INTERVIEW GUIDE – EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Comparative Research on Interest Group Politics in Europe
(INTEREURO)

BASIC INFORMATION ON THE INTERVIEW AND INTERVIEWEE

Proposal ID:

Name of interviewee:

Phone number: *E-mail (if available):*

Position at time of decision-making in Commission:

Position at time of interview:

Date of interview: /   /2012

Place of interview: _____

Time of interview: from _____ to _____

Interview carried out by _____

PRELIMINARY REMARK

This interview is part of a research project on interest group involvement in EU decision-making. The project is carried out by research teams in nine different countries under the auspices of the European Science Foundation. For this project, we are currently conducting a survey with officials from the European Commission on a sample of 100 legislative proposals.

In this interview, I want to talk with you about the Commission proposal concerning

_____

We are keen to formally thank all those who have helped and supported us. Would you object to us listing you in the acknowledgements of our project? If you prefer to remain anonymous, we can guarantee that you will not be mentioned in our acknowledgements, that your responses to our questions will be treated confidentially, and that you will not be identifiable in any of the publications that result from this project.

_____

1. Often, legislative proposals are characterized by several lines of disagreement or conflict around specific issues. For example, a proposal on emissions trading may trigger conflicts about the sectors of the economy that should be covered by the scheme, about the way emissions rights should be distributed, and so on. Can you identify up to three distinct issues within the proposal concerning (_____) on which there was disagreement among the stakeholders? By stakeholders, we mean non-state policy advocates, such as interest groups, firms and regional representations, but also the Commission, government actors such as member states and party groups in the European Parliament.
[Each issue identified should concern at least one non-state actor]

      1.) _____

      2.) _____

      3.) _____

2. We now have identified **XX** issues. On each of these issues, stakeholders may take differing policy stances and favour different policy outcomes. We are interested in the policy alternatives they favoured when consultations began.

    a.) Regarding issue 1 on **(name issue)**, let's start with the non-state policy advocates. When the consultation process began which two non-state stakeholders took the most divergent initial positions?
[These actors are placed at the end of the issue continuum, the names written in the actor table, and the numeric values (0, 100) entered into the issue table. The 0 value should be given to the position that favours less integration or less regulation. If only one non-state actor took a position on an issue or all non-state actors adopted the same position, then use other stakeholders' positions to establish the other extreme.]

    b.) Can you very briefly describe the policy positions of these stakeholders?
[Enter text into position table: 'substantive']

    c.) Now, please locate the policy alternatives initially favoured by the other non-state policy advocates on the policy continuum.
[Enter numeric values and substantive position in table]

    d.) Please now also locate the policy position favoured by the **European Commission**.
[Enter numeric values and substantive position in table. If a position is located outside the policy positions taken by the most divergent non-state actors, use a number <0 or >100 to represent it.]

e.) Could you now please locate the positions of the **member states** that took a clear position on this issue?
[Enter numeric values and substantive position in table. If a position is located outside the policy positions taken by the most divergent non-state actors, use a number <0 or >100 to represent it.]

f.) Please now also locate the positions of party groups in the **European Parliament** that took a clear position on the issue.
[Enter numeric values and substantive position in table. If a position is located outside the policy positions taken by the most divergent non-state actors, use a number <0 or >100 to represent it.]

g.) Now that the policy-making process on this proposal has been completed, what is the **final outcome**? Where would you locate this position on this dimension?
[Ask this question only if the proposal has been decided upon. Numeric values and substantive position in table. If a position is located outside the policy positions taken by the most divergent non-state actors, use a number <0 or >100 to represent it.]

h.) Now I am interested in talking about a 'what-if' scenario. If the Commission, Council and Parliament had failed (were to fail) to reach an agreement on the issue of **(name of issue)**, where would you locate the outcome of such a situation on the continuum?
[Omit this question if the proposal failed as of Q3g. Numeric values and substantive position in table. If a position is located outside the policy positions taken by the most divergent non-state actors, use a number <0 or >100 to represent it.]

3. Non-state actors such as firms, interest groups and regional representations differ from each other regarding the **technical knowledge** they possess. By technical knowledge we mean detailed information on, and an in-depth understanding of, the substance of the proposal. Thinking about each non-state stakeholder, can you please tell me the level of technical knowledge each organisation holds with respect to this policy proposal? Please use a five point scale, ranging from very low, to low, medium, high and very high. *[Use actor table to fill in scores]*

4. The provision and exchange of detailed and reliable information is an important part of the legislative process. Looking back at this particular proposal, who - among the stakeholders you have mentioned already - would you say have been your most important sources of information?
[Try to get three, and with a rank order]

      1.) _____

      2.) _____

      3.) _____

5. In the legislative process information flows in both directions: Which stakeholders have **you** most frequently provided information to? **ONLY FOR THE 20 DIRECTIVES DEALT WITH BY THE MLG PROJECT**
[Try to get three, and with a rank order]

1.) _____

2.) _____

3.) _____

6. The Commission consults many actors when developing policy proposals. How did you define the credibility of the non-state policy advocates that were involved in the policy debate on this proposal? Please indicate whether you strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neither agree nor disagree (3), agree (4), or strongly agree (5).

Based on...

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
the public support that they enjoy					
their economic resources					
their track records					
their ideological outlook					
the quality of their arguments					
their representativeness					
the EU's registry of interest groups					
Other (please indicate)					

7. According to your experience, how frequently have non-state stakeholders used the following political strategies to influence the European Commission's policy position with regard to this proposal? Please indicate whether the strategy was not used at all (1), used less frequently than on other proposals that you are familiar with (2), used about as frequently (3), or used more frequently (4).

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**
(a) directly lobbying the European Commission				
(b) seeking support from Members of the European Parliament				
(c) lobbying through policymakers within the member-states				
(d) building a media presence or conducting media campaigns				
(e) staging protest activities				
(f) forming coalitions with other stakeholders				
(g) publishing position papers				
(h) creating an extensive body of technical expertise and knowledge				

8. We have discussed different issues that have raised conflict in the proposal and different actors that have been involved. Now, I would like to ask you what you think is at stake in (the essence of) this proposal at a more general level.

_____

_____

_____

9. One last question: did the substance of the debate on this proposal change during the policy process? If so why and in what way? (For example, did the discussion on it move from criteria of distributive justice to its administrative feasibility?)

_____

_____

10. Finally, thank you for your time today and for answering our questions. Is there anything you would like to comment upon or feel we have overlooked?

Immediately after the interview, please write down your judgment on the "quality" of the interviewee; that is, how well informed the interviewee appeared?   (A-E Scale)

ACTOR TABLE   **Proposal ID:_____**

ID	Actor name	Tech. Kldge. (Q3)
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POSITION TABLE   **Proposal ID:_____ Issue:____ on _____**

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 |----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
 0                        50                       100
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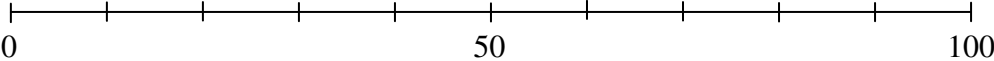
Meaning of left extreme:
Meaning of right extreme:

Actor ID	Numeric	Substantive

[Note: include non-state stakeholders; Commission; member states; EP party groups; final policy outcome; and, the 'what if' scenario].