**Supplementary file**

**Appenix A**

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| **Table A1(a). Descriptive overview of variables (N (%))** |
| Business groups | 23 (72%) |
| Citizen groups | 9 (28%) |
| Funding: 100% of funding comes from members | 13 (41%) |
| Funding: 75-99% of funding comes from members | 5 (16%) |
| Funding: 25-74% of funding comes from members | 3 (9%) |
| Funding: 0-25% of funding comes from members | 10 (31%) |
| Type of members: Individual organizations | 12 (37%) |
| Type of members: National associations | 15 (47%) |
| Type of members: Individual organizations & National associations | 5 (16%) |
| Headquarters in Belgium | 27 (84%) |
| Policy domain: Agriculture & Fisheries | 5 (16%) |
| Policy domain: Trade | 3 (9%) |
| Policy domain: Environment & Social affairs | 4 (13%) |
| Policy domain: Finance | 4 (13%) |
| Policy domain: Health | 3 (9%) |
| Policy domain: Transport | 8 (25%) |
| Policy domain: Utilities | 5 (16%) |
| Scope: Europe | 29 (87%) |
| Scope: International | 3 (13%) |
| To what extent do members have similar resources*Very different* *Different* *Similar* *Very similar* | 21 (65.6%)4 (12.5%)4 (12.5%)3 (9.5%) |
| **Table A1(b). Descriptive overview of numerical variables (Mean (S.D.))** |
| Age (years) | 35.94 (20.22) |
| Resources (FTE lobbying according to Transparency Register) | 6.3 (5.97) |
| Number of members (i.e., individual organizations and associations) | 35.54 (23.94) |

# Appendix B

While we expect issue features and membership inequalities to play an important role in how members are involved in position taking processes, we control here for group type (business or citizen groups) (see De Bruycker et al. 2019) and governmental funding (see Fraussen 2014). Importantly, we argue that the relevance of these control variables is less prominent among interest groups with organizations and/or associations as members because these groups have a limited number of potential members, who have material incentives to engage even when they represent a cause or are highly funded by governmental organizations (see Rodekamp 2014 for an empirical confirmation of this argument). To further explore this expectation, we present here a quantitative exploration of the two control variables: group type and governmental funding.

Firstly, 26 out of the 32 group leaders interviewed (i.e., 81%) indicated that their members are actively involved in establishing policy positions. Equally important is the fact that none of the interviewees indicated that their members were “not at all involved” in setting policy positions. As expected, the degree of member involvement is not significantly different across business (M=4.1, SD=0.97) and citizen groups (M=3.8, SD=0.44); t(21)=(-1.175), p=0.254.

Secondly, no significant differences are found between interest groups that heavily rely on either membership fees or governmental funding. To conduct this analysis, we distinguish interest groups that heavily rely on membership fees (i.e., >75% of their budget, N=18) from those that heavily rely on governmental funding (i.e., >75% their budget, N=11). There are no significant difference in the level of members involvement between interest groups relying on membership fees (M=4.17, SD=1.09) and interest groups relying on governmental funding (M=3.73, SD=0.42); t(27)=(1.400), p=0.173.

# Appendix C

Interview protocol: The 32 interviews were conducted as a part of a larger project funded by a national research agency. The interviews opened with an explanation of the project and of how the data collected would be treated, granting anonymity of the respondent and the organization they represent. The interviews opened with a set of questions about the role of interest groups in a specific set of EU legislative proposals. Subsequently, the interview moved to the questions of interest for the present study. The interview combined closed and open questions to gather both quantitative and qualitative data while making sure that interviewees could more extensively reflect on their responses. More specifically, the topic list of the interview section related to this paper was:

* Interest group constituency and membership (nature and definition of the group).
* Type of members (similarity / heterogeneity among members).
* Internal organization and structure of the group.
* Decision-making process in policy position-taking.
* Member involvement in decision-making processes.
* Member involvement through formal and informal mechanism.
* Intensity of involvement across members.
* Challenges to involve members.
* Circumstances under which member involvement is more/less feasible.
* Background information about the organization.

# Appendix D

The coding process focused on three sensitizing concepts: member involvement in position-taking, issue features and membership inequalities. The first one is an umbrella concept which includes codes about the process (i.e., formal vs. informal), about the actual process of decision-making (i.e., whether it was easy to reach consensus, if it required majoritarian positions or if it was not possible to reach a decision), and about the actions or non-actions of the leadership during the decision-making process.

The second concept, issue features, is focused on any mention to how the nature of the policy issue affected the membership of the group and thus their likelihood to participate. Following Smith’s (2000) categorization, we distinguish between particularistic, controversial and unifying policy issues.. The third sensitizing concept, membership inequalities, includes quotes that specifically refer to how the capacities of members (in terms of resources, staff, knowledge or expertise) affect their degree of involvement in policy position-taking. This sensitizing concept was further examined by distinguishing between groups that reported an heterogenous membership-base (in terms of resources) and those with a membership-based with similar resources (i.e., homogeneous membership-base).

Table A2 below summarizes the coding process:

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| **Table A2. Coding process** |
| **Sensitizing concepts** | **Codes** |
| Member involvement in position-taking | Formal vs. informal processes |
| Final position: Unanimous / Majoritarian / No-position |
| Leadership (in)actions |
| Issue features  | Particularistic issues |
| Controversial issues |
| Unifying issues |
| Membership inequalities | Homogenous membership-based |
| Heterogenous membership-base |