

**When Europe Hits City Hall:
The Europeanization of Cities in the EU Multi-level System**

DRAFT – please do not cite without permission

Kristine Kern
University of Minnesota
Department of Political Science
1414 Social Sciences Building
267 – 19th Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55455
E-mail kkern@umn.edu

Paper submitted for presentation at the 2007 Biennial Conference of the
European Studies Association in Montreal.

1. Introduction

Cities are the economic, political, and cultural centers of Europe. Today, most Europeans live and work in cities. How they live and work depends on political decisions made at local, regional, national, and European level. Local decisions are not only shaped by decisions made by the national governments in London, Stockholm, and Berlin; they are also increasingly shaped by decisions made by the European Union. Although cities and towns are not directly represented in Brussels, European cities are affected by European integration because around two thirds of the legislation implemented by local authorities is EU legislation (Zimmermann 2006: 27). This has led to changes at both local and EU level. The implementation of EU programs at local level alters the preferences of local actors as well as practices, and policies. Conversely, local experiences shape the development of EU programs and policies which incorporate such experiences and innovative urban practices (Marshall 2005: 672).

In many areas cities have developed from policy-takers to active players in the EU multi-level system. They have opened offices in Brussels, founded transnational city networks, and tried to gain direct access to European institutions. Although local authorities are not even mentioned in the treaties, they have become more important in Brussels.

Institutional changes include the establishment of the Committee of the Regions in 1994, the inclusion of provisions referring to local authorities in the draft of the Constitutional Treaty, and the introduction of a systematic dialogue with the European and national associations of regional and local authorities. By directly linking its activities to the local level, which is the level closest to the people, the Commission hopes to improve the legitimacy of EU decisions and counterbalance the widely discussed democratic deficit.

Although local politics is increasingly shaped by EU decisions, the Europeanization of cities has only emerged as a topic for analysis recently (John 2000; Marshall 2005; Kassim 2005: 303-307). While Europeanization has become an important approach in European studies (Olsen 2002; Featherstone/Radaelli 2003; Bulmer/Lequesne 2005; Graziano/Vink 2007), the local level has played only a marginal role in Europeanization research. Despite the fact that most Europeanization studies focus on the domestic (national and subnational) impact of EU legislation, the effects on cities and towns barely feature in the current debate, although most EU legislation is eventually implemented at the local level. Thus, this paper aims to analyze three different dimensions of urban-level Europeanization. First, Europeanization can be defined as the implementation of EU

legislation and its impacts at local level. This top-down approach has shaped the debate among scholars and practitioners who have highlighted the (negative) implications for local self-government. Second, the effects of top-down Europeanization have been altered because cities have started to bypass nation-states. Like the general debate on Europeanization, this perspective combines top-down and bottom-up arguments. Third, these approaches must be complemented by a third dimension which concentrates on horizontal Europeanization, namely city twinning and networking. Cities have developed various tools to facilitate best practice transfer. Although EU institutions play either no role here or merely a facilitative one (e.g., through project funding), this is an important aspect of urban-level Europeanization.

The next section provides a general overview on the Europeanization debate and asks how this approach can be applied to the local level (section 2). The questions as to how European integration has affected cities and which role cities have played in the process of European integration is discussed in section 3. The different dimensions of Europeanization are then presented. Cities cope with European integration in three different ways. Most important is the implementation of EU regulation (section 4), which has been complemented by strategies to bypass the nation-state (section 5) and to facilitate best practice transfer through twinning and networking (section 6). The final section summarizes the discussion and draws some conclusions regarding the general applicability of existing approaches to the Europeanization of cities.

2. Dimensions of the Europeanization of Cities

In terms of the discussion of the Europeanization of cities, their position in the multi-level structure of European governance would appear to be crucial. The multi-level governance approach starts from the assumption that the EU has become a system with multiple levels or spheres of governance, including European, national, and sub-national arenas (Hooghe/Marks 2003; Bache/Flinders 2004). This concept differs from classical approaches which explain European integration at least in two respects: first, this approach does not consider the levels of governance as parts of a stable hierarchical arrangement. Instead, multi-level governance approaches assume that competencies between local, national, and supra-national governmental institutions are shifted not only upwards to the European Union but also downwards from the nation-states to regions and cities (Rosamund 2004: 121; Pierre and Peters 2000: 77). Second, this approach is not limited to state-based forms of regulation, but includes the entire range of governance

types, such as public-private partnerships and non-state regulation. As a consequence of these underlying assumptions, authority becomes dispersed both across multiple territorial levels and among a variety of private and public actors. In a multi-level system it becomes difficult to determine the boundaries between different policy arenas because actors pursue multi-level strategies such as venue shopping (Rosamund 2004: 120) and may start parallel initiatives at different levels. Policy arenas are no longer confined to a specific level because local actors may work together with representatives of national ministries and the EU commission. This creates new opportunities for local authorities, which can pursue their interests at both national and European level.

The debate on Europeanization, which is mainly interested in the different ways domestic actors adapt to Europe (Radaelli 2006: 58), complements the multi-level governance approach by providing a sense of the means by which multi-level governance is implemented (cf. Pollack 2005: 384). Although many Europeanization studies concentrate on the impact of European politics in the Member States, the impact of the Member States' actions on EU institutions are also included. These top-down and bottom-up dynamics (Börzel 2005; Ladrech 2005: 319) are not limited to the interaction between the EU and its Member States but are also relevant for the interaction between the EU and local authorities (cf. Schultze 2003; Marshall 2005: 671; Kern/Bulkeley 2008). Analyzing the Europeanization of cities is a challenge because it requires disentangling the complex and dynamic relationship between three actor groups: i.e. the EU institutions, its 27 EU Member states, and about 100,000 local authorities in the Member States. Despite the formal hierarchical structure of the state-local relations which means that cities and towns are part of the Member States in formal terms, they have developed effective strategies to bypass them. Therefore, the analysis of the Europeanization of cities requires a better understanding of the dynamic development of EU-local relations and their repercussions for both the relations between the EU and its Member States and local-state relations within Member States.

