



National Report on EU Governance Research

Belgium

by

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**RESEARCH ON EU MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE IN BELGIUM:
A STATE OF RESEARCH**

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List of Abbreviations

APSA	American Political Science Association
CEEPS	Centre of Expertise for Environmental Policy Sciences
CEPS	Center for European Policy Studies
CILGMUEE	Citoyenneté, Identités, Légitimité démocratique et Gouvernance Multiniveaux dans l'Union Européenne élargie
CONNEX	Connecting Excellence on European Governance
DOSEI	Domestic Structures and European Integration
ECPR	European Consortium on Political Research
EIS	European Information Service
EMLG	European multilevel governance
EPC	European Policy Center
EPIN	European Policy Institutions Network
epsNET	European Political Science Network
ETUI-REHS	European Trade Union Institute for Research, Education and Health and Safety
EU	European Union
EUSA	European Union Studies Association
FoE	Friends of Europe
FUNDP	Facultés Universitaires Notre-Dame de la Paix
FUSL	Facultés Universitaires Saint-Louis
GARNET	Network of Excellence on Global Governance, Regionalisation and Regulation
IGC	Intergovernmental Conference
KHK	Katholieke Hogeschool Kempen
KIIB	Koninklijk Instituut voor Internationale Betrekkingen
KUL	Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
MLG	multilevel governance
RNGS	Research Network on Gender Politics and the State
SEGEI	Socio-Economic Governance and European Identities
UA	Universiteit Antwerpen
UCL	Université Catholique de Louvain
UG	Universiteit Gent
UH	Universiteit Hasselt
ULB	Université Libre de Bruxelles
ULG	Université de Liège
VUB	Vrije Universiteit Brussel

I. INTRODUCTION¹

About CONNEX...

The Network of Excellence CONNEX ('Connecting Excellence on European Governance') seeks to map the research conducted on European multilevel governance (EMLG) in 23 European countries since 1994.² The project is funded by the European Commission within the *Sixth Framework Programme of Research* and has a four years duration (2004-2008). CONNEX is coordinated by the *Mannheim Centre for European Social Research* at the University of Mannheim; network coordinator is Prof. Dr. Beate Kohler-Koch. The Belgian CONNEX partner is Prof. Dr. Bart Kerremans of the University of Leuven (KUL).

The forthcoming CONNEX database includes detailed information on project and network based research dealing with the institutional architecture of EMLG, the enhancing of democracy in European governance, civil society involvement in EMLG and the flexibility of European governance through new instruments. Research projects may be single or joint projects. However, to be included, they should have run at least for one year and resulted in publications. Ongoing PhD projects are also included. Research networks included bring together scholars studying a topic of common interest for at least one year. During this period, they have to cooperate on a regular basis.

About the CONNEX National Report on Belgium...

Before focussing on the trends and developments within EMLG research in Belgium, as requested, in the first part of this report, we discuss the background against which this research has been conducted. An overview of the changing Belgian higher education structures, the research institutions focussing on EU policy- and decision-making and the information facilities available, reveals a strong intertwining of EU education, research and information. To answer the question if Belgian EMLG research is accessible to outside scholars, also the publication venues and the presence of Belgian scholars at international conferences and summer schools are looked upon.

In the second part of this report, a status quaestionis of Belgian research on EMLG is presented. Because of the federal structure of the Belgian State, Belgian scholars seem to have an almost natural interest in multilevel governance (MLG) research. Whereas most of them focussed on domestic MLG, throughout the 1990s, another

