

More than an add-on?

The Europeanization of the Dutch civil service

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1. Introduction

European integration does not stop to fascinate political scientists. Many of us are excited about this institution that transcends national interests, overcomes collective action problems, and presents member states with such a durable and authoritative framework that they slowly but unrecognizably lose authority to model their own policies as desired. But does it? Despite our excitement, many of us have troubles escaping the reflexes caused by the years of international relations hegemony in studying the EU. Does the EU really have the clout to force member states to adopt unwanted policies? Then how about the never-ending stories about non-compliance, the European Commission's hesitance in adopting a tough stance on reluctant member states, the difficulties of monitoring actual application and enforcement on the ground? The tension between member state dominance and supranational control continues to offer a well of fascinating research topics.

In order to demonstrate the success of the EU in transcending member states' institutions and policies, or even the domestic interests underlying them, we are advised to answer at least three questions. First, we should answer the question of *the extent* to which Europe matters for the member states. Because even if we can identify compliance by initially reluctant member states, this may not be very meaningful if the EU's share in national matters is only minimal. Even though interesting from a theoretical viewpoint, the societal relevance of massive research attempts to explain the fate of EU intervention in member states is slight when it affects only a minimal terrain of national policy making. Second, we should try to answer the question to what extent any processes of Europeanization we observe are truly *affecting the core* of what member states are doing or are just added on to existing structures and policies. That is, if we believe that the EU really is capable of overriding member state concerns, the adaptations made by member states should be far from 'easy'. The adoption of coordination structures, for instance, is an interesting phenomenon, but it does not constitute evidence of the EU's transformative effect as coordination structures may simply be added on to existing organizational arrangements and can perfectly well co-exist with domestic institutions that were already out there. Finally, we should answer the question of *how* the European Union impacts on member states. Under what conditions does the EU succeed in bringing about domestic change, and when do member states carry on their business as usual?

So far, the literature on Europeanization has prioritized the third research question, about the conditions under which the EU has an impact, at the expense of the first two. Most researchers have started from the EU input and have sought to identify the factors explaining the extent of change. This paper, by contrast, tries to make a contribution to the first and second research questions, by measuring the *net impact* of the EU for at least one member state, the Netherlands, and assessing to what extent the changes brought about by European integration are merely co-existing with established institutions or are of a transformative nature.

We do this by looking at the EU-related activities of Dutch civil servants. This allows us to assess a wide variety of ways in which the EU may have an impact on domestic policies and organizations: directly, through involvement in EU decision-making and transposing and implementing EU legislation, and indirectly, through activities that are affected by the EU without direct intervention. This way, we hope to be able to say more about the extent to which the EU affects member states, as well as the character of that impact. Moreover, it will allow us to differentiate between different fields and types of organizations.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. In section 2, we will give a brief overview of the theoretical issues underlying our first question, about the extent of EU impact on member states. In section 3, we do the same for the theoretical issues relating to our second question, about whether or not the EU changes the core of what member states do. In section 4, we then discuss the large-scale survey among Dutch civil servants that was used to study the questions raised in this paper. Sections 5 and 6 present the empirical results from this survey relating to our two research questions. Finally, in section 7, we discuss these results and draw a number of conclusions.

2. The Net Impact of Europeanization

The central problem informing the booming literature on Europeanization concerns the impact of European integration on member states. Europeanization research has as its goal to explain the changes ‘Europe’ brings about in the member states. So far, this question has been answered for two domains of adaptation: domestic institutions and policies (cf. Bulmer, 2007). Some researchers have focused on institutional adaptations in member states (e.g. Jordan 1997; Knill 2001). Others have zoomed in on the adaptation of domestic policies in

response to increasing integration at the European level (e.g. Falkner et al. 2005; Knill and Lehmkuhl 2002). The latter is by far the most extensive part of the Europeanization literature, and it includes studies on the EU impact in various policy domains and in a wide range of member states.

Most of the existing literature on Europeanization has an explanatory character, seeking to explain the differences in patterns of adaptation to EU policy inputs (Börzel and Risse 2003; Knill and Lehmkuhl 2002). The central concern here has been *how*, i.e. under which conditions, member states adapt their policies to EU policies. The question of adaptation is highly relevant from a theoretical perspective, because it highlights the key puzzle informing EU studies: to what extent is the EU an international institution that transcends member states' interests, and forces them to modify their own policies and institutions? Yet, this strand of research has an important shortcoming: even if we manage to unveil the theoretical mechanisms behind EU adaptation, we are still left in the dark about the overall impact of the EU on domestic policy-making. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that most of these policy-oriented studies start from the EU level, and then search for concomitant effects in the member states. In other words, most research is very much x-oriented, starting from EU policy inputs and tracing these to the domestic level. One downside of this approach is that there is no variation on the independent variable, as a result of which we cannot rule out alternative explanations for domestic policy change, such as New Public Management or the influence of international organizations other than the EU (Haverland, 2006). As another downside, this methodological approach is likely to lead to an overestimation of the impact of the EU on member states as such an x-oriented design does not allow us to assess the overall importance of the EU for national states. By starting from EU policy inputs, the EU becomes 'a cause in search of an effect' (Goetz, 2000).

Thus, all the interest in the question of *how* European integration matters for the member states has overshadowed the question of the net impact of the EU on the member states (cf. Haverland, 2006, 136). We have no clear idea of the actual impact of European integration on member states, i.e. the extent of jurisdiction left to the member states in the face of ever-intensifying European integration. In our view, this is a vital research question. In order to present European integration as a veritable transcending force on domestic policies, we must therefore answer the question of net impact.

In recent years, the question of the EU's net impact has increasingly been recognized as an important one. First, various studies have sought to address the EU's share in domestic legislation. They have done so by counting the share of domestic laws and regulations that result from European directives (Blom-Hansen and Christensen 2004; Bovens and Yesilkagit forthcoming; Page 1998). These studies have consistently found shares of EU-inspired legislation ranging from 10 to 20%— a relatively small share when compared to the estimates of 70% or more that are often mentioned by Europhoric officials and even in well-established textbooks on the EU. However, these quantitative studies have been criticized for their narrow focus: they only look at the impact of EU directives, whereas the EU also has a (direct) effect through regulations and arguably an (indirect) effect through the 'pre-structuring' of domestic policy options (cf. Knill and Lehmkuhl 2002).

