on the direction of your research?
- E.g. tailoring of specific RTD to qualify for FP funding?

Have the FPs had an impact on the links between UK and continental partners?
- I.e. greater co-operation between researchers / dissemination of results?
- Relative merits of CASH & CONTACTS?
- If formed, would pan-European links would be there anyway due to general restructuring / or other programmes (e.g. EUREKA)?

Have the FPs had an impact on the links between Government, University and Industry partners?
- I.e. co-operation between researchers / dissemination of results?
- Is it at a much higher level than in the early 1980s?

Is this due to the FPs or other factors?
- Other government programmes?
- Forced search for industry cash due to budget cuts?
- Could these links have eventually been formed due to general restructuring in the industry?

Europes

Are the FPs seen as simply another source of income, or are they seen as qualitatively different?

- E.g. database of contacts & ability to join with continental partners

What has been the impact of *Europes*?

A) Financial
B) Psychological

Impact of *Europes* on lobbying efforts?

Impact of *Europes* on relationship with other departments, Research Councils EU bodies, etc.?

Is *Europes* a help or a hindrance to UK RTD?

Would the FPs be missed if they were not there?

Lobbying / Influence

What are your main channels of influence in relation to influencing the OST?

- Direct contact (formal / informal) - Combine with Research Councils
- Media - MPs - etc

How do they work?
Are they effective?

Does *Europes* impact on the above?

Two-level approach, national & EU?
What are your main channels of influence in relation to **EU FP** lobbying?

- Leave it to OST
- Programme management committees
- Media - MPs - Research Councils
- Commission → DG-XII?
  - Desk Officers?
- MEPs
- EU-level lobbying groups
- Coordinate with national equivalents
- Actual companies do the footwork?

How do they work?
Are they effective?

Do you have much contact with equivalent bodies from other member states?

Most of lobbying is therefore through GB government – or – Commission?

Do you feel you have more or less impact at the European level than at the national?

Do you feel that you have a satisfactory level of input into the FPs?

- Influencing government's position
- Influencing Commission's position

Which is the most responsive source of info, OST or the Commission?

How would you split the intensity of your lobbying between EU regulation & RTD funding?

- I.e. which takes most of your resources?

Improvements – Non-essential questions for this interviewee

In what areas do you believe the FPs could be improved?

Common criticisms, are these correct?

- Too slow to process applications
- Too little feedback on
- Unnecessarily overbearing in terms of progress reports
- Time-scale suitability (i.e. too short?)
- More information on proposals

Role of SMEs?

Conclusion

- Check for contact details mentioned in the interview (if any).
- Ask if they have any other issues they feel are important to the policy area.
- Thank them for their time.
- Check if it would be possible to get back to them if any further issues arise.

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List of Interviews

United Kingdom University

Eight unattributable interviews, from four 'old' universities, four from 'new' universities.

United Kingdom Industrial

Five interviews with the Director of Research Policy or equivalents of four major UK based multinational corporations.

United Kingdom and European Union Level Interest Groups

Douglas, Alison (1998) Head of UKRO, United Kingdom Research Office (UKRO), Rue de la Loi 83, BP10, B-1040 Brussels, Belgium, *Telephone Interview*, 1st June 1998.

Keown, Dr. B. (1998) Beta Technology Limited, Riverside House, Weedon Street, Sheffield, S9 2FT, *Interview*, 28th May 1998.

Dryer, Ross (1998) Technical Manager, British Agrochemicals Association, 4 Lincoln Court, Lincoln Road, Peterborough, PE1 2RP. *Telephone Interview*, 6th August 1997

Reden, Dr Jürgen (1997) R&D Adviser, EFPIA, Hoechst Aktiengesellschaft, Hoechst Marion Roussel, D-65926 Frankfurt am Main, Germany, *Telephone Interview*, 12th December 1997.

Ward, Campbell (1997) Biotechnology Information Service (BORIS), Biotechnology Services Manager, Chemical Industries Association (CIA), Sunderland House, Sunderland Street, Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK11 6JF. *Interview*, 1997.

Wright, Dr. Philip (1998) Technology Group, CBI, Centre Point, 103 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1DU. *Interview*, 7th January 1998.

Research Councils

Dukes, Dr Peter (1997) International Section, Medical Research Council (MRC), 20 Park Crescent, London, WIN 4AL, *Interview*, 8th January 1997.

Fletcher, Dr Peter (1997) International Section, Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council (PPARC), Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon, SN2 1UJ, *Interview*, 15th August 1997.

Struthers, S. (1997) Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon, SN2 1UJ, *Interview*, 15th August 1997.

West, Chris (1997) International Section, Natural Environment Research Council Research Council (NERC), Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon, SN2 1UJ, *Interview*, 15th August 1997.

Williams, Neil (1997) Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon, SN2 1UJ, *Interview*, 15th August 1997.

Willis, Tim (1997) Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC), Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon, SN2 1UJ, *Interview*, 15th August 1997.

United Kingdom Government Departments

Five unattributable departmental interviews, including the DTI, DETR, DoH and MAFF

Office of Science and Technology

Three unattributable interviews and one attributable

Wright, Rob (OST) (1997) Director of International Science and Technology Affairs, Office of Science and Technology (OST), Albany House, Petty France, London SW1H 9ST. *Interview*, 6th August 1997.

United Kingdom Permanent Representatives Office

Jones, Bill (1999) United Kingdom Permanent Representatives Office (UKRep), 10 Avenue d'Auderghen, 1040 Brussels. *Interview*, 15th March 1999.

Members of the European Parliament

Adam MEP, Gordon J (1999) Labour Party, Northumbria. *Interview*, 17th March 1999.

Chichester MEP, Giles (1999) Conservative and Unionist Party, Devon and East Plymouth. *Interview* 16th March 1999.

Ford MEP, Glyn (1999) Labour Party, Greater Manchester East. *Interview*, 2nd February 1999.

McNally MEP, Eryl (1999) Deputy leader of European Parliamentary Labour Party, Labour Party, Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes. *Interview*, 17th March 1999.

Commission of the European Communities

Three unattributable telephone interviews with senior commission staff.

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