Apart from the question as to whether European integration itself should be regarded as a form of Europeanization, an approach which is rejected by most authors (Quaglia et al. 2007: 408), three dimensions of Europeanization appear to be most relevant for the Europeanization of cities. First, most of the research on Europeanization has focused on the effects of the European Union on its Member States. This dominant approach concentrates on the top-down implementation of EU decisions in the Member States, in particular on the dimensions and mechanisms of domestic change. As most EU

regulations are ultimately implemented at local level, this perspective is of enormous interest in relation to the Europeanization of cities. Until recently, the debate among both scholars and practitioners focused on the (negative) impacts of the EU's legal instruments at local level. From this perspective, local authorities are regarded as part of a hierarchically structured nation-state. Although they are in charge of implementing European legislation, they do not have direct access to EU decision-making. Thus, from this point of view, local authorities are considered as affected objects rather than active subjects (Rechlin 2004; Münch 2006; Niederhafner 2007).

Second, an increasing number of studies has challenged this perspective and states that top-down Europeanization must be complemented by a bottom-up perspective because processes of Europeanization are more circular and interactive than unidirectional (Radaelli 2006). When the repercussions of top-down Europeanization are taken into account, Europeanization can be regarded as "co-evolution between the domestic and the European level" (Radaelli 2006: 59). In response to top-down Europeanization, cities have started to bypass nation-states and influence EU institutions directly. Traditionally, cities and towns concentrated on lobbying at national level through their national associations. In recent years this situation has changed because local authorities have extended their repertoire and have become more active in Brussels and Strasbourg. Besides using formal channels of representation (e.g., through the Committee of the Regions) they try to attain their goals through the direct lobbying of EU institutions (Rechlin 2004; Heinelt/Niederhafner 2005; Niederhafner 2007). In contrast to top-down Europeanization, bottom-up Europeanization establishes direct ties between local authorities and EU institutions. Although this has consequences for the Member States, it is the co-evolution between the local and the European level that is of primary interest here. If the EU-local relations are taken into account, the assessment of the effects of urban Europeanization leads to different results. Unlike top-down Europeanization, the emerging 'foreign policy' of cities opens up new transnational spaces for local actors. From this point of view the Europeanization of cities is not a problem but provides cities with new opportunities.

Third, Europeanization can take place even if the EU institutions are not directly involved in the process. In Europe we find various forms of best practice transfer between Member States, between regions in different Member States, and between cities in different countries. Policy transfer is not a new phenomenon created by European integration but can be traced back to the early development of public policies in areas such as social

policy since the late 19th century. Even then, countries learned not only from their own experiences, but also from the experiences of their peers in other European countries, most often their immediate neighbors. The first diffusion studies in political science were concerned primarily with policy diffusion between U.S. states. In recent years, comparative studies have begun to examine the phenomenon of policy diffusion systematically. This includes a wide range of related concepts such as lesson-drawing (Rose 2005), policy transfer (Evans 2004), and policy convergence (Holzinger and Knill 2005). Today most diffusion research focuses on nation-states, such as the diffusion of market liberalization, pension reforms, or environmental policy. However, there is still a notable dearth of studies focusing on the diffusion of policy innovations at local level (Wolman/Page 2002; Shipan/Volden 2005; Kern et al. 2007). In recent years the European Union has developed an approach which systematically supports the exchange of experience, learning from peers, and best practice transfer. As European towns and cities face similar challenges, they have developed strategies to facilitate best practice transfer. They cooperate transnationally, exchange experiences and jointly develop innovative solutions. Although horizontal Europeanization can also be found at Member State level, at which various transnational and transgovernmental networks have thrived in recent years, horizontal Europeanization appears to be even more important at local level. Strategies ranging from city twinning to the establishment of transnational city networks constitute another dimension of the emerging foreign policy and para-diplomacy of European cities.

3. Local Authorities and European Integration

Before discussing the various types of urban Europeanization in detail, I will first turn to the local dimension of European integration. This relates primarily to the question as to how local authorities are formally represented in the EU's institutional arrangement, in particular whether they play any role in the EU treaties. As is the case in other policy areas, especially in the field of human rights, the initiatives of the Council of Europe were crucial for the rights of local authorities in Europe. The Council of Europe has been an active supporter of local and regional self-government for several decades. Back in 1957, the 'Conference of Local Authorities in Europe,' which unites representatives from the local and regional levels, was created within the Council of Europe. It has been known as the 'Congress of Local and Regional Authorities' since 1994 when it became a consultative body of the Council of Europe. Its 325 members represent around 200,000 European municipalities and regions.

In 1985, the Conference adopted the 'European Charter of Local Self-government', in which the signatories recognize the principle of local self-government in domestic legislation. It came into force in 1988 and has been ratified by 42 of its 46 Member States, among them all 27 EU Member States. The Charter commits the Member States of the Council to the implementation of basic rules which guarantee the local authorities' political, administrative, and financial independence. It commits the signatories to the recognition of the principle of local self-government in domestic legislation and, if possible, constitutional law. The Charter considers that public responsibilities should preferably be exercised by the authorities closest to the citizens, the higher level being considered only when the coordination or discharge of duties is impossible or less efficient at the level immediately below. In Article 10, the Charter even provides a basis for a municipal foreign policy: "The entitlement of local authorities ... to belong to an international association of local authorities shall be recognized in each State. Local authorities shall be entitled ... to cooperate with their counterparts in other States."

Given that the Charter was drafted only a few years before the end of the Cold War, it became crucial for the development of local democracy and self-government in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and in their endeavors to re-established local democracy. The fact that EU membership is restricted to members of the Council of Europe has helped to establish general standards for local democracy in the new EU Member States. The prospect of becoming a full EU member has certainly fostered the ratification of the 'European Charter of Local Self-government'. All new members of the Council of Europe were bound to sign two conventions within one year after joining the Council of Europe: i.e. the 'European Convention on Human Rights' and the 'European Charter of Local Self-Government' (Hoffschulte 2006: 68).