A second way of assessing the EU's actual impact on the member states has focused on the effect on domestic institutions rather than policies. Recent years have seen a proliferation of research seeking to estimate the overall extent to which domestic administrations have been affected by European integration. Most of these surveys have been conducted in Nordic countries. In a survey among 'EU specialists' in the civil service of four Nordic countries, 31 to 64% of the respondents indicated that 'the overall consequences of EU/EEA policies and regulations on their department' was 'fairly large' or 'very large' (Lægreid et al. 2004). In another survey among a random sample of civil servants in Norwegian central government ministries and directorates, around 45% of all respondents stated that they were affected 'to some extent or more' by the EU and/or EEA Agreement (Egeberg and Trondal 1999, 135).

These studies on the Europeanization of the civil service give additional information on the net impact of the EU on member states, but they still remain rather general. To begin with, respondents were asked to indicate whether they perceived an impact of the EU on their work. Answers to this question cannot be directly related to the actual activities of civil servants. In terms of measuring the impact of the EU, it would be useful to have a quantitative measure of the relative importance of EU-related activities when compared to other activities. In addition, it would be useful to have a specification of different types of EU-related activities in order to assess what types of EU impact on the civil service matter most.

In this paper, we also assess EU impact through the impact it has on the civil service, in this case of the Netherlands. The reason for studying the civil service rather than policy production is that we believe that the former lends itself better to measurement. As has appeared from the studies on legislative impact discussed above, it is hard to quantitatively measure the denominator, i.e. the body of national policies, vis-à-vis the EU's policies. Yet, as policy is largely prepared, made, and implemented by civil servants, we feel that the extent to which their work has been Europeanized is a useful additional indicator of Europeanization.

In assessing the EU's net impact, we use data from a large-scale survey among Dutch civil servants in central government departments. Using these data, we can assess how many civil servants carry out EU-related activities and how much time they spend on these activities. In addition, we will study what specific activities these Europeanized civil servants carry out. This is an inclusive way of assessing the EU's impact, because the activities of civil servants may relate to various different types of EU impact: participating in EU decision-making, transposing EU directives, discussing EU-related issues with other stakeholders, taking into account existing EU policies in drafting new domestic laws, etcetera. The figures thus obtained therefore form a useful complement to existing quantitative measures.

Besides assessing the net impact of European integration on the Dutch civil service in overall terms, we seek to sketch a variegated picture of impact, comparing the impact on different policy sectors, and types of administrative functions. In so doing, we seek to map out the exact locations of Europeanized activity in the Netherlands. This could serve as a benchmark for future investigations, so as to chart developments over time, or for cross-country comparisons.¹

¹ The variegated impact of the EU on the member states has been an important focus of attention for students of Europeanization. Much research has been done, for instance, to assess and explain differences in compliance records between the member states (Steunenberg and Rhinard, 2006; Kaeding, 2006; Haverland and Romeijn, in press, Berglund, Gange, and Van Waarden, 2006). It would be highly interesting to combine these findings with findings on net impact of the EU on the civil service, to sketch a picture of EU leaders and laggards.

3. Europeanization: more than an add-on?

Besides the quantitative impact on member states, the second condition for identifying the EU as an institution that is able to transcend member states institutions and policies relates to its *transformative effect* on member states. The EU can only be said to be truly transformative to the extent that it comes to reorient ‘the direction and shape of politics to the degree that EC political and economic dynamics become part of the organizational logic of national politics and policy-making’ (Ladrech, 1994, 69). In other words, the proof of the pudding is in demonstrating that European integration transforms national policies and institutions.

Yet most instances of Europeanization documented in the literature are of an added rather than a transformative character. To begin with the policy level, we must make a distinction between spurious and actual compliance (Mitchell, 1994, 428). Spurious compliance concerns those cases in which EU policy is well in line with the interests of a member state – or at least a winning coalition therein. From a theoretical point of view, such instances of compliance are not too interesting; we should rather identify those cases that evidence a tension between EU inputs and domestic preferences.

Regarding institutional adaptation to the EU, a majority of studies have focused on the domestic structures to coordinate member states’ uploading and concomitant implementation processes (see for instance Wright (1996); Soetendorp and Hanf (1998); Harmsen (1999); Kassim, Peters, and Wright, 2000). Such adaptations, however, are hardly indicative of the overriding force of the EU on member states, because ‘domestic EU policy making is self-evidently a response to Europeanization’ (Bulmer, 2007, 53). Such adaptations can safely coexist with existing national institutions and procedures for policy-making, and hence leave the domestic machinery intact.

Hence, we seek to assess to what extent the EU has remained an add-on to the domestic administrative system, or has transformed that administrative system. We will investigate this question for both the level of individual civil servants and their administrative surroundings. Concerning the individual level, we have surveyed civil servants beyond the real EU specialists, who overview the process of delivering inputs into the process of

European integration and complying with EU policies.² In order to find out to what extent the EU has penetrated domestic ways of doing things, we should not restrict ourselves to those ‘boundary spanners’ (Laffan, 2003, 4). In addition, we should also study the characteristics and activities of the ‘EU cadre’, the specialists who combine sectoral expertise with knowledge of EU law and politics (Bulmer and Burch, 1998).

The question we thus seek to answer is whether European integration affects, if at all, the workings of national administrations, or whether EU-related work is a ‘side competency’ carried out by EU specialists at the fringes of governmental departments. We will try to answer this question by first looking at the kinds of EU-related activities carried out by civil servants. Second, we will study the degree of embeddedness of EU-related work. Is EU-related work dispersed broadly within government departments, or is it carried out by isolated pockets of EU specialists? Also, we will investigate the differences in patterns across governmental departments.

Finally, we study the degree of organizational support for EU-related work that is offered by the governmental departments. For a long time, the EU did not form an integral element of the Dutch administrative culture. As in many member states, Dutch civil servants for a long time did not ‘think European’ (Jordan, 2003, 263). As Voermans (2004, 27) claimed, the European Union does not yet constitute an important part of the frames of Dutch national politicians and civil servants. And as reported by the *Visitatiecommissie Wetgeving* (2000), EU expertise was lacking outside the small circle of EU specialists, and EU training was not widely offered. In addition, domestic policy-making is reported to have a higher priority than EU-related work, such as the transposition of EU directives (Mastenbroek, 2005a, 21).

