

If the new small member states are able to adopt similar working methods in order to deal with EU business, they should not have major difficulties in defending their national interests. For instance, Finland, whose working methods concerning EU affairs are typical of those used by small states, as described below, has been particularly successful in promoting its interests within the EU. The following characteristics of the administrative working procedures of small states in the EU in the period 1986 to 1994 may provide the key to the successful participation of other small states within the Union. The discussion is divided into four parts: decisive administrative characteristics, little division between policy formulation and implementation, relationships with the Commission and negotiation tactics in the Council.

2. Decisive administrative characteristics

There are four main ways in which small administrations handle EU affairs:

Firstly, small states tend to prioritize within the Union to a much greater extent than large states. As they are highly aware of their limitations in terms of administrative capacity, small states tend to concentrate on policy sectors which they gain direct benefits from. Moreover, they have to focus on particular issues within these policy sectors in order to guarantee their interests. For instance, Ireland has put most of its administrative capacity to securing positive outcomes in the negotiations within the CAP and Regional Policy. The Irish administration has, more specifically, paid most attention to two of the agricultural products under the CAP, i.e., beef and milk, and left the others on the sidelines. Ireland simply has not had the administrative capability to engage in detailed discussion on all products within the CAP. The same can be said of the country's participation in the Regional Policy since it has paid most of its attention to the Objective 1 aspect of the policy.

Small states can allow themselves to prioritize to a much greater extent than the large ones because they have a narrower range of interests within the Union. The economies of small states rely on fewer export products than those of the large states. Also, the range of interests of small states in export sectors is narrower than that of the large states. In 1994, for example, the shares of two or three agricultural products in the