Comparable developments in the EC/EU emerged later than in the Council of Europe. This can be explained by the fact that, prior to the Single European Act of 1986, European legislation had almost no (direct) impact on sub-national governments. By the early 1990s this situation had changed fundamentally and today there is almost no area of local or regional policy that is not affected by European regulation (John 2000: 879). This development was counterbalanced by the creation of the Committee of the Regions in 1994 which intended to give subnational governments a voice in the European Union. Today, the Committee of the Regions consists of 344 Members who represent both regions and cities. The composition of the national delegations is determined by the structure of the Member States. Representatives of local authorities prevail because

regional authorities do not exist in most of the smaller EU Member States, such as Ireland, Denmark, and Estonia. While these countries only sent representatives of local authorities, the situation with regard to federal states like Germany and Belgium is different (Münch 2006: 109; Niederhafner 2007). The national delegations from these Member States consist mainly of representatives from the regions and the local authorities are not adequately represented.

The 'Committee of the Regions' is a consultative body and has, therefore, only limited competencies. The Treaties oblige the Commission and the Council to consult the Committee whenever new proposals are made in areas that have an impact at subnational level. The Maastricht Treaty defined five such areas (economic and social cohesion, trans-European infrastructure networks, health, education, and culture), and the Amsterdam Treaty added another five areas (employment policy, social policy, the environment, vocational training, and transport). Although the Committee is involved in policy-making in many areas, because its recommendations have no binding effects, it has remained a relatively weak body. As a result, local authorities have developed a rather skeptical view of the work of the Committee of the Regions. However, the establishment of the Committee has certainly strengthened the position of subnational authorities in EU policy-making.

Apart from the establishment of the Committee of the Regions, the final version of the EU's Constitutional Treaty ('Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe') can be regarded as a success for local authorities. With the support of the European Parliament (and the so-called 'Napolitano report'), representatives of local authorities, in particular the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), tried to influence the debate on the 'Convention on the Future of Europe' using various access points. Several recommendations made by the local authorities had an impact on the final version of the treaty. Although the Council of Europe's 'Charter of Local Self-government' was ultimately not incorporated into the final document, the position of local authorities in the EU was strengthened by a general provision in the Constitutional Treaty. Article I-5 of the Treaty states: "The Union shall respect the equality of Member States before the Constitution as well as their national identities, inherent in their fundamental structures, political and constitutional, inclusive of regional and local self-government." This is a considerable improvement as compared with the existing treaties which do not even mention local self-government. Furthermore, the Constitutional Treaty contains provisions that reinforce the principle of subsidiarity. Article I-11 explicitly mentions the

local level: “Under the principle of subsidiarity, in areas which do not fall within its exclusive competence, the Union shall act only if and insofar as the objectives of the proposed action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States, either at central level or at regional and local level, but can rather, by reason of the scale or effects of the proposed action, be better achieved at Union level.” Although the future of the EU constitution is at best unclear following its rejection by the French and Dutch voters, the final version of the Constitutional Treaty, which was signed in Rome in 2004, can be considered a success for local authorities, at least when compared with the existing treaties (Zimmermann 2006: 32, 45; Münch 2006: 116; Hoffschulte 2006).

Summing up this short overview of the local dimension of European integration, it is possible to draw three conclusions: first, as in the area of human rights, the Council of Europe played an essential role in asserting the rights of local authorities. The ‘European Charter of Local Self-Government’ can best be compared to the ‘European Convention on Human Rights’. It has acted as an important tool in guaranteeing the re-establishment of local democracy in the new Member States. Second, the position of local authorities within the EU’s institutional arrangement is still relatively weak but has become stronger over time, especially through the foundation of the Committee of the Regions and the debate on the Constitutional Treaty. Third, state structures decide how local authorities are formally represented in Brussels. Because of the strong position of regional authorities in federal states, local authorities from federal states like Germany are in a weaker position than local authorities from centralized states like Ireland.

4. Implementing EU legislation

While Council of Europe conventions and EU treaties constitute the general rules of the game for local authorities in the EU multi-level system, Europeanization is eventually caused by the implementation of specific policies and their impact on the domestic level. Most important in this respect are EU directives, e.g. in the area of internal market policies, which have to be transposed into national law before they can be implemented at the national and subnational level. Although most legislation, which is implemented locally, is the product of EU decision-making, this influence is only indirect because it comes in the ‘disguise’ of national or state legislation. Local actors are not always aware that they are implementing EU legislation. More visible, however, are projects funded by the EU through its Structural Funds or Community Initiatives (such as URBAN program).

How local authorities react to EU integration and which attitudes towards Europe they develop depends on their position at home and in Brussels. In Germany, European integration has triggered an ongoing debate whether and how decisions made in Brussels restrict the rights of local authorities and hollow out the self-governing guaranty of local authorities laid down in the German Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*). Legal experts have analyzed in detail in which areas local authorities are negatively affected by European integration (Rechlin 2004; Münch 2006; Niederhafner 2007; von Alemann/Münch 2006). This (negative) assessment of Europeanization can be explained best by two factors: First, the relatively autonomous position of local authorities in Germany and, second, their problems to get access to EU decision-making in Brussels where they compete with regional authorities (the German federal states, *Länder*), which have not only a strong position within the German federal system but have also been more successful to gain access to EU institutions. In contrast to local authorities in Germany, local authorities in other countries, which are in a weaker position at home and in a stronger position in Brussels, have more to gain than they have to lose. An example is the situation of local authorities in the UK under Margaret Thatcher and her centralist program. “Ironically, the Conservative government produced a counteractive Europeanization as local authorities sought a new role and engaged with more sympathetic political actors at the supranational level” (John 2000: 884).

The need to implement EU legislation and the incentive to participate in EU programs has triggered organizational changes at the local level. Many cities reorganized their administration and set up own offices for European affairs. Differences between cities can best be explained by the size of the city, its capacities, and the attitudes of the political elite. A study on the situation in Dutch cities came to the conclusion that only big cities like Rotterdam and Eindhoven have established special EU sections and hired employees who deal exclusively with EU affairs. Most of the cities, which were included in the study, integrated their lobbying activities into the existing administrative structures. Bigger cities, especially if they are in a poor socio-economic position, make more use of EU opportunities. The socio-economic preconditions are crucial because they determine whether a city is eligible for EU funds. Eligibility appears to be the main driver for institutional changes in Dutch local administrations (Rooij 2002: 447, 462-464). Empirical evidence from the German federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia also suggests that the adaptation of cities to the new challenges depends on their size. Most German cities which started reorganization initiatives had more than 100,000 inhabitants, and in North Rhine-Westphalia almost all cities with more than 300,000 inhabitants have

centralized their EU activities. The growing importance of European integration is reflected by the fact that most European affairs offices set up recently were established at higher levels in the administrative hierarchy than similar office created earlier. Moreover, there is also a trend to reorganize existing offices and strengthen their position by integrating them into the mayor's office (Münch 2006: 178-180, 199).