We distinguish between two types of organizational support, one relating to personnel management and one relating to policy management. We argue that *personnel management* is important for assessing the EU’s qualitative impact, because for a long time most Dutch departments had a somewhat dual career system for Europeanized and ‘national’ civil servants. We assume that, if the EU has indeed become more important for

² For the Netherlands, this rather restricted circle of EU coördinators is estimated to consist of 60 civil servants (Raad voor het Openbaar Bestuur, 2004, 77).

the Dutch civil service, these paths have become mixed, and EU experience has become a general asset for career development. Second, we have conceptualized the organizational support variable in terms of *policy management*, i.e. the way the policy process is designed and controlled. When top bureaucrats and politicians deem EU affairs unimportant or even peripheral to their policy field, it can be expected that there is no systematic attention for EU-related activities.

Box 1 Overview of research questions

1. Impact

- a. EU involvement: what percentage of Dutch civil servants carry out EU-related activities?
- b. Time spent: How much time do Dutch civil servants spend on EU-related activities?
- c. To what extent are differences in EU involvement and time spent related to types of jobs and organizations?
- d. Specific activities: What is the relative importance of different types of EU-related activities (specific activities)?

2. Relevance

- a. Organizational embeddedness: To what degree are EU-related activities broadly embedded or, rather, isolated within the organization (organizational embeddedness)?
- b. Organizational support: How well are EU-related activities supported organizationally?
 - i. Dimension 1: Personnel management
 - ii. Dimension 1: Policy management

4. Data and operationalization

For our study, we had the unique opportunity to connect to a Personnel Survey (‘POMO Survey’) carried out by the Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations. This is a large-scale survey that aims at investigating the satisfaction, motivation, and mobility of civil servants, so as to assess and improve the attractiveness of the civil service as an employer. The survey is held biannually; for the present research we used the 2006 edition.

In the questionnaire, we included a number of questions pertaining to the EU's impact on civil servants' work. These questions were not posed to all of the sample, as the Dutch civil service is a very heterogeneous group, which does not only comprise national, regional, and local levels of government, but also various public sectors like academic hospitals, universities, and the police. Since we are primarily interested in the Europeanization of central government, we targeted our questions at this subset of the population. The sample for this subset was 10,000 civil servants, selected randomly from a population of around 90,000. The population included all ministries (with the exception of the ministry of Defense) and a number of large executive agencies (the Tax Service, the Immigration Service, the Prison Service, and the Directorate for Public Works and Water Management). Quango-type agencies were not covered by the survey. In total, 4502 respondents completed the questionnaire, yielding a response rate of 45%.

In the questionnaire, we included four questions on the EU. Annex 4 gives a translation of the original wording of these questions into English. We started with the question whether or not a respondent's work was affected by the EU. This question served as a filter for the other questions; respondents who answered 'no' did not answer subsequent questions on the EU.

Respondents who indicated that their work was affected by the EU were then given a list of eight specific EU-related activities and were asked to indicate how important those activities are in their work. The activities broadly fall into two categories: 'bottom-up' contributions to EU policy-making and 'top-down' implementation of EU policies. Concerning policy-making we distinguished between preparation of the Dutch input into EU-level meetings, participation in Council working groups, participation in European Commission meetings, bilateral consultations, and involving local government in EU-level policy-making. Related to the policy-implementation stage, we included three items: transposition, the practical application or enforcement of EU policies, and the taking into account of EU policies during the making of national policies. We asked the respondents to indicate the importance of each of these activities in their work on a 5-point Likert scale.

We then asked respondents to provide an estimate of the time spent per week on these EU-related activities. This estimate allows us to give a more quantitative assessment of EU impact. Moreover, it forms the basis for calculating the degree to which EU-related

activities are concentrated in a small number of civil servants or, by contrast, dispersed widely in the organization.

Finally, in order to assess the degree of organizational support for EU-related work, we incorporated six propositions that relate to the dimensions of personnel management and policy management. Respondents were asked to evaluate each proposition on a five-point Likert scale. To gauge the importance of the EU for *personnel management*, we asked to what extent a respondent's employer offers sufficient EU-related training opportunities, to what extent EU-related experience is used as a personnel selection criterion, and to what extent EU-related experience is seen as positive for one's career development. Concerning *policy management*, we asked respondents to indicate whether they receive a clear mandate for EU-level negotiations, whether EU-related work receives lower priority than work that is purely domestic in scope, and whether the organization experiences so-called 'Chinese walls', i.e., limited coordination between those civil servants who negotiate about EU policies, and those who subsequently carry them out.

Together, these questions allow us to assess both the quantitative impact of the EU on the Dutch civil service and the extent to which EU-related activities have been incorporated into the core of organizations in central government. Below, we will discuss both dimensions in turn.

5. The quantitative impact of the EU on Dutch central government

5.1 The extent of EU-involvement by Dutch civil servants

Starting with the extent of EU-involvement of Dutch civil servants, we may discern two indicators: the percentage of civil servants who report that they are involved in EU-related activities in their work, and the average number of hours spent on those activities. In our survey, around 30% of all respondents (1329 out of 4502) indicated that their work was affected by the EU. To distinguish these respondents from those who reported no involvement with the EU, we will refer to them as 'Europeanized civil servants'.

Within the group of Europeanized civil servants, the vast majority spends relatively little time on EU-related activities. This is indicated in figure 1, which shows the average number of hours a week spent on EU-related activities by Europeanized civil servants. As

Figure 1 shows, a bit more than half of all Europeanized civil servants spend 2 hours or less a week on EU-related activities, and almost 75% spend less than 10 hours. On the other side of the spectrum, there are peaks at 30 hours, 36 hours and 40 hours. The latter two answers presumably reflect a full working week for those respondents.

