

Interest Representation at EU-level

*Simona Wohleser
Österreichischer Städtebund, Büro Brüssel
27 Sept 2011, 10:15*

VIENNA – office

(Pres Mayor Häupl; Gremien: Städtetag, Hptausschuss, Geschäftsleitung; meets in 37 committees)

- ❖ Constitutional representative body of all Austrian cities (2 associations)
- ❖ Leads financial adjustment negotiations & represents cities at High Courts
- ❖ Long tradition of subsidiarity & local self gov; high quality of services & infrastructure to affordable prices; high satisfaction rate of citizens;

BRUSSELS - office

- ❖ Since 1994 part of Austrian EU-Delegation; offices in Austrian Perm Rep to EU

BRUSSELS office

Because:

- ❖ AT-Const: „on all EU-issues, cities have same rights AND obligations as federal and regional level“ (art 21 d/1);
- ❖ Our democratic right & obligation...*“für das Gemeinwohl“*
- ❖ EU-Information from federal state: too late, too sparse, sometimes false;
- ❖ Local gov are essential & logic stakeholders at EU-level;
- ❖ active participation in EU-legislative process for us essential;
- ❖ Coop with other nat associations: competence platform for EU-officials & others to consult;

main tasks

„political and technical“

- ❖ Monitoring
- ❖ Networking
- ❖ Lobbying
- ❖ (Promoting)

practical advice

in general

- ❖ Position papers: clear, short, to the point; easy accessible language (EN/FR); Follow-up to pp [with appropriate officials; always be prepared, always be on time & NEVER overstay your appointment, always remain professional, NEVER emotional!!)
- ❖ Create (*rainbow*) coalitions (*EU-Institutions, business & Industry, NGOs, PermReps, Media, etc*)

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

(European & national interest)

- ❖ excellent tool for putting pressure & raising issues;
- ❖ Fragile opinion forming process
- ❖ Balance of forces - more cultural-historic than along party lines:
- ❖ **Liberal-Anglo-Saxon--French-Belgian--North-/Central European & Italian**
- ❖ important EP-rules of procedure & legislative procedure; MEP in co-ordinators' group of political groups (*decisions about reports, rapporteurs, hearings, ideas for hearings, speakers, experts*); assistants & EP-officials

EU-COMMISSION

(European interest – BUT: not to underestimate MS influence)

- ❖ Has no neutral policy agenda; follows its own agenda
- ❖ Prefers market oriented solutions
- ❖ guards, interprets & re-interprets Treaties
- ❖ Some departments initiate & dominate politics, influence public opinion, encourage discussion und propose legislation only when the time is right
- ❖ Important: EU-legislative procedure esp when is proposal due;
- ❖ relevant DGs, units, sectors, expert groups (ca 6.000) etc

COUNCIL of the EU

(represents total of all national interests)

- ❖ no public meetings; lack of transparency;
- ❖ has rather “distant” relationship with local & reg gov
- ❖ Council decisions to be lobbied for/against in MS (“*at home*”)
- ❖ Influence of BXL based offices limited
- ❖ important officials of Perm Rep

REQUIREMENTS for Successful offices

- ❖ Precise definition of objectives from „home office“
- ❖ Clear political goals
- ❖ Willingness of cities to deal with EU-policy areas
- ❖ Secure financial resources of BXL-office
- ❖ Sufficient competence (professional & social) of BXL reps

a BXL-office is only as successful as the home office wants it to be

PLANETARIUM BRÜSSEL