Cities are affected by many policies which are made in Brussels. This encompasses market-building policies such as the liberalization of the energy markets; market-correcting policies such as the EU's Cohesion Policy; market-cushioning policies such as environmental protection; and even, at least to a certain extent, non-market policies such as asylum procedures (Sbragia 2004). Among the local policies affected most by EU regulative policies are public procurement and the services of general interest. The liberalization of the energy markets, which is not a European project but rather a worldwide phenomenon, had widespread impacts on the local level. Since the late 1980s the EU Commission has started several initiatives to liberalize European energy markets which led to a directive for energy markets (1996) and a directive for gas markets (1998), which were both amended in 2003. Member States reacted differently to this directive, which asked for a gradual opening of the energy markets. Unlike other Member States, Germany, Finland, Sweden and the UK pursued a more ambitious approach and decided to fully open their markets. In Germany, competitive restructuring of the energy markets caused the privatization of numerous municipal utilities. Liberalization and privatization decreased regulatory influence of public ownership and diminished the control of subnational actors over prices, investments, and corporate policies of the utilities. Responsibilities have shifted and are now shared by the EU and the national governments (Monstadt 2007; Münch 2006: 133-134).

In contrast to market-building policies, which primarily aim at liberalization and the creation of a single market, market-correcting policies attempt to either compensate for the cost to particular groups imposed by the building of markets, to channel or constrain the market itself, or to limit inequality. Most important for local authorities is the EU's Cohesion Policy, which was introduced to reduce inequalities among regions and compensate governments of poor countries for the cost of economic integration (Sbragia 2004: 124, 127). Cohesion Policy is redistributive in nature because only 40 percent of the EU population are covered by structural funds. Since the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund, which are still the policy's main instruments, were created, the scope of the policy has increased considerable. The agenda for

Cohesion Policy changed rapidly in 1986 with the adoption of the Single Market, followed by a comprehensive reform in 1988. This reform affected the guiding principles. Partnership with public and private authorities, including local and regional authorities, was added to the three already existing principles programming, concentration, and conditionality. The introduction of the partnership principle was an important step for local authorities because it requires close cooperation between the European Union, national governments, and subnational governments. Although this certainly changed the local-state relations within the Member States, central governments largely maintained their role as ‘gatekeepers’ (John 2000: 880, 886; Rooij 2002). Community Initiatives are an exception in this respect because these initiatives do not necessarily require the involvement of the Member States. The Member States have to approve only the broad priorities of the programs, while the funding decisions are made by the Commission. Therefore, these programs provide a basis for the establishment of direct relations between the EU and local authorities. Most important in this respect are the INTERREG III and the URBAN II Initiatives. While the INTERREG Initiative promoted cross-border, transnational, and inter-regional cooperation, the URBAN Initiative aimed at large cities with serious problems.¹

The impact of the policies discussed above on European cities varies along national and regional lines. National policies appear to be more important in the case of energy liberalization. Empirical evidence suggests that converging national policies may foster the convergence of local policies because local authorities face similar challenges. An example is the impact of the EU’s liberalization program on local climate change policy in Germany and the UK. Taking the development over time into account, leads to the conclusion that cities in the UK and Germany and their reaction on the challenge of climate change have become more similar (Bulkeley/Kern 2006).

In a broader sense it can be argued that: “Pressures from Europe help to undermine the contrast between Northern professionalized bureaucratic urban local governments such as in Sweden, Finland, Germany and Holland, and the fragmented, weak and clientelistic southern ones, such as in Spain, France, Italy, Greece, and Portugal” (John 2000: 877). However, even policies which aim at convergence in a broad sense, as Cohesion Policy certainly does, may cause differences between subnational authorities which participate

¹ For the new funding period (2007 to 2013) the EU’s Cohesion Policy underwent, once again, fundamental changes. The new program contains three objectives: (1) Convergence; (2) Regional Competitiveness and Employment; (3) European Territorial Cooperation.

in the programs and subnational authorities which do not. Apart from the fact that the comparison between these two groups really shows that Europe can make a difference,² local authorities which participate in such programs, especially in the Community Initiatives, develop direct ties to the European Commission. Eligibility for EU funds appears to be a main driver of a more active policy approach (Rooij 2002: 463). EU-local relations are, however, difficult to grasp with a strict top-down model. EU legislation made in Brussels is not simply handed down to the national level and is then implemented by local authorities. If national governments lose their 'gatekeeper' position, which allows local authorities to bypass the nation-state, reality becomes more complex than a unidirectional top-down approach suggests.

5. Bypassing the Nation-state

After the debate has shifted gradually, it is now widely acknowledged that the EU has imposed new constraints on sub-national authorities but that Brussels also offers them new possibilities for action and new channels of influence (Rechlin 2004; Kassim 2005: 303). These new opportunities have caused new strategies and many cities have started to develop direct links to Brussels. This 'bypassing the nation-state' differs from top-down Europeanization discussed in the previous section in several respects. The main difference is that the top-down approach assumes, at least implicitly, that cities do not directly lobby European institutions. Instead their lobbying activities are restricted to the national policy arenas.

When cities develop own initiatives and try to influence EU decisions directly, they transform from policy-takers to policy-makers. Cities become actors in the process of European integration. They establish transnational networks, set up own offices in Brussels (Ercole et al. 1997: 231; Goldsmith 2003: 124; Kassim 2005: 307) and cooperate with each other to strengthen their influence and solicit EU funding. The most important organizations, which now represent local authorities in Brussels, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and Eurocities, have opened their offices in Brussels many years ago. The CEMR, which represents the national associations of local authorities at European level, opened a field office in Brussels in 1969, which has since then become the organization's real center of gravitation, although the official

² Cohesion policy is of special interest for Europeanization studies because cities which participate in a special program can be compared with cities which do not participate. This helps to answer the question whether policy changes were triggered by EU policies or by other factors.