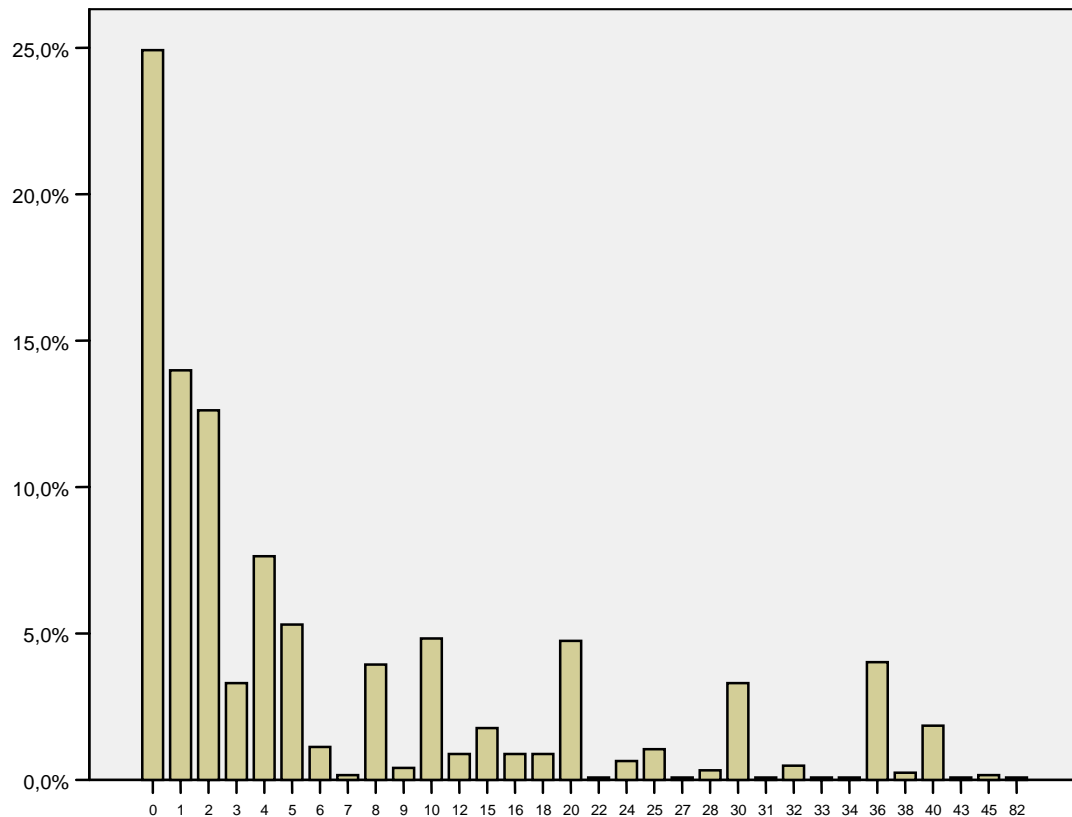


Figure 1. Time spent per week on EU-related activities among Europeanized civil servants (N=1244)

Because of the skewed pattern of answers to this question, the mean and median numbers of hours differ greatly. While the mean number of hours spent on EU-related activities among Europeanized civil servants is 7.81 hours a week, the median is only 2 hours, reflecting the fact that the vast majority of civil servants who are in some way affected by the EU in their work only devote little time to EU-related activities while a smaller group of true ‘Eurocrats’ spend most of their time on the EU.

Another way of looking at this is to divide the number of hours spent on EU-related activities by the contractual working week of the respondent, which respondents were asked to identify in elsewhere in the survey. Figure 2 shows the time shares divided in four classes,

ranging from less than 25% to more than 75% of a respondent's contractual working week. As the figure makes clear, the vast majority of civil servants (73.9%) spend less than 25% of their contract time on the EU, while 10.9% spend more than 75% of their working week on EU-related activities. The categories in between are smaller than either extreme.

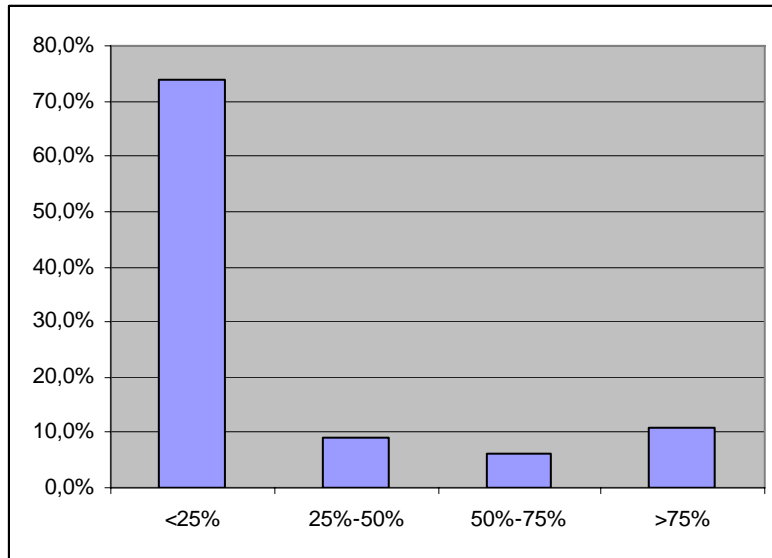


Figure 2. Time share of EU-related work among Europeanized civil servants, as a percentage of the contractual working week (N=1242)

These overall figures give a first impression of the (quantitative) importance of EU-related activities in Dutch central government, but they give little indication as how EU-involvement differs between parts of government or types of civil servants. Table 1 shows the percentage of 'Europeanized civil servants' and the median time spent on EU-related activities by those civil servants for eight job types.³

³ This is based on a question elsewhere in the survey, where respondents were asked to classify their own job in terms of these eight categories.

	Involved in EU-related work		Median time spent (among Europeanized civil servants only)	Total number of respondents
	Percent	Frequency	Hours	Frequency
Policy preparation	47%	270	4.0	581
Oversight	43%	282	4.0	660
Management	37%	186	2.0	498
Research	35%	71	2.0	201
Policy implementation	30%	224	2.0	749
Secretariat	18%	49	0.0	275
Support	17%	144	1.0	829
Other	17%	92	2.0	558
Total	30%	1318	2.0	4351

Table 1. EU involvement by work type (N=4351)

As could be expected, different types of civil servants are involved in EU-related activities to different extents. Almost half of the officials working on policy preparation deal with the EU in one way or another. Interestingly, this figure is lower for officials working on policy implementation; in this group, only one third indicates his or her work has a European dimension to it. A relatively large percentage of managers and civil servants working in oversight positions also indicate their work has been Europeanized. Not surprisingly, those holding support and secretarial functions deal with EU affairs least often. These differences also hold when we look at the median time spent on EU-related activities by Europeanized civil servants. Median civil servants involved in policy preparation and oversight spend most time on EU-related activities while Europeanized civil servants involved in secretarial or support work score well below the overall median.

We can do the same for the different organizations within the Dutch central government that were covered in the survey. These organizations are shown in Table 2, starting with the organization that has the highest percentage of Europeanized civil servants and so on.

