
LESSONS AND STRATEGIES OF ECONOMIC LOBBYING IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Aleksandar Ruzin

Skopje, North Macedonia, alexandre.ruzin@gmail.com

Abstract: The basic stuff, that is, the basic texture of lobbying is aimed at the procedure of making the public decision by the public authorities. Interest groups, or pressure groups, that is, lobby groups (GROSSMAN Emiliano-Les groupes d'interet, Paris: Armand Colin 2006) when they act against public authorities, they hope to obtain the most favorable positions in relation to the public decision of the decision-makers. For this purpose, they devise their own strategy and regroup tactically. It was through such maneuvers that lobbying came to life. Similar to the practice when an administrative text can change the activities of enterprises and other entities, a large number of individuals, especially in business circles, strive to be constantly informed about the tendencies of the legislator. They will try to anticipate, predict and foresee them, because their profits and interests may depend on the favorable or unfavorable legal provisions and decisions. Therefore, even during the institutional procedure, they will try to be heard, felt, carefully analyzed and followed up so that the influence on the content of the decision can be designed in time.

Keywords: Lobbying, European Union, methodologie, Definition, Forum of lobbying

1. THE STUFF OF LOBBYING

The decision-making procedure is repeated at different levels according to the nature of the state, civil associations, unions, territorial communities... In essence, the public decision, which is in principle purely official, forms the core of every official provision (dispositive officieux). In the European Union, under the influence of the work of its member states, the trend of making decisions according to the specific Brussels mechanism will generalize and can be interpreted on two levels, that is, two logics of reasoning: The first decision-making as a type of attitude, i.e. the position of those who do not accept to make decisions without them being present and consulted during the decision-making process Second-decision-making as a set of methods that assumes that through influence it is possible to manage the decision-making process The lobbyist will engage to model the project of the public authorities just as the sculptor works the clay from which he wants to make the statue. It is evident that the focus of his activity is the public decision. Therefore, it is completely understandable that the lobbyist tries to know all the most important parameters and basic characteristics that affect the decision-making process and procedure. One of the first mysteries to unravel is the nature of public decision and its specificities.

The public decision and its characteristics: by making the decision as a type of collective position, it acquires an appropriate status. This status allows it to distinguish from private decisions, especially those that are made daily by the personnel in the enterprises. At the same time, the public decision is distinguished by one additional quality, that is its nature of permanence and stability. (Clamen, 2021, p. 44)

Observed through the category of symbolism, the decision-making place is in constant spatial dynamics. The decision that came from the (ministerial) office will be moved to the public place. It becomes public upon its disclosure. In doing so, it goes through several stages. In some countries with a closed administrative tradition, the nomenclature of decision-makers does not always follow such logic. The principle of secrecy and discretion are the privileges possessed by the decision-making institution. All mentioned public projects decided by the public authorities find an appropriate place in the forum, and become the subject of the discussions between the numerous actors. But precisely because of their nature and significance, these procedures are under constant significant monitoring.

2. DEFINITION

Due to the richness of methods and the interdisciplinary nature of lobbying and lobbying, there are several definitions of lobbying. The following definitions are among the most established in relation to lobbying and lobbyists :

-According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary, a lobby is a large hall open to the public, especially for mutual meetings between MPs and their constituents. -According to Webster's Dictionary, lobbying consists in persuading the members of a parliamentary assembly in order to influence the legislator

-According to Dusko Krsmanović, lobbying means things aimed at professional promotion, advancement or protection of special interest with the primary aim of influencing the legislative or executive power. (Krsmanović, 2019, p.1)

-According to Daniel Gauguin, lobbying is a mechanism of counter-force that accelerates the way to political balance in a certain context. - When asked what lobbying is, the majority of Europeans believe that it is "using a group to pressure the current government to accept its ideas and interests." (Gauguin, 2022, p.4)

-According to the opinion of the famous lawyer Lefebure,(2021/2, p. 4 "...to lobby...doesn't mean only to effect meetings in the premises but before effecting analyzes and understanding a problem in order to explain the attitude and consequences to those who own it the monopoly of decision-making"

-According to the opinion of consultant (J.P. Quentin, 2019, p.34), lobbying is "an instrument of strategic communication whose purpose is to activate management goals and political decisions based on technical files"

-According to La Toupie (2023, p.1), a French electronic dictionary, lobbying is a pressure group that seeks to influence laws, ordinances, establishing certain norms to mainly favor its own economic interests

-According to (B. Legrelle/C.Curelli, 2021, p.71) lobbying is: to change and create laws.