¹ We would like to thank Thierry Balzacq, Marie-Thérèse Berting, Jan Beyers, Sven Biscop, Hans Bruyninckx, Peter Bursens, Karen Celis, Evrard Claessens, Bruno Colson, Ben Crum, Jos De La Haye, Filip De Rynck, Lieven De Winter, Franklin Dehousse, Frank Delmartino, Jacobus Delwaide, Kris Deschouwer, Annelies Desomer, Stefanie Dierckxsens, Michel Dumoulin, Stefaan Fiers, Alain Finet, Nuala Fogde, François Foret, Christian Franck, Sonia Gsir, Marc Hooghe, Gaëlle Hubert, Yves Lejeune, Dries Lesage, Bart Maddens, Paul Magnet, Marc Maresceau, Marco Martiniello, Françoise Massart-Pierrard, Johan Meeusen, Jan Orbie, Guisepe Pagano, Olivier Paye, Eric Remacle, Louise van Schaik, Justus Schönlaui, Martine Simon, Peter Stroobants, Wilfried Swenden, Jo Swinnen, Mario Telò, Nick Thijs, Eleni Tsingou, Maarten Van Craen, Nico Van Dijck, Luk Van Langenhove, Karla Vander Weyden, Patrick Vander Weyden, Claire Vandevivere, Tom Verbeke, Pierre Vercauteren, Lode Vereeck, Koen Verhoest, Amaryllis Verhoeven, Pierre Verjans, Joris Voets, Hendrik Vos, Jan Vranken, Françoise Welvaert, Paul Wynants and Jan Wouters for the information provided.

² All information on the CONNEX network can be found on the following website: www.connex-network.org.

growing group applied MLG insights to the study of the EU. Initially, the focus was on the EU as a multi-layered system of governance. Yet, towards the end of the 1990s, also the governance component also became the subject of research. This report concludes with an overview of the main characteristics of the Belgian projects and networks included in the CONNEX database. Note that only projects and networks of which the project leadership and coordination are located in Belgium were eligible. A list of these projects and networks is included in Annex I.

II. Structural background of research on EU Multilevel Governance in Belgium

In 1993, the unitary state of Belgium became a federal state divided in Regions (Flemish Region, Walloon Region, Brussels-Capital Region) and Communities (Flemish Community, French Community, German-speaking Community).³ The movement towards this federal state, and especially the reforms brought into force towards the end of the 1980s, had important implications for the organisation of education.⁴ In 1989, authority over education was transferred almost completely to the Communities. Only the duration of compulsory education, the minimum requirements for awarding accredited diplomas and the pension regulation for teachers are still laid down at the federal level.⁵ Furthermore, the federal constitution includes a number of duties for the Communities in the execution of their competences, like the obligation of compulsory education being free of charge. Although higher education is also determined by federal laws, the federal government does not interfere in the way they are used by the Communities as regards content. As a result, since the end of the 1980s, the Communities have been able to go their own way as for educational structure and policy. As demonstrated by De Rynck, while the Flemish Community decided to testify a new view on the role of the state ('enabling state'), the French Community has been merely reproducing the national policy legacy ('service delivery state').⁶

Yet, as for higher education, in both Communities, a binary distinction has been made between university and non-university education, the latter being organised by higher colleges ('hogescholen', 'Haut Ecoles'). As for university education, a *candidate's degree* ('kandidaat', 'candidat') took two years to obtain, in disciplines like medicine three years. An additional two or three years of study was necessary to obtain a *license degree* ('licenciaat', 'licencié'). In non-university education a distinction was made between 'one-cycle' (three or four years) and 'two-cycle' (four or five years) studies, the first one resulting in *graduate degrees* ('graduaat', 'gradué') and the latter one in *licence degrees at an academic level*. In addition, most universities and higher colleges offered a wide variety of specialised post-graduate programmes ('aanvullende opleiding',

³ Note that Flemish politicians decided to merge the Flemish Community with the Flemish Region in 1980. As a result, *Flanders* has one Flemish Parliament, one Flemish Government and one public administration, competent for both community and regional matters.

⁴ For a detailed overview of the Belgian education system, including the differences between the Flemish, French and German-speaking Communities, consult the Eurybase database: www.eurydice.org. In this report we focus on the status quaestionis on EMLG research in the Flemish and French Communities as the German-speaking Community does not host academic institutions dealing with this topic.

⁵ Swenden, W. (2002) Vergelijkend federalisme en onderwijs. Een verkennende analyse. *Tijdschrift voor Onderwijsrecht & Onderwijsbeleid*, 2001-2002, 2, p. 190-191.

⁶ De Rynck, S. (2005) Regional Autonomy and Education Policy in Belgium. *Regional and Federal Studies*, 15(4), p. 485-500.