Organization	Involved in EU-related work		Median time spent (among Europeanized civil servants only)	Total number of respondents
	Percent	Frequency	Hours	Frequency
Agriculture	61%	169	8.0	276
Foreign Affairs	56%	63	4.0	113
Transport	52%	58	3.0	111
Economic Affairs	52%	60	4.0	115
Social Affairs	38%	43	1.5	114
Housing & Environment	37%	62	2.0	167
Finance	37%	37	4.0	100
Immigration Service	34%	34	2.0	101
Health & Sports	33%	46	2.0	141
Tax service	31%	386	4.0	1237
Public works and water management directorate	31%	105	2.0	340
Interior	30%	26	2.0	86
Hoog College van Staat⁴	25%	13	1.0	52
Education	18%	21	2.0	116
Justice	17%	117	1.0	687
General Affairs⁵	17%	2	1.0	12
Prison Service	11%	58	0.0	554
Other	39%	26	2.0	66
Total	30%	1326	2.0	4388

Table 2. EU involvement by government organization (N=4388)

Some of the ‘usual suspects’ top this list, including the Departments of Agriculture, Foreign Affairs, Economic Affairs and Transport. These are the same departments that Egeberg and Trondal (1999) found to be most affected by the EU in Norway (with the exception of the Department of Agriculture – presumably because Norway does not participate in the EU’s Common Agricultural Policy). There is quite a gap between these four organizations and the rest. Whereas in each of the top-four organizations at least 52% of respondents claim their

⁴ The ‘Hoog College van Staat’ category includes some advisory bodies (such as the Dutch Council of State) as well as support staff in parliament.

⁵ ‘General Affairs’ is the prime minister’s department.

work is affected by the EU, this is 38% for the number five on the list, the Department of Social Affairs.

The differences between the top-four and the rest are also reflected in the median time spent on EU-related activities. Generally speaking, the figure is highest for those organizations that also have the highest percentage of Europeanized civil servants, with the exception of the Department of Finance and the Tax Service, which combine intermediate scores on the percentage of Europeanized civil servants with relatively high median numbers of hours spent on EU-related activities by those civil servants.

If we take together the executive agencies in the sample and compare them to the policy departments, there is a statistically significant difference in involvement: 26.1% for executive agencies versus 34.3% for the policy departments. However, the difference is not very large (Cramer's $V=.089$, $p<.001$) and the median number of hours spent on EU-related activities is the same for civil servants in either type of organization (2.0 hours).⁶

5.2 Types of EU-involvement

What kind of activities do civil servants engage in when they do EU-related activities? In order to answer this question, we asked respondents whose work is affected by the EU to indicate for eight specific EU-related activities whether they are 'completely unimportant', 'not so important', 'neutral', 'fairly important' or 'very important' in their work. This allows us to see if certain types of activities are more important than others. Table 3 gives an

⁶ In order to find out whether 'job type' or 'organization' is more important in 'explaining' if a civil servant's job is affected by the EU, we conducted a logistic regression, taking the answer to the question 'is your job affected by the EU?' as the dependent variable. The job types as well as the organizations were included in the analysis through two series of dummy variables. Moreover, to control for possible individual differences between civil servants, we included four individual-level characteristics: age, income (as a proxy for rank), seniority and education level. The analysis showed greater explanatory power for the organizational dummies than for the job type dummies, while only two of the individual-level variables (age and income) were significant in the fully specified model. However, the overall explanatory power of the model remained limited, with a Nagelkerke R^2 of .202 for the fully specified model.

overview of the eight specific activities in order of importance. Each of the eight EU-related activities is indicated briefly; the full wording can be found in the annex to this paper. For the purpose of the table, the answer categories ‘fairly important’ and ‘very important’ have been combined into one category ‘important’, while the other three answer categories together form the ‘unimportant’ category.

	Important		Unimportant		Total
	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	N
Enforcement	67	852	33	417	1269
Consideration of EU policies	51	640	49	619	1259
Transposition	44	555	56	701	1256
Bilateral consultation	33	420	67	843	1263
Preparation of negotiations	33	417	67	853	1270
Commission working groups	25	317	75	940	1257
Involving local government	25	309	75	947	1256
Council working groups	17	211	83	1048	1259

Table 3. Importance of specific EU-related activities among Europeanized civil servants

As can be seen in Table 3, ‘top-down’ activities are the most important types of EU-related activity for the Europeanized civil servants in our sample. Two thirds of Europeanized civil servants indicate that (application and) enforcement of EU policies is an important aspect of their work, while more than half point towards the importance of considering EU policies in national policy preparation and 44 % are involved in transposition. Activities that are related to policy-making at the EU-level are much less widespread. Each is seen as important by less than one third of Europeanized respondents.

A plausible assumption would be that civil servants specialize in either EU policy-making or the implementation (including transposition) of EU policies. To find out whether

this is the case, we conducted a principal component analysis on the eight specific activities, taking the original five-point answer scales. The results are shown in Table 4.⁷

	Component	
	1 'Dutch input into EU policymaking'	2 'Implementation of EU law and policies'
Commission Working Groups	,930	
Preparation of EU meetings	,920	
Bilateral contacts	,878	
Council Working Groups	,878	
Involving local governments	,624	
Taking into account EU policies	,498	,453
Transposition	,455	,581
Enforcement		,904

Table 4. Factor loadings of the specific EU-related activities on the two extracted components (factor loadings shown if they are greater than .4; the total explained variance is 73%).

The analysis reveals two underlying clusters of activities (components 1 and 2). Table 4 shows how closely each of the activities is related to these two components (the so-called 'factor loadings' of each activity). The closer a factor loading is to 1, the stronger an activity

⁷ The factors were extracted using Principal Component Analysis. Factor rotation was carried out using direct oblimin, because all activities are correlated to some extent. Factors were extracted if their eigenvalues were greater than 1.0. Tests for multicollinearity and sample size adequacy all scored well above minimally required values.

is related to that component. Factor loadings have only been indicated if they are greater than .4.

Component 1 consists of all activities related to EU decision-making. Each of these activities has a factor loading of more than .85, indicating a strong correlation. Moreover, ‘involving local governments’ and ‘taking into account EU policies’ also load highly onto this component. In addition, transposition loads fairly highly on component 1, although it loads more on component 2. As a result, we can interpret component 1 in two ways, in a broader and a stricter sense:

- In a broader sense, component 1 shows that most EU-related activities are related. Hence, if respondents find one activity important, they are likely also to find other activities important (with the exception of enforcement).
- In a stricter sense, component 1 relates to EU policy-making or, stated differently, the Dutch input into EU policy-making.