CEMR headquarters is located in Paris. Eurocities, a transnational city network of more than 120 large cities (over 250,000 inhabitants) in about 30 European countries, which was founded in 1986 established its headquarters in Brussels in 1992 (Niederhafner 2007: 215, 269, 272). Most of the more specialized transnational city networks do not have the necessary means to set up an own office in Brussels. However, the ongoing discussion in the Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC), a transnational city network with about 100 member cities in the Baltic Sea Region, shows that an office in Brussels is necessary for both continuous lobbying activities and getting EU funds for projects. The UBC, therefore, finally opened its 'UBC Antenna Office' in Brussels in fall 2006.

The members of these organizations view European integration no longer as a restriction but as a new opportunity for local authorities. Such institutionalized forms of networking enable cities to actively pursue multi-level strategies. They may even use the detour over Brussels to change the situation in Berlin, Dublin or Helsinki. The new opportunity structure pulls cities to Brussels. Even if they do not have an own office there, they are represented by their national association of cities, the CEMR, Eurocities, and many other more specialized networks. This development can be regarded as expression of para-diplomacy, meaning that subnational authorities represent their interest independently of the national governments. While the mere implementation of EU legislation does not require an own local foreign policy, bypassing the nation-state does.

Lobbying in Brussels can take several forms:

(1) Individual cities can pursue their individual strategies, including an own office in Brussels. This is of course the privilege of the biggest and most influential cities. Rotterdam is an example for a city which has the capacities to influence decisions made in Brussels directly. Rotterdam's mayor is a member of the Committee of the Regions. The city is one of the six founding members³ of Eurocities and employs own special EU lobbyists, which lobby daily and consider this as their core task (Rooij 2002: 456, 462; Schultze 2003: 123). Smaller cities which not have the necessary means to pursue such a strategy can combine forces with the surrounding counties and regional authorities. An example is Stockholm Region, which has set up an office in Brussels. It represents not only the City of Stockholm but the local and regional authorities in the Stockholm-Mälardalen Region.

³ Eurocities was founded 1986 in Rotterdam by six cities (Barcelona, Birmingham, Frankfurt a. M., Lyon, Milan, and Rotterdam)

(2) Traditional associations of local authorities have become increasingly Europeanized since the 1950s—witness the founding of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) in 1951. Although national and even regional associations of local authorities are present in Brussels, the CEMR has certainly become the most important European association of local authorities, which represents both local authorities and national local government associations. While big metropolitan cities join not only the CEMR but also other organizations such as Eurocities, most small and medium-sized municipalities are only represented by the CEMR.

(3) Since the mid-1980s numerous transnational networks have supplemented the CEMR. Unlike the CEMR, they were founded as transnational organizations and are based exclusively on the direct membership of cities. Lobbying activities in Brussels or Strasbourg have not only increased considerably in recent years, they have also become one of the main functions of organization such as Eurocities.

The CEMR and Eurocities are not the only city associations and city networks lobbying in Brussels but certainly the two most influential organizations. This is especially true when considering decision-making in less specialized areas such as the debate on the Constitutional Treaty or on general issues such as the regulation of the services of general interest.

Subnational mobilization is uneven across the European Union. Differences between municipalities exist along national lines but also between cities within the same country. Cities which become active in Brussels share an entrepreneurial spirit and the desire to shape policy at the European level (Kassim 2005: 307). It is most evident that bigger cities, especially the members of Eurocities, are better represented than small towns. There is less evidence for differences between cities in northern and southern Europe. It may be argued that cities located in northern Europe have advantages because they are more bureaucratized and professionalized than their counterparts in southern Europe, where informal contacts and clientelistic relations still prevail. Among the cities organized in Eurocities such a difference can not be observed because members of this network can be found in Scandinavia, in Spain, in Poland, and in many other European countries.

While associations and transnational networks of local authorities have increased their initiatives in Brussels, new EU initiatives, especially initiatives launched by the Commission, have altered the opportunity structure for local authorities and their representatives. In 2001, the Commission published the ‘White Paper on European

Governance'. It is based on five principles: openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness and coherence. Among the proposals for better involvement the foundation for direct EU-local cooperation can be found: "At EU level the Commission should ensure that regional and local knowledge and conditions are taken into account when developing policy proposals. For this purpose it should organize a systematic dialogue with European and national associations of regional and local government while respecting national constitutional and administrative arrangements" (European Commission 2001: 23-24). Such strategic dialogues have taken place since 2004, encompassing general as well as thematic meetings. These changes certainly facilitated the access to EU decision-making although the reaction of local government organizations to these dialogues were ambivalent (Niederhafner 2007: 178-181). The Commission strategy can be explained by the fact that the EU has become more dependent on information and expert advice from civil society, business groups, and subnational authorities. Moreover EU-local relations, and especially transnational city networks, can help the Commission to implement EU policies (Goldsmith 2003: 121; Eising 2004; Heinelt and Niederhafner 2005: 79; Niederhafner 2007).

Whether local authority initiatives' have an impact on EU decision-making depends primarily on the ability of the local authorities and their representatives in Brussels to aggregate the different positions of local authorities in Europe, which differ considerably regarding their size, socioeconomic position, and their location in rural or metropolitan areas. The positions of local authorities are difficult to aggregate, but aggregation of these differing interests is exactly what the Commission values most. Helpful in this respect appear initiatives of the Commission which facilitate the cooperation among different transnational city networks which are active in the same field. An example for this strategy was the institutional funding of the '*European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign*', a body sponsored to facilitate cooperation among the various transnational municipal networks and associations which are active in the area of urban sustainability across Europe. This institutional framework certainly helped these organizations to speak with one voice.

6. Networking between cities

Local authorities associations and transnational city networks do not limit their activities to the aggregation and representation of their members' interests but also stimulate the exchange and transfer of best practice between cities. This can be regarded as another

strategy based on the assumption that Europe offers new chances. Learning from other cities is an important part of the general mission of transnational municipal networks such as Eurocities or the Union of the Baltic Cities (Kern 2001, Kern/Bulkeley 2008). Transfer of best practice requires the existence of direct ties between municipalities. EU institutions are not directly involved or may play only a facilitating role. The ties between municipalities, which are developed on a strictly voluntary basis, can be either bilateral or multilateral. Three types of transnational networking can be distinguished here: (1) bilateral twinning (sister cities); (2) transnational city networks; (3) EU-funded projects.

