

Working in EU advocacy and the world of NGOs

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Agenda

- Introduction
- Common challenges for NGO and corporate lobby
- What can they learn from each other?

Stereotypes

- NGOs have unlimited supporters and a lack of financial resources
- Business have limited supporters and indefinite financial resources
- NGOs are badly coordinated angry hippies
- Business representatives wear suits and lobby “the right”
- NGO representatives wear jeans, carry banners, and lobby “the left”

NGOs do have resources



NGOs are well coordinated



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UNITED AGAINST BAYER-MONSANTO DEAL: It's no secret that civil society organizations are working behind the scenes on how to cause trouble for the world's largest seed and pesticides firms, six of which are [at various stages of merging with each other](#). Their main target is Bayer and Monsanto, who are in discussions with the European Commission over a proposed merger. They even have a cool name for it — Baysanto. However it's not often that the minutes of their strategy meetings [are leaked](#), which happened this week. The NGOs' interest in EU competition law appears to be relatively new, with the minutes referring several times to the need for further legal advice. The reason for their interest? "Power concentration of corporates" and the "the social justice issues arising around increased market domination from an even smaller number of companies," according to two of the participants.

The meeting: At the end of last month, a group of NGOs met in Berlin to "discuss international campaign plans and opportunities regarding the three mega mergers in the seed and pesticide industry." The discussion began with a *tour de table*, during which 19 people gave updates on campaigning strategies, including how to involve activists in U.S. and "the south," specifically South Africa, through the African Center for Biodiversity.

Spiritual and anti-corporate activists: At the table were representatives from Oxfam, Friends of the Earth and Corporate Europe Observatory, as well as Misereor (the German catholic bishops' Organization for Development Cooperation), Bread for the World (representing German protestant churches) and Demeter (a company that certifies organic food products).

NGO advocacy is more than lobby



NGOs work with all MEPs



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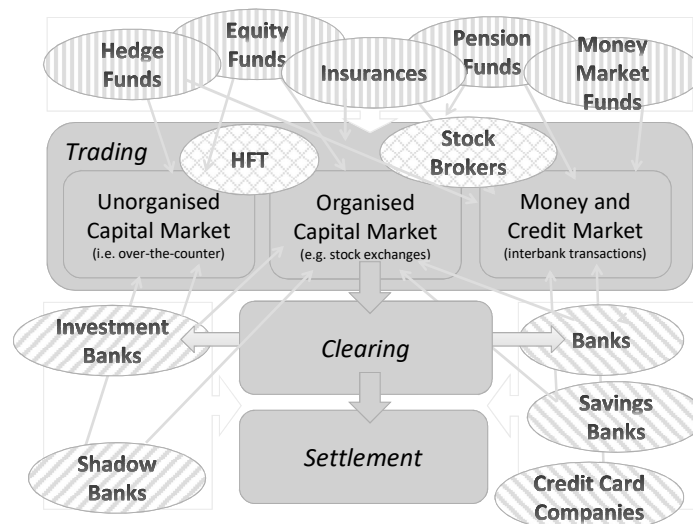
Common challenges and strategies

- Choose the right battles
- Choose the right opponents
- Set the agenda,
don't follow someone else's
- Work with your members
- Work with anyone

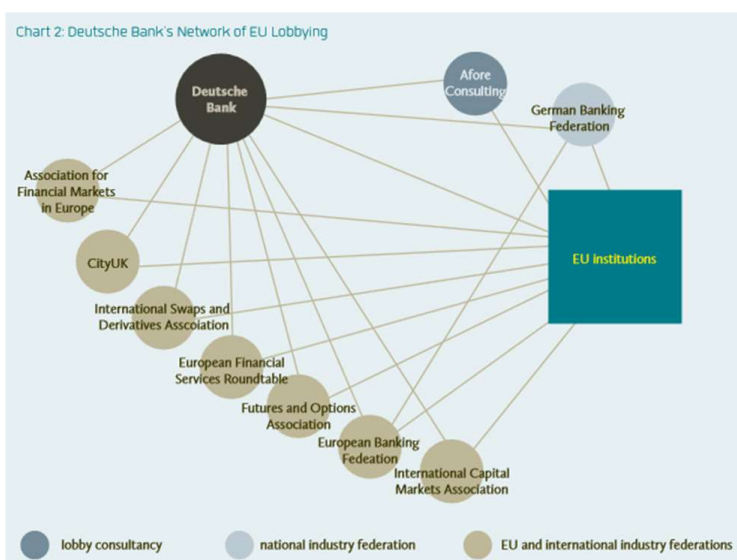
Choosing the right battles

- Bank stability: capital, TBTF, recovery
- Fixing financial markets: shadow banking, money market funds, Capital Markets Union, securitization
- No speculation on derivative markets
- Financing the real economy, SMEs
- Retail investments, consumer protection

Choosing the right opponent (1)



Choosing the right opponent (2)



Set the agenda

- NGOs most vulnerable to the dangers of agenda following
 - Instead of challenging the role of the financial sector in society, the post-crisis regulation of every aspect of the financial sector has reinforced its role in society
 - Campaigning for agri-based car fuel actually reinforces transport infrastructure based on fossil fuel combustion
- But business also
 - Hedge funds starting to lobby when the draft Directive regulating them with largely symbolic requirements was already on the table



Working with members

- NGOs with member associations and trade associations are very similar in governance, structure, and activities.
- Create associations and coalitions with diverse members to increase your appeal to MEPs and Member States
- Coordinate loosely but do not impose common positions



Work with anyone

- Don't restrict yourself to your comfort zone, target swing groups
- Don't exclude certain political backgrounds unless you really don't want to be seen with them

Lessons for business

- Improve media work: long-term relations, not crisis management
- Engage on social media, especially Twitter ("Facebook is for voters")
- Align your message to the world of decision-makers

Lessons for NGOs

- Become a shapeshifter (TJN)
- Intervene earlier and upstream
- Have a long breath!
 - Align funding to long-term goals
 - Ensure staff continuity
- Avoid fights for visibility and funding – there is a greater common fight (cf. industry associations)

Thank you

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