Component 2 consists of enforcement (which loads most highly onto this component), transposition (more so than onto component 1) and ‘taking EU policies into account’ (but less so than onto component 1). The most obvious interpretation of this component is therefore that it relates to the implementation of EU policies or, stated differently, EU input in Dutch regulation and policymaking.

A closer look at the relationships between activities can be had by analyzing the relationships between two particular activities. If we do so, the same pattern is revealed for each pair of activities: most of the respondents for whom activities that score lower in Table 3 are important also find ‘higher-ranking’ activities important but not vice versa. To give a concrete example: 85.2% of all respondents who find participation in Council working groups important also say participation in Council working groups is important in their work, while only 43.0% of all respondents for whom participation in Commission working groups is important also find participation in Council working groups important.

This pattern can be explained by taking into account the absolute number of respondents who indicated that they find these two activities important. As was shown in Table 3, 25% of Europeanized civil servants found participation in Commission working groups important, compared to only 17% who said the same of Council working groups. Hence, participants in Council Working Groups may form a subset of the (larger) group of participants in Commission Working Groups.

This interpretation is supported by the fact that similar patterns can be found between preparation of EU meetings (which scored higher still in Table 3) and participation in Council and Commission groups. Moreover, the same holds true for the relationship between ‘transposition’ and ‘enforcement’: 88% of respondents who indicate that transposition is important also indicate that enforcement is important, but the other way around only 58% of respondents who say enforcement is important also say transposition is important. This pattern even holds for the two ‘extremes’ in Table 3: 78% of respondents who indicate Council Working Groups are important also say enforcement is important, but the other way around it is only 20%.

The pattern of activities therefore resembles a Russian Matryoshka doll, in which the smaller dolls (here: activities less frequently mentioned as important) fit into the larger dolls (here: activities more frequently mentioned as important), but not vice versa. Another way of saying this, is that there seems to be a ‘participation ladder’ of EU-related activities. The bottom rung of the ladder consists of activities that are important to a relatively broad range of Europeanized civil servants (in particular ‘enforcement’ and ‘taking into account EU policies’). Going up the ladder, for civil servants who engage in more specific activities (culminating in participation in Commission or Council Working Groups), the lower rungs also tend to be important but not the other way around.

6. From periphery to core: organizational embeddedness and support

6.1 Organizational embeddedness

Above, we showed how many civil servants are involved in EU-related work and how much time they spend on these activities. Apart from this overall EU involvement, it is also important to look at the way these activities are embedded within the broader organization: is the EU the province of a small number of specialists or are EU-related activities spread across a wide range of civil servants? The figures on time spent already indicated that although almost 30% of respondents report EU involvement, most of these respondents spend 2 hours or less on EU-related activities a week, while some spend up to 40 hours a week.

In order to take a closer look at the spread of EU-related activities and at differences between organizations, we have constructed a ‘dispersion index’. The dispersion index ranges from 0 to 1. If it is 1, all respondents in an organization spend exactly the same amount of time on the EU, so EU-related work is widely dispersed. If, by contrast, the index is close to 0, EU-related work is concentrated in one or a few respondents, indicating a low level of dispersion.⁸ For purposes of interpretation, it is important to keep in mind that dispersion is not the same as EU involvement. For example, if in an organization everyone spends 1 hour a week on the EU, the dispersion index will be 1. If, however, half of the people spend 10 hours a week and the other half 30 hours, the index will be 0.8. Even though EU involvement is much higher in the latter case, dispersion is lower because some people spend more time on the EU than others.

⁸ The dispersion index is based on the measure for the ‘effective number of political parties’ in the political science literature. This number is calculated by dividing one by the sum of squares of the shares of votes each party has in parliament (or in elections). In a formula:

$$\text{Effective number of parties} = 1 / (\sum v_i^2)$$

in which v is the share of votes a party has (and ‘ i ’ stands for ‘the i -th party’).

For instance, if there are three parties in parliament that each have one third of the votes, the effective number of parties will be 3. But, if one party has 50% of the votes and the two others each have 25%, the effective number of parties will be 2.67. A similar formula can be used to calculate the ‘effective number of Europeanized civil servants’ in an organization, using the time spent by each civil servant as a share of the total time spent on EU-related activities in that organization. This share then becomes the v_i in the formula. Since the size of organizations differs considerably, the ‘effective number of civil servants’ does not tell us much. Hence, we divide it by the total number of civil servants from that organization to obtain a figure between 0 and 1. The formula then becomes:

$$\text{Dispersion index} = 1 / (n * \sum v_i^2)$$

in which v_i is the share of the i -th respondent in the total amount of time spent on EU-related work, and n is the total number of respondents.

Table 5 shows the dispersion indexes for each organization in Dutch central government and for the whole sample. It also repeats the levels of EU-involvement reported in Table 2.

Organization	Involved in EU-related work	Dispersion index (total)	Dispersion index (among Europeanized civil servants)	Total number of respondents
Agriculture	61%	0.29	0.47	276
Foreign Affairs	56%	0.18	0.32	113
Transport	52%	0.19	0.35	111
Economic Affairs	52%	0.18	0.34	115
Social Affairs	38%	0.10	0.27	114
Housing & Environment	37%	0.11	0.31	167
Finance	37%	0.12	0.33	100
Immigration Service	34%	0.07	0.22	101
Health & Sports	33%	0.12	0.35	141
Tax service	31%	0.11	0.34	1237
Public works and water management directorate	31%	0.10	0.32	340
Interior	30%	0.08	0.25	86
Hoog College van Staat⁹	25%	0.12	(0.49)	52
Education	18%	0.07	0.38	116
Justice	17%	0.03	0.16	687
General Affairs¹⁰	17%	0.17	(1.00)	12
Prison Service	11%	0.01	0.10	554
Other	39%	0.11	0.28	66
Total	30%	0.09	0.31	4388

Table 5. EU involvement and dispersion indexes by government organization (N=4388)

The figures in the column ‘Dispersion index (total)’ have been calculated on the basis of all respondents from a given organization, whether they indicated that they were involved in

⁹ The ‘Hoog College van Staat’ category includes some advisory bodies (such as the Dutch Council of State) as well as support staff in parliament; see footnote 12 for a note on the score.