Direct cooperation between cities in Europe has a long tradition. Local foreign policy is by no means restricted to membership of local authority associations and transnational networks like the CEMR, Eurocities, or the Union of the Baltic Cities. There are also direct relations between municipalities, typically in the form of twinning. The idea of twin city partnerships developed after the First World War but only really came to fruition after the Second World War. It was initiated by, among other organisations, the International Mayors' Union (IBU) which primarily promoted Franco-German twinings (Grunert 1981: 56). As they are seen as a tool for reconciliation it does not come as a surprise that most city twinings were established between Germany and France. Two partly overlapping objectives were pursued: first peacekeeping and international understanding, second the promotion of European integration. Steady contact among citizens was seen as a suitable means of achieving these goals (Klaus 1994: 6-7.). The number of city twinings in Europe has increased considerably over time. Twinning has been promoted by the CEMR and the European Union. In 1989 the Commission introduced a 'Town Twinning Programme' not only to further existing partnerships but also to establish new ones. Since 1993 an annual prize, the 'Golden Star of Town-Twinning' has been awarded to municipalities '(that) have best contributed to European integration by forging closer links between their respective citizens.' The main goals of city twinings have not much changed over time. They are confined mainly to a cultural mission, such as understanding cultural differences, improving language skills, etc. City twinning does not aim – at least not primarily – at best practice transfer. However, twinning can serve as an excellent basis for the establishment of transnational city networks and they are very helpful when partners for an EU-funded project are needed.

In contrast to city twinning, the establishment of transnational city networks aims at the facilitation of the exchange of experience and best practice transfer. Exchange of experience and best practice transfer is one of the main functions of all city networks.

Typical of transnational city networks is that, first, members are autonomous and free to join and leave. Second, such networks appear to be polycentric, horizontal, and non-hierarchical. Third, they provide a good basis for decentralized cooperation between members. The history of the UBC shows that the three forms of horizontal cooperation are interdependent. In the case of the UBC the basis was provided by a long-standing relationship between Gdansk and Kalmar (Sweden). The two cities sought to win the support of their respective twin cities for this institutional innovation. The tradition of the Hanseatic League certainly played a role, for almost 60 percent of the founding members had once belonged to the Hanseatic League, probably the first European city network.

The marked increase in transnational networking among municipalities started in the late 1980s (Ward and Williams 1997: 454). In the 1990s, newly founded networks tended to become more specialized and Europeanized. In the first phase of development in the 1990s most networks were characterized by dynamic growth and strong differentiation but more recently many networks have entered a different phase in their life cycle. There are some signs of stagnation, although the membership of most networks has stabilized. In addition to these general trends, networks such as *Eurocities* or the *Union of the Baltic Cities* share specific structural and functional similarities. In most TMNs three groups of actors can be distinguished: (1) member cities; (2) General Assembly, Board, and Presidency; (3) an international secretariat and national or sectoral coordinators. Some networks have differentiated over time. In the UBC the commissions cover the whole range of (transnational) urban policy, such as business cooperation, environment, social affairs, and urban planning. Transnational city networks have developed forms of internal and external governing in order to operate efficiently within the European multi-level governance context (Kern 2001; Kern/Bulkeley 2008).

Besides city twinning and transnational city networks, which are long-term relationships, cities become involved in short-term projects, many of them funded by the EU. This means that formal-legal and long-term relationships between municipalities are being increasingly superseded by limited-term institutional arrangements. This is a decisive difference, since twin city partnerships are permanent relationships, as the metaphoric terms 'twin cities' or 'sister cities' suggest. Project networks can, but do not necessarily, overlap with existing city twinings and transnational networks. An established network of sister cities and membership in a transnational city network such as Eurocities provides an excellent basis for finding city partners if they are needed for a project application (Blania 2006: 299). Long-term relationships can be used to stabilize short-term projects.

EU funding of cooperative projects involving cities from different countries have created transnational spaces independent from nation-states. Thus, transnational city networking may have direct impacts at the local level. It may also cause problems because local goals and the transnational project goals may differ (Blania 2006: 311). Membership in transnational networks pays off for most cities because transnational city networks such as Eurocities initiate and even manage such projects. In Düsseldorf, which is a member of Eurocities, 80 percent of all EU projects, in which the city participated, were initiated by this transnational network (Kranz/van Toorenburg 2006: 327).

7. Conclusions

The discussion has shown that three dimensions of urban Europeanization can be distinguished: (1) from a top-down point of view cities are limited to implementing EU legislation; (2) alternatively, it can be emphasized that cities have started to bypass the nation-states and influence EU decision-making directly; (3) networking between cities fosters a third dimension of Europeanization, which is more horizontal in nature and does not require a direct involvement of the European Union, although European funding of twinning and networking is most welcome and helpful.

Concerning the impact of European integration on cities, the dominant view still regards Europeanization as a threat to local autonomy because local authorities implement most EU legislation but have only limited influence on EU decision-makers. This top-down perspective has been criticized because it neglects the new opportunities which result from increasing European integration. Whether cities perceive Europe as a threat or as an opportunity depends on their position at home and in Brussels. At home this is determined by state structures, especially by the autonomy of local authorities and the existence of a federalist structure. Weak local authorities in centralized states (e.g., in the UK in the 1980s) have more to gain than strong and autonomous local authorities in federal states (e.g., in Germany). In Brussels the chances of cities to get access to decision-makers has considerably improved over time. Today, the European Union provides an opportunity structure which allows cities and their representatives to gain access to different EU institutions, especially the EU Commission. National and European local government associations have, therefore, become more active in Brussels in recent years. This development has been enforced by bilateral and multilateral relations between cities in different Member States.