-According to G. Lamarque it is: promotion of a norm, creation of a new one or repeal of an existing legal provision
Le lobbying (Gilles Lamarque 1994, p. 10), Paris: PUF, Collection: Que sais-je?

-For the McDonald's group, "public works serve to realize the company's goals by eliminating political and legal barriers"

-According to the consultant Sylvain Lhote, lobbying is: establishing and ensuring the positioning that is compatible with difficult socio-political tendencies (Sylvain Lhote (2022, p.3)

For example, in the USA, the homeland of science and the art of lobbying, MPs are under a lot of scrutiny from both the public and experts. In some European countries such as France, Italy, Spain, Greece or the countries of trn. "Young Europe", there is still some space for the preservation of secret decision-making mechanisms. However, in a normal democratic regime, no public decision-maker can decide completely secretly. Sooner or later projects and decisions become public. After all, the democratic principle of government control according to the slogan of checks and balances applies in this matter as well. This mechanism implies the division of power and the control function of the opposition, NGOs and the media. Due to the democratic environment, in the treatment of this type of problem comes the strengthening of the democratic capacity of the government. She will get rich from these confrontations. In the variety of influences, the public domain also feels certain threats. In the process of making decisions, the government sees an opportunity to adapt and better secure its authority. As an integral part of the government, officials and politicians become receptive to the suggestions of lobbyists.

3. THE MAIN FORUM - THE MARKET AS THE CENTRAL ARENA.

In the forum as the public place of information exchange, everyone plays their own game. All those who raise the question of their interest should understand that the decision-maker is not a single person or a single institution. It is a decision-making mechanism, made up of several individuals, officials and officials. In the forum where various information and arguments face each other, there is only one truth for everyone. What is true of solvers is also true of influencers.

For one and the same subject, the most diverse and numerous lobbyists are interested, presenting different, similar or identical arguments. Each of these actors possesses appropriate characteristics amenable to numerous comparative analyses. The forum (from the Latin word forum - public place for exchange) as a place for exchanging information and arguments, functions in a double direction: on the one hand, public decision-makers find the technical information they depend on, on the other hand, private actors valorize their ways of thinking and contribute to the decision which they justify with their arguments. This aller-retour technology is a kind of information exchange.

The intensity of the exchanges is also explained through the evolution of power as a political category. In the past, strength, power and money were the primary forms of power and monopoly over decision-making. Today, power and authority are expressed through the category of knowledge, information and brain gray matter. In contrast to the brutality of force and money, information is much more complex, more subtle and more delicate than the previously listed values. Power rules but information reigns supreme. One of the historical truths of our civilization is the following variable, which is still relevant: if you control a relationship through which you can influence decision-makers, you possess a seriously valuable asset, especially if that relationship is known to a small number of initiators.

The officials are formed and professionally expert in the same way as the rest. They know that timely information allows them to react to all challenges, to adapt, to gain a certain advantage over other lobbyists. From the point of view of officials and decision-makers who do not possess functional information, their interest in any strategic information or argument is understandable. The demand of public authorities in the domain of information is huge because it keeps them close to reality and helps them not to stray from the truth. The greater the desire of Brussels or Washington officials for information, the greater their awareness of the danger of not being on the ground.