¹⁰ ‘General Affairs’ is the prime minister’s department; see footnote 12 for a note on the score.

EU-related work or not.¹¹ The pattern of dispersion indexes more or less follows that of EU-involvement (the percentage of respondents involved in EU-related work) in the sense that higher levels of EU-involvement tend to go together with higher levels of dispersion. Nevertheless, within this broader pattern, some organizations score relatively high on dispersion (e.g. the Departments of Agriculture and Health) while others score relatively low (e.g. the Departments of Social Affairs and Justice, and the Immigration Service).

Since overall EU-involvement and overall dispersion tend to be associated, we can obtain a clearer picture of the extent to which dispersion is higher or lower than expected by looking at the dispersion of EU-related work among Europeanized civil servants only. This is done in the column 'Dispersion index (among Europeanized civil servants)'. Since these figures have been calculated only among respondents who reported EU-involvement, they are not influenced by the overall level of EU-involvement in the organization.

This column shows even more clearly where the differences are. The Department of Agriculture now has by far the highest level of dispersion (at 0.47), while most organizations between the Departments of Foreign Affairs and Education score between 0.30 and 0.40. Organizations with relatively low levels of dispersion are the Departments of Social Affairs, the Interior and Justice, as well as the Immigration Service and the Prison Service.¹² Put differently, in these organizations EU-related work is concentrated relatively heavily among a small number of civil servants.

Overall, the dispersion index reinforces the pattern found in Table 2. The Department of Agriculture is the most highly Europeanized government organization, in terms of EU-involvement, median time spent *and* dispersion. The Departments of Foreign Affairs, Transport and Economic Affairs are also fairly strongly Europeanized. The group

¹¹ For the purposes of calculation, all respondents who indicated they were not involved in EU-related work were assumed to spend 0 hours on EU-related activities.

¹² The Department of General Affairs and the organizations under 'Hoog College van Staat' score even higher than the Department of Agriculture but given the small number of Europeanized civil servants in these organizations these figures are not very meaningful. For instance, the Department of General Affairs has a score of 1.00 because two respondents indicated EU-involvement and they each spend 1 hour a week on EU-related activities.

behind these shows a more mixed picture, with organizations scoring higher on some indicators than others. In general, however, the level of Europeanization tends to be lower among organizations in the justice side of central government. The other organizations are in between and may be characterized as ‘moderately Europeanized’.

6.2 Organizational support

The differences in embeddedness already hint at the answer to our question whether the EU goes to the core of organizations or whether it remains a phenomenon on the fringe of organizations: it depends on the organization you are looking at. We can elaborate on this further by looking at the six statements about organizational support that we asked our respondents to react to. These six statements read as follows:

- My organization offers sufficient training opportunities for EU-related activities
- When selecting candidates for EU-related activities, my employer takes sufficient account of European experience
- Experience with EU-related activities offers an advantage for my career development
- When I participate in EU-level meetings, I receive a clear negotiation mandate
- In my organization, EU-related activities have a lower priority than purely national activities
- In my policy area, there is sufficient co-ordination between those who negotiate at the EU-level about European policies, and those who are responsible for transposing and implementing those policies

For each statement, respondents had a choice of five answers: ‘completely disagree’, ‘largely disagree’, ‘neither agree nor disagree’, ‘largely agree’ and ‘completely agree’. Table 6 shows the overall pattern of responses to these statements.

Statement	Completely disagree	Largely disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Largely agree	Completely agree	N
Training	8%	18%	27%	35%	12%	810
Selection	9%	16%	43%	28%	4%	661
Career	15%	15%	32%	28%	10%	772
Mandate	11%	14%	44%	22%	9%	504
Priority	20%	32%	28%	14%	6%	802
Co-ordination	9%	19%	37%	27%	8%	668

Table 6. Overall responses to the six statements

Two things can be noted about these responses. First, as can be seen in the last column ('N'), the non-response to these statements was considerable. Out of a total of 1329 respondents who indicated that they dealt with the EU in their work, the number of respondents reacting to the statements ranged from 504 (for the statement on mandates) to 810 (for the statement on training). This may reflect the fact that not all statements are relevant to all Europeanized civil servants (e.g. the statement on mandates is only relevant if one is involved in EU-level meetings). This also means, however, that we should be cautious about the extent to which the answers reflect broader patterns in our sample, let alone in the wider population. Second, substantively the results show a mildly positive response to all statements (bearing in mind that the statement about priority was formulated in a negative way, so that 'disagree' becomes a positive statement).

At the same time, there are no large differences between the overall responses to the statements. A more interesting question is therefore whether the answers differ between types of organization. For this purpose, we divided the organizations in our sample (those that appear in Tables 2 and 5) into three groups, using the percentage of 'Europeanized civil servants' as an indicator: a group of highly Europeanized organizations (with more than 50% Europeanized civil servants), a group of organizations with moderate levels of Europeanization (between 30% and 50% Europeanized civil servants), and a group of organizations with low levels of Europeanization (less than 30% Europeanized civil servants).

Table 7 shows the answers to the six statements. For ease of interpretation, the original five answer categories have been recoded into three categories: 'disagree', 'neutral' and 'agree'.

Statement	Degree of Europeanization	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	N
Training	Low	37%	21%	42%	83
	Moderate	26%	27%	48%	398
	High	24%	28%	48%	260
Selection	Low	33%	31%	36%	64
	Moderate	26%	47%	27%	322
	High	24%	39%	38%	221
Career	Low	38%	23%	38%	73
	Moderate	32%	37%	31%	384
	High	25%	29%	46%	248
Mandate	Low	26%	38%	36%	47
	Moderate	28%	52%	21%	239
	High	22%	36%	42%	176
Priority	Low	39%	34%	27%	82
	Moderate	50%	30%	21%	389
	High	62%	24%	14%	264
Co-ordination	Low	31%	36%	34%	59
	Moderate	29%	43%	28%	332
	High	28%	37%	43%	221

Table 7. Responses to the six statements by respondents in organizations that a Europeanized to a high, moderate and low degree

The responses to the statement on training show hardly any difference, although respondents from organizations with a low level of Europeanization tend to be a bit more critical (42% agree versus 48% for the other two groups).¹³ Differences do turn up for the other five statements. For the statement on priority, respondents in highly Europeanized organizations disagree more often than those in moderately Europeanized organizations (indicating EU-related work does *not* receive lower priority than domestic work), while respondents from organizations with low levels of Europeanization disagree least often. For the ‘agree’ category, the differences are less clear, but still fairly sizeable.¹⁴

¹³ However, using Cramer’s V to assess the strength of the association does not reveal a statistically significant difference between the cells.