'specialisatieopleiding', 'diplôme d'études complémentaire', 'diplôme d'études approfondies', 'diplôme d'études spécialisées').

Following the Bologna Process, higher education in Belgium, is also in a transition phase. The candidate and licence degrees are being replaced by an *academic* bachelor's degree of three years and a master's degree of one or two years, in some cases three or four years. The graduate degree is being replaced by a *professional-oriented* bachelor degree. The first reforms were introduced in the past academic year (2004-2005); the old structures should be phased out by 2011. As known, the Bologna Process intends to harmonise higher education throughout the EU. Yet, even within Belgium harmonisation turns out to be everything but obvious. Whereas the French Community opted for a general introduction of the *3+2 formula*, the Flemish government decided to allow so for exact and biomedical sciences only, even with the exception of geography and informatics. In most humanities, including social sciences, the traditional *3+1 formula* is preserved. Notwithstanding these differences, in both Flanders and Wallonia the implementation of the Bologna reforms is going hand in hand with a proliferation of study programs at universities and higher colleges. The aim of offering courses covering the widest range of subjects is also resulting in a proliferation of EU-related studies, above all at postgraduate level.

As noted by Swenden, *Bologna* also illustrates that especially Flanders has been using its policy autonomy to lay specific accents on education.⁷ Like the Netherlands, it has been carrying the load, whereas the French Community has been more hesitant. For instance, the Flemish government uses the Bologna Process to bridge the gap between higher colleges and universities and to end, at least on paper, the division between study programs *at an academic level* organised by two-cycle higher colleges and *academic* programs offered by universities. The *Higher Education Act restructuring higher education in Flanders* of 4 April 2003 foresees in both professional and academic bachelors, yet only in academic masters.⁸ Following the text, in order to bridge this gap, research-based teaching should become the rule. Two-cycle higher colleges have to *academise* their education, embedding it in scientific research. They have to do so by participating in academic research through *associations* ('Associaties') with universities. Five of such associations have established, clustered around the universities of Antwerp (UA), Brussels (VUB), Ghent (UG), Hasselt (UH) and Leuven (KUL). In comparison, in the French Community, *interuniversity* academies ('Académies') have been set up around the universities of Bruxelles (ULB), Louvain-la-Neuve (UCL) and Liège (ULG). Only the *Pôle Universitaire Européen Bruxelles Wallonie* – a collaboration between ULB and eleven higher colleges and institutes in Brussels – foresees in institutionalised cooperation with higher colleges.

⁷ Swenden, W. (2002) Vergelijkend federalisme en onderwijs. Een verkennende analyse. *Tijdschrift voor Onderwijsrecht & Onderwijsbeleid*, 2001-2002, 2, p. 199.

⁸ Decreet van 4 april 2003 betreffende de herstructurering van het hoger onderwijs in Vlaanderen, Belgisch Staatsblad, 14 augustus 2003.

In the period researched, a growing group of Belgian scholars have been focussing on EU policy-making or included an EU dimension in their research. Political scientists, legal scholars, economists and historians have been doing so not only at universities and higher colleges, but also at research centres and think-tanks like the Royal Institute for International Affairs (KIIB), the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), Friends of Europe (FoE) and the European Policy Center (EPC). Yet, the research projects and networks included in the CONNEX database indicate that research on EMLG has been mainly university-based, which is in line with the Belgian tradition of research and education being intertwined. Although research on EMLG has been developing steadily in the past ten years in universities on both sides of the linguistic border, it was also carried out on an *ad hoc* basis, witness the difference between the number of projects and networks included and the number of researchers and (international) publications dealing with this topic. Moreover, as only Belgium based networks and projects were eligible for inclusion, the participation of Belgian researchers in foreign networks and projects is not taken into account either. In these networks and projects, they are mostly responsible for studying the Belgian case. However, some have also been involved in the application for and coordination of projects and networks based abroad. For these reasons, one should be careful to use the number of projects and networks included as the only indicator for the state of the art of research on EMLG in Belgium.