4. INTERESTS AND COMPROMISES

Consensus: Each lobbyist and participant in the competition strives to obtain such a decision from the decision-maker that is most favorable to the interest he represents. That is why the debates, which are sometimes very sharp and difficult, assume various forms of influence. Confronting all disputed points, the purpose of exchanging information on the forum is to reach a more favorable compromise. The forum allows certain pros and cons for each decision. The advantage to the maker of any decision is that the decision must take into account the diverse interests and cultures of the stakeholders. It is also the weakness of the decision of the decision-makers: when talking about compromise, it means reaching a certain leveling (balancing) between the interests of the applicant and the decision-maker. The concern to manage more or less a certain sphere stimulates the partners to consider that the best solutions are actually the average solutions, that is, those that neither disappoint nor shock the vital interests of any of the interested entities. Certain characteristics of public decisions result from such dialogue:

- in a technical sense, the adopted decision is never the best. The best decision is that which is acceptable to all who seek consensus.
- an intermediate solution (decision) is the result of a compromise and the fruit of the consensus between those who participate and contribute to the debate by interest groups and public authorities.
- those who intervene do not seek to completely strip a project, but to highlight the details that suit their option
- extreme solutions for a project are not desired by either the decision-makers or the interest groups. At the same time, decisions that are extreme are sensitive to public opinion.
- in inter-ethnic and multi-quota environments, any monolithic solution has little chance of being adopted by public opinion and decision-makers in contrast to a flexible one.

5. DECISION-MAKING PROCEDURE

Cycle of techniques: Gone are the days of single-mindedness and democratic centralism. Decisions will no longer be made only in one place and by one authority. The decision-making procedure foresees the operation of several technical services. The decision-making cycle contains several procedural steps on the hierarchical ladder. Such a complex procedure results from the multitude of administrative decision-making levels. At the same time, each administrative level contributes with its culture, understanding of the value system and the respective influence. The mentioned entities are in constant interaction and mutual competition. It is understandable why the decision-making process is a process filled with rivalries and mutual competition. Those who own the power are in dynamic and constant negotiations. On the other hand, the decision-making process is constantly shifting. The administrative machinery forwards the file and it passes from one instance to another, which means that each of the decision-making teams has insight into the file. When it comes to making the decision, it brings you into a precise institutional context from which it is impossible to escape. During the duration of the entire decision-making procedure, the high legal standards are constantly present in order to remind the decision-makers of the legal order. Regardless of the fact that it is for high-ranking officials, they are obliged to respect all stages without going too fast or arranging things according to their wishes and interests. *The project – Tram in Skopje : In North Macedonia, more precisely in the city of Skopje, the "Tram" project of Mayor Kostovski encountered a confrontation with the Government of Gruevski, who insisted on the project of double-decker buses. After lobbying, the Tramway project failed due to the pressures of the Anti-Corruption Commission, which announced criminal liability against Kostovski and the participants in the tender, i.e. the company with which the City of Skopje will sign a contract. The government referred to the alleged loopholes in the legal procedure cycle, although it was clear to all that it was a deal that should have been under the full control of the government. (Trifun Kostovski – Mayor of Skopje 2005-2009)* Preparations for decision-making occupies a very significant place, which explains the complexity of the process in an extraordinary way: numerous researches and surveys, own observations, advisory bodies, etc. The reasons for this procedure are as follows: due to the various games of the actors, the story will further complicate and the process will drag on. The more the procedure goes on, the more the chances of reversibility, i.e. going back, are lower. In this way, time becomes a significant factor in the decision-making process. In certain situations, it can be an ally of the decision-makers, but also an opponent if it is excessively calculated

6. THE CLASH OF INTERESTS VERSUS GENERAL VALUES

Efficiency forward - the rest stand! : Every debate about public decisions brings to light the diversity of cultures and the relationship of values between two levels. Everyone thinks with their own logic, value and interest:

- a) observed from the point of view of public authorities, they try to show that when they decide, they work to respect and preserve the general interest of the people. That's why officials try to present themselves as perfect, infallible, untouchable, non-corrupt and conscientious. For them, decision-making is also a kind of message to the electorate.

b) observed from the aspect of the interest of the civil sector, he tries to articulate the interests of the field as primary. Various enterprises, associations, unions and the entire civil society shout in one voice: forward efficiency, stop the rest! The general development of society and the political system, global democratization and globalization created a different environment and moved the actors and factors of lobbying. Along with the mentioned dynamics, the numerous actors in lobbying are evolving. The importance of information and communications came to the fore as a kind of capital. Among the subjects of lobbying, the right to express the interest of a certain organized or informal group as well as the practice of negotiating capacity between various groups and subjects with the decision-makers gradually developed. This new culture of communication does not mean that it will also mean overcoming the gap between opposing logics. From this stage, a first conclusion is imposed: for a more successful understanding of the decision-makers' future move, it is desirable for the decision-maker to identify with the characteristics of the decision. For the decision-maker, the most important thing is the way in which it will be perceived by public opinion.

