The Investigation of Corporate Lobbying Patterns on the EU Decision-Making Process: The Case of Korean Shipbuilding Industry

Jong-Won Lee*
Sung-Won Yoon**

I. Introduction

Lobbying by interest groups was observed as early as the 1950s by the neo-functionalist perspective of the European integration. According to neo-functionalism, interest groups play an important role in accelerating integration process by contributing to 'spill-over effects'.1) It also claims that interest groups provide their special knowledge or information in

* Professor, Department of International Trade, The University of Suwon
** MSc in European Studies, London School of Economics and Political Science
1) E. Haas, The Uniting of Europe: Political, Social and Economical Forces 1950-1957 (Stanford: Stanford University, 1958), p. 16. He defined integration as 'the process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities towards a new center, whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing national states.' For the process, he identified two types of spill-over 'functional' and 'political' and argued that the former preconditions the latter.
exchange for direct contacts with the supranational institutions. Besides, business interest is placed at the center of interest representation among various interests partly because of the historical fact that the integration process was initiated for economic reasons.²) It thus has been subject to changes following the development of the EU institutional patterns. The most significant event was the passage of the Single European Act (SEA) in 1987, which changed the climate of influential actors in policy-making process.³) As interest representation remained at the national level because of the governments’ control of economic and social regulations by the mid 1980s, lobbying was pursued mainly by representatives of national organisations who were related to special interest groups within a specific country.⁴) There were relatively few associations and companies that participated in interest representation to the EU institutions independently of the national channels of influence.⁵)

In the post-single market era, the role of lobbying groups and other non-governmental organizations in the EU system has been considered increasingly important and influential. The main reasons are ‘Europeanisation’ of policy domains and reinforcement of decision-making process within the EU institutions. The SEA adoption brought about two main issues internal market liberalization and monetary and financial integration within the Community. In order to pursue these objectives, the Act widened the scope of policy domains which previously belonged to the responsibility of national governments, such as economic and social

⁴) S. Hix, op. cit., p. 193.