Unlike redistributive programs, such as Cohesion Policy, the EU's regulative policies, such as the liberalization of the energy markets, affect all local authorities in the Member States in a similar way. As far as regulative policies are concerned, top-down Europeanization does not discriminate between certain regions. In contrast, the impact of the EU's Cohesion Policy varies among European regions and enables the participants of programs which are directly run by the Commission, such as URBAN II, to establish direct links to the Commission. However, bypassing the nation-state and transnational networking, especially as an active member of a transnational city network, appears to be still the privilege of relatively few pioneering cities which have the capacities to start such activities. Transnational city networks are networks of pioneers, for pioneers (Kern/Bulkeley 2008). Metropolitan cities seem to be in a much better position to become a member of this club. This development will most likely lead to a polarization between pioneers and laggards and supports the thesis that there is more empirical evidence pointing towards a differential impact of Europe than towards convergence (Radaelli 2006: 62).

Even within countries differences between cities exist and will most likely persist. Some cities become Europeanized while others stay bound by regional and national ties. As pioneering cities can be found in all Member States, a cluster of truly Europeanized cities is slowly emerging. Size seems to matter most in this respect, although political leadership and the already existing external relations (sister cities, transnational networks, EU projects) also play a decisive role here. Europeanized cities do not only cooperate with each other in EU-funded projects or in transnational city networks like Eurocities, they also develop an identity as a European city in a European network of cities. It can be assumed that the development of such Europeanized cities will eventually affect the differences between the urban governance systems and state-local relations in the 27 Member States, which differ considerably, especially between countries in northern and southern Europe. Although active strategies are limited to a certain cluster of cities, this may change over time because transnational city pioneers may become models for their national, less Europeanized, peers (Kern et al. 2007). While it is an open question how the long-term development will look like, recent developments show that horizontal Europeanization, which does not necessarily requires direct EU interventions, has crucial impacts on subnational governance and subnational mobilization. Europeanization is certainly more than a top-down exercise dominated by Brussels.

Europeanization does constrain cities but it also provides them with new opportunities. Whether the former or the latter prevail depends on both the city's location, especially its regional location in a specific Member State, and the characteristics of the city. Cities like Rotterdam, Barcelona, Birmingham, and Gdansk are far more Europeanized than small towns in rural areas, but even such towns can participate in EU projects. Europeanization has different implications for a city like Barcelona, Catalonia's capital and Spain's second city; for Dessau, a small city with a high unemployment rate located in the former GDR; and for Valga, a small town in southern Estonia. Europe provides opportunities for all of them: for Barcelona, which is a founding and active member of Eurocities; for Dessau which participates in the URBAN II initiative; and even for Valga which cooperates with more than 20 other European cities and towns in the 'European municipal buildings climate campaign', a project partially funded by the EU. For most European cities and towns Europeanization is, and will remain, mainly the implementation of EU legislation, for the pioneers Europe offers manifold opportunities. Whether cities gain or lose from Europeanization depends on their position at home and in Brussels, but most of all on their own initiative.

References

- Von Alemann, U. and Münch, C. (eds.) (2006): *Europafähigkeit der Kommunen. Die lokale Ebene in der Europäischen Union* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften).
- Bache, I. and Flinders, M. (eds.) (2004) *Multi-level Governance* (Oxford et al.: Oxford University Press).
- Börzel, T. (2005) 'Europeanization: How the European Union interacts with its Member States', in: S. Bulmer and Lequesne, C. (eds.) *The Member States of the European Union* (Oxford et al.: Oxford University Press), pp. 45-69.
- Bulkeley, H. and Kern, K. (2006) 'Local government and the governing of climate change in Germany and the UK', *Urban Studies* 43(12): 2237-2259.
- Bulmer, S. and Lequesne, C. (eds.) (2005) *The Member States of the European Union* (Oxford et al.: Oxford University Press).
- Eising, R. (2004) 'Interest groups and the European Union'. In Cini, M. (ed.), *European Union Politics* (Oxford et al.: Oxford University Press), pp. 192-207.
- Ercole, E., Walters, M., Goldsmith, M. (1997) 'Cities, networks, Euregions, European offices'. In: Goldsmith, M. and Klausen, K.K. (eds.), *European Integration and Local Government* (Cheltenham, UK/Brookfield, US: Edward Elgar), pp. 219-236.

- Evans, M. (ed.) (2004) *Policy Transfer in Global Perspective* (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate).
- European Commission (2001) *European Governance. A White Paper* (Luxembourg: European Communities)
- Featherstone, K. and Radaelli, C. (eds.) (2003) *The Politics of Europeanization* (Oxford et al.: Oxford University Press).
- Goldsmith, M. (2003) 'Variable geometry, multi-level governance: European integration and subnational government in the new millennium'. In Featherstone, K. and Radaelli, C.M. (eds.), *The Politics of Europeanization* (Oxford et al.: Oxford University Press), pp.112-133.
- Graziano, P. and Vink, M. (eds.) (2007) *Europeanization. New Research Agendas* (Houndmills and New York: Palgrave Macmillan).
- Grunert, T. (1981) *Langzeitwirkungen von Städte-Partnerschaften. Ein Beitrag zur europäischen Integration* (Kehl am Rhein and Straßburg: N.P. Engel Verlag).
- Heinelt, H. and Niederhafner, S. (2005) 'Cities and Organized Interest Intermediation in the EU Multi-level System'. In van den Daele, W. (ed.), *Diskurs und Governance*. WZB Discussion Paper IV 2005-103, pp. 76-88.
- Hoffschulte, Heinrich (2006) 'Kommunen in Europa – Die bürgernahe Basis in einem Europa der vier Ebenen' In: von Alemann, U. and Münch, C. (eds.) *Europafähigkeit der Kommunen. Die lokale Ebene in der Europäischen Union* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften), pp. 58-76.
- Holzinger, K. and Knill, C. (2005) 'Causes and conditions of cross-national policy convergence' *Journal of European Public Policy* 12(5): 775-796.
- Hooghe, L. and Marks, G. (2003) 'Unraveling the central state? Types of multi-level governance' *American Political Science Review* 97(2): 233-243.
- John, P. (2000) 'The Europeanisation of sub-national governance' *Urban Studies* 37 (5-6): 877-894.
- Kassim, H. (2005) 'The Europeanization of Member state institutions' In: Bulmer, S. and Lequesne, C. (eds.) *The Member States of the European Union* (Oxford et al.: Oxford University Press), pp. 285-316.
- Kern, K. and Bulkeley, H. (2008) 'Cities, Europeanization and multi-level governance: governing climate change through transnational municipal networks' *Journal of Common Market Studies* (forthcoming).
- Kern, K., Koll, C., and Schophaus, M. (2007) 'The diffusion of Local Agenda 21 in Germany: comparing the German federal states' *Environmental Politics* (forthcoming).
- Kern, K. (2001) 'Transnationale Städtenetzwerke in Europa' In: Schröter, E. (ed.), *Empirische Policy- und Verwaltungsforschung. Lokale, nationale und internationale Perspektiven* (Opladen: Leske + Budrich), pp. 95-116.