7. CONCLUSION

I. Lobbying is a type of information exchange. The approach of the lobbyist is always positive and aimed at realizing the interest. At the beginning, the lobbyist behaves like an ENTREPRENEUR. He is in a state of demand towards the public authorities, he possesses technical information about the subject in question and that is his small trump card.

II. The lobbyist tries to influence the decision-makers on a certain topic or file, and this process takes place in a certain time context. Influence is a product of time, which plays a significant role in lobbying. He should make an ally out of time. It is useful to take a long-term view and draw up the necessary strategy

III. Lobbying is an act of communication, where it is necessary to be heard in order to be understood and accepted. The individual skill must also contain certain knowledge and communication skills. The lobbyist must have a good command of the communication strategy. The lobbyist should not be silent and it is desirable to express himself. Only those who are able to freely communicate and express themselves will be able to get a chance of conviction. The lobbyist must neither remain passive nor constantly wait. Only those who take the initiative succeed in public spheres.

IV. The aim of the debate is to establish a compromise. The lobbyist engages in the game of mutual concessions under the assumption that he knows what he is really fighting for.

V. Lobbying is a cocktail of domains that combines law, politics, communication and other skills and knowledge. The lobbyist should study each file in all dimensions and angles and try to play in the direction of complementing it with these dimensions

VI. Lobbying also represents a kind of clash of cultures and values. The lobbyist is also obliged to approach the use and influence in the administrative world tactically. The lobbyist will fare much better if he knows the customs and cultures and respects them. He must take care of: the cult of formal perfection in relation to cultures, quality writing, legal arguments, the fear of creating a precedent, the desire for the adequacy of the rules.

VII. Most often the influence results from the lobbyist's solidarity with other individuals and entities. He must assert himself as a partner and take into account all actors, not excluding coalition partners. Even before taking action, the lobbyist should have his partners in mind.

REFERENCES

- Clamen, M. (2021). *Manuel of Lobbying*, Paris: Dunod
- Drajic, M. (2018). *Korporativno lobiranje u Evropskoj uniji*. Автор: Drajić, Marko. Издавач: Neopress 2018 For the McDonald's group,
- Gauguin, D. (2022). The lobbying is a mechanism "using a group to pressure the current government to accept its ideas and interests." (Gauguin, 2022, p.4)
- Grossman, E. (2006). *Les groupes d'interet*, Paris: Armand Colin,
- Gilles. (1994). *Lamarque it is: promotion of a norm, creation of a new one or repeal of an existing legal provision* Lobbying Gilles Lamarque Paris: PUF, Collection: Que sais-je?
- Kaščelan, B., & Krsmanović, D. (2022). *Ekonomsko i politiko lobiranje u Srbiji i u svetu – European Doctorat on law and economics*, Bologna, p.332, Zavod za ucenike Beograd ISBN: 978-86-17-18011-7
- Krsmanović, D. (2019). *Lobiranje kao profesija – šta je lobiranje i kako postati lobista?* Beograd, radionica
- La Toupie, a French electronic dictionary, - <https://www.toupie.org/Dictionnaire/Lobby.htm>
- Legrelle, B. (2021). lobbying is: to change and create laws. Currelli, Carolina. « EU Lobbying in the "Age of Zoom": How Was Environmental Policy Impacted? », *L'Europe en Formation*, vol. 393, no. 2, 2021, pp. 77-105.

- Lefebure, "..To lobby...doesn't mean only to effect meetings Dans L'Europe en Formation 2021/2 (n° 393), pages 77 à 105
- Lhote, S. (2022). President of [The Confederation of European Paper industries \(CEPI, Paper360° Senior Editor Europe\)](#)
- Quentin, J.P. (2020). lobbying is "An instrument of strategic communication " Jean-Pierre QUENTIN
www.algoric.eu > Bibliographie