¹⁴ All in all, the differences are statistically significant, with Cramer’s V=.110 (p<.01).

For the other four statements, a similar pattern can be observed. In the ‘disagree’ category, the differences between groups are as expected (i.e. with more highly Europeanized organizations scoring lower), although the differences are not large. In the ‘agree’ category, however, highly Europeanized organizations score highest (as was to be expected), but organizations with lower levels of Europeanization score higher than organizations with moderate levels of Europeanization.

This suggests that the crucial difference is between highly Europeanized organizations and the rest. In highly Europeanized organizations, European experience plays a greater role in selecting people for EU-related work, is more important for one’s career development, civil servants going to EU meetings receive clearer mandates, and the coordination between negotiations and implementation is seen to be better than in the other two groups of organizations. Moreover, in highly Europeanized organizations, EU-related work is much less often accorded lower priority than national activities. All of these outcomes seem to reflect the fact that in highly Europeanized organizations, EU-related work has been integrated much more strongly into organizational structures and daily work routines. In these organizations, the impact of the EU may indeed have moved from an add-on to the core of how the organization is operating.

7. Conclusions

In this paper, we have sought to answer the question to what extent the impact of the EU has moved beyond being a mere ‘add-on’ to domestic policies and processes towards a transformative force in member states. We have tried to assess this impact by analyzing data from a large-scale survey among civil servants in Dutch central government, which we argue is a relatively integrative way of measuring EU impact.

Overall, the impact of the EU seems rather modest, with 30% of civil servants indicating that their work is affected by the EU but most of this 30% spending only little time on EU-related activities. Although we have called these 30% ‘Europeanized civil servants’ to distinguish them from the rest, for most of them the EU seems to play a relatively limited part in their work, at least in the way they perceive it themselves. For a smaller group of around 10% of Europeanized civil servants (3% of all respondents), the EU

is highly important, and they devote most if not all of their working week on EU-related activities.

This pattern of a (relatively) broad base of casually-involved civil servants and a ‘hard core’ of Eurocrats also turns up when we look at the kinds of activities civil servants find important in their work. For the vast majority of Europeanized civil servants, these are the ‘top-down’ aspects of EU policy-making (transposition and enforcement of EU law and working within the parameters set by EU policies). A much smaller group is involved in EU policy-making, be it directly in Brussels or other member states or indirectly, in preparing the Dutch input into EU arenas. What is striking, however, is that respondents for whom less frequently-mentioned activities are important almost invariably also find more frequently-mentioned activities important. Above, we likened this to a Matryoshka doll or a participation ladder, in which a small ‘elite’ is involved in all types of activities and increasingly wider circles of civil servants perform increasingly limited number of activities.

Apart from this general picture, our study shows that it is important to look beyond such overall measures and focus on differences between policy areas and organizations. As was to be expected, the survey showed widely differing levels of EU-involvement between organizations of central government, not only in terms of the number of respondents who say the EU is important in their work but also in terms of the amount of time they spend on EU-related activities.

This is highly consequential in terms of the way EU-related activities are embedded and supported organizationally. In organizations where more civil servants are working on the EU, EU-related activities tend to be more dispersed, while in less Europeanized organizations those activities tend to be concentrated more heavily among a limited number of people – and this result also holds when we correct for the number of civil servants involved in EU-related activities. Moreover, respondents from the four most highly Europeanized organizations (the Departments of Agriculture, Foreign Affairs, Transport and Economic Affairs) consistently indicate that their organization gives greater support for EU-related activities and accords those activities a more central place in their personnel policies.

These results suggest that there is a threshold above which organizations start to integrate EU-related activities in their organizational processes and daily work routines. For organizations below that threshold, the impact of the EU remains relatively peripheral and is

limited to pockets of EU specialists. For organizations that have passed the threshold, however, the EU has moved from an add-on to a transformative force.

Generalizability of our results remains a point for debate. After all, we have studied only one member state, and it may well be that specific characteristics of Dutch central government or the way the EU is perceived in Dutch politics and administration shape the way organizations respond to the EU. At the same time, this approach to analyzing the impact of the EU lends itself for comparative analysis across member states and may thereby help us to gain more insight in the way the EU affects member states and to pinpoint the specific factors that mediate that impact – both across and within member states.

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Annex: Items on Europeanization included in the ‘POMO’ survey

PART H IMPACT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

In your work you may be affected by the European Union (EU). For instance, you may be involved in preparing the Dutch input into EU decision-making, you may participate in meetings at the EU-level or bilateral meetings with colleagues from other member states, or you may play a role in implementing European legislation and policies. In the following, some of these activities are listed.

1. Is your work affected by the European Union?

Yes

No, go to question XXX.

2. Can you indicate the importance of the following activities in your work?

	Totally unimportant	Not very important	Neutral	Fairly important	Very important
1. Preparation of the Dutch input into EU-level meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Participation in working groups of the Council of Ministers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Participation in meetings organized by the European Commission (e.g. expert meetings, comitology)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Consultation with colleagues from one or more other member states outside the formal EU framework.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Transposition of European policies into national legal measures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Practical application or enforcement of rules and policies that originated in the EU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Taking into account EU policies during national policy making	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Involving local government in EU-level decision making or policy making	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. *On average, how many hours per week do you spend on the EU-related activities listed above?*

hours per week (→ to question XXX if you spend 0 hours per week on EU-related activities).

4. The following statements concern the way in which your employer facilitates EU-related activities organizationally. This may involve training opportunities, career development, and managerial support. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	I do not agree at all	I do not agree	neutral	I agree	I totally agree	don't know / not applicable
1. My organization offers sufficient training opportunities for EU-related activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. When selecting candidates for EU-related activities, my employer takes sufficient account of European experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Experience with EU-related activities offers an advantage for my career development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. When I participate in EU-level meetings, I receive a clear negotiation mandate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. In my organization, EU-related activities have a lower priority than purely national activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. In my policy area, there is sufficient coordination between those who negotiate at the EU-level about European policies, and those who are responsible for transposing and implementing those policies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>