- Klaus, M. (1994) ‚Städtepartnerschaften zwischen ost- und westdeutschen Kommunen. Ein Medium des Bürgerdialogs, interkommunaler Solidarität und verwaltungspolitischer Integration‘ (Berlin: Graue Reihe der KSPW).
- Kranz, A, and van Toorenburg, P. (2006) ‚Die Stadt Düsseldorf als Mitglied in netzwerken und Verbänden – Erfahrungswerte‘ In: von Alemann, U. and Münch, C. (eds.): *Europafähigkeit der Kommunen. Die lokale Ebene in der Europäischen Union* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften), pp. 322-330.
- Ladrech, R. (2005) ‚The Europeanization of interest groups and political parties‘ In: Bulmer S. and Lequesne, C. (eds.) *The Member States of the European Union* (Oxford et al.: Oxford University Press), pp. 317-337.
- Marshall, A. (2005) ‚Europeanization at the urban level: local actors, institutions and the dynamics of multi-level interaction‘ *Journal of European Public Policy* 12(4): 668-686.
- Monstadt, J. (2007) ‚Urban governance and the transition of energy systems: institutional change and shifting energy and climate policies in Berlin‘ *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 31 (2) (forthcoming June 2007).
- Münch, C. (2006) *Emanzipation der lokalen Ebene? Kommunen auf dem Weg nach Europa* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften).
- Niederhafner, S. (2007) *Europäische Städte im Mehrebenensystem der EU. Eine vergleichende Untersuchung der Einflussnahme kommunaler Akteure auf europäischer Ebene anhand der beiden pan-europäischen Kommunalverbände Eurocities and RGRE* (Dissertation).
- Olsen, J. (2002) ‚The many faces of Europeanization‘ *Journal of Common Market Studies* 40(5): 921-952.
- Pierre, J. and Peters, B.G. (2000) *Governance, Politics and the State* (Houndsmills etc.: Macmillan).
- Pollack, M. (2005) ‚Theorizing the European Union: international organization, domestic polity or experiment in new governance?‘ *Annual Review of Political Science* 8: 357-398.
- Rose, R. (2005) *Learning from Comparative Public Policy* (London and New York: Routledge).
- Quaglia, L., Neuvonen, M., Miyakoshi, M., and Cini, M. (2007) ‚Europeanization‘ In: Cini, M. (ed.) *European Union Politics*, Second edition, pp. 405-420.
- Radaelli, C. (2006) ‚Europeanization: solution or problem?‘ In: Cini, M. and Bourne, A. (eds.), *Palgrave Advances in European Union Studies* (Houndsmills and New York: Palgrave Macmillan).
- Rechlin, S. (2004) *Die deutschen Kommunen im Mehrebenensystem der Europäischen Union – Betroffene Objekte oder active Subjekte?* WZB Discussion Paper SP IV 2004-101, Berlin.
- Rooij, R. (2002) ‚The impact of the European Union on local government in the Netherlands‘ *Journal of European Public Policy* 9 (3): 447-467.
- Rosamund, B. (2004) ‚New theories of European integration‘. In: Cini, M. (ed.), *European Union Politics* (Oxford et al.: Oxford University Press), pp. 109-127.

Shipan, C. and Volden, C. (2005) *Diffusion, Preemption, and Venue Shopping: the Spread of Local Antismoking Policies*, Working Paper, RWJ Scholars in Health Research Program.

Schulze, C. (2003) 'Cities and EU governance: policy-takers or policy-makers?' *Regional and Federal Studies* 13(1): 121-147.

Sbragia, Alberta (2004) 'Key Policies' In: Bomberg, E. and Stubb, A. (eds.) *The European Union: How Does it Work?* (Oxford et al.: Oxford University Press), 111-135.

Ward, S. and Williams, R. (1997) 'From hierarchy to networks? Sub-central government and EU urban environment policy'. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 35 (3), pp. 439-464.

Wolman, H. and Page, E. (2002) 'Policy transfer among local governments: an information theory approach', *Governance* 15(4): 477-501.

Wolf, F. (2006) 'Europakompetenz in der Stadtverwaltung: Die Europaarbeit der Stadt Köln' In: von Alemann, U. and Münch, C. (eds.) (2006): *Europafähigkeit der Kommunen. Die lokale Ebene in der Europäischen Union* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften), pp. 251-268..

Zimmermann, U. (2006) 'Die Europäische Verfassung – Eine Bilanz aus kommunaler Perspektive' In: von Alemann, U. and Münch, C. (eds.) *Europafähigkeit der Kommunen. Die lokale Ebene in der Europäischen Union* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften), pp. 25-47.

	Table 1: Dimensions of the Europeanization of Cities		
	Implementing	Bypassing	Networking
Levels involved	EU, Member States, Subnational authorities	EU, Cities	Cities
Dynamic between levels	Top-down	Top-down and bottom-up	Horizontal
EU-local relations	Indirect relations Member States as 'Gatekeepers'	Direct relations Lobbying at EU level Consultation of local authorities	EU not directly involved (except as facilitator; funding)
State-local relations	Hierarchical Local authorities as part of the Member States	Paradiplomacy State-local relations loosen	Paradiplomacy State-local relations loosen
Institutional changes	European affairs offices within the local administration	Offices and lobbying in Brussels (e.g., CEMR)	City twinning Transnational city networks
Differences between local authorities	All local authorities affected Differences along national lines (regulative policies) Differences along regional lines (redistributive policies)	Pioneers dominate associations and networks (CEMR, Eurocities)	Pioneers dominate associations and networks (CEMR, Eurocities)