

policy proposals and the Commission gets a special insight into the situations of the small states and potential support for its proposals. The increased comitology procedures in the Commission have further enhanced the *routine working process*.²⁵

The small states tend to rely on the Commission to a much greater extent than their larger counterparts. This is both in connection with their work within the Commission itself and in the Council. Small states do not have the capacity to gather all the necessary information in policy sectors of limited importance. As a result, they rely on the Commission's sources to take a policy stand in those sectors. On the other hand, small states do not rely on the resources of the Commission in sectors of key interest since their administrative capacity is used extensively in the presentation of their own information. However, the small states are in greater need of support from the Commission in the Council than the larger ones. This is particularly the case with the working groups in the Council because permanent representatives, who often attend these meetings on behalf of their administrations, may rely on information provided by the Commission, while experts from the capitals of the large states attending the same meetings do not. Furthermore, a small state also relies on the Commission in the Council of Ministers because it has no chance of succeeding on its own, while a number of cases indicate that a large state in the same position can press its views. A small state that is able to state that the Commission is on its side is in a much better position than on its own. As a result, small states try to avoid confrontation with the Commission and instead emphasize cooperation with it.

Nevertheless, it has to be kept in mind that the Commission is not a defender of the interests of small states. The small states' tactic is to negotiate a favourable deal with the Commission in order to better their chances of succeeding in the Council. Moreover, small states would prefer to negotiate bilaterally with the Commission instead of multilaterally in the Council. This is, for instance, the case with the negotiations leading to the creation of the Community Support Frameworks of Regional Policy. The small states prefer this form because they are more

25 Ibid., p. 114–160.