Like in most EU Member States, also in Belgium EU research has been supported by the Jean Monnet Action *European Integration in University Studies*.⁹ Today, Belgian universities host five Jean Monnet Centres of Excellence: the *Institute for European Studies* (UCL), the *Institut d'études européennes* (ULB), the *Europacentrum Jean Monnet* (UA), the *UGent Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence* (UG) and the *Institute for European Studies* (VUB). In comparison, neighbouring countries like the Netherlands, Germany and France count respectively four, seven and twelve of such centres. Moreover, the Bruges/Natolin-based College of Europe is supported by the Jean Monnet Action because of its 'specific' contribution to the EU integration process through education and training.¹⁰ In addition, 11 Jean Monnet Chairs have been assigned, of which five in European law, three in European political integration, two in history of European integration and one in European economics. Finally, 14 universities and higher colleges – seven of each – offer permanent courses or European modules co-financed by the European Commission. As noted, also research centres, think tanks and study groups have been showing a growing interest in the EU. Without saying that quantity equals quality, it is clear that in the past decade, a large research and teaching infrastructure on EU issues has been developed in both the French and Flemish Community. Yet, an important reason for the state of the art is exactly the fragmentation of the Belgian education and research landscape. Indeed, as stated by Frogner and Dewinter, the *pillarisation* of the Belgian political and civil society resulted in three university systems in the second half of

⁹ A detailed overview of the Centres, Chairs, courses and modules financed by the Jean Monnet Action *European Integration in University Studies* is available on the website of the Jean Monnet Project Technical Assistance Office: www.icp-ajm.org/ajm/docs/belgium.pdf.

¹⁰ Other institutions supported this way are the European University Institute (Florence), the European Institute of Public Administration (Maastricht), the Europäische Rechtsakademie Trier (Trier) and the Centre international de Formation Européenne (Nice). More information on this initiative can be found on the following website: europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/ajm/supportinstiti/support_institutions_en.html.

the 20th century: catholic, free-thinking and neutral.¹¹ Within these systems, further fragmentation was caused by the often difficult relationship between the linguistic communities. Also the gradual expansion of the university system, creating universities in nearly every provincial capital, disintegrated resources and made inter-university contacts less evident.

In Belgium, EU information resources are closely linked to the teaching and education structure sketched above. Most library collections hosted by the institutions mentioned invest in reference works on EU institutions and policies, especially in function of the topics researched. As for the latter, as most of these institutions make the *academic bibliography* of their researchers available through the internet, on the condition that the information provided is accurate and up-to-date, it has become relatively easy to get an idea of the research being conducted. Practically speaking, Belgian researchers have the advantage of conducting their research within a stone's throw of the Brussels-based European institutions. This not only simplifies the organisation of interviews with EU officials for instance, also the extensive library collections of these institutions, including databases, are literally within reach.¹² Furthermore, *European Documentation Centres* are located at the universities of Antwerp (UA), Brussels (ULB and VUB), Ghent (UG), Leuven (KUL), Liège (ULG), Louvain-la-Neuve (UCL) and Namur (FUNDP). Also the Katholieke Hogeschool Kempen (KHK), the College of Europe and the Brussels-based think-thanks CEPS and ETUI-REHS host such centres. For information on EU institutions, legislation, policies, programs and funding activities, citizens can also appeal to the *Europe Direct* information relays in Antwerp, Braine-L'Alleud, Bruges, Eupen, Gent, Hasselt, Leuven, Liège, Mons, Namur and Saint-Hubert. Current information on the ins and outs of the EU can also be easily obtained through news sites like EIS (www.eis.be) and euobserver.com (www.euobserver.com) whose home base is often Brussels.

In terms of journals partly or fully dedicated to EU issues, the Belgian publication venues for EU research are rather limited. Although journals like *Res Publica* and *Revue Internationale de Politique Comparée* welcome contributions on EU policy- and decision-making, their main focus is Belgian politics. Moreover, because of reasons related to employment and promotion, Belgian researchers also tend to publish their research as much as possible in peer reviewed international journals like the *Journal of Common Market Studies*, the *Journal of European Public Policy* and *Regional and Federal Studies*, or as chapters in international edited volumes. As a result, the publication language of particularly the younger generation of Belgian EU researchers, and especially the Flemish ones, has become English.¹³ Although English has also been winning ground in the French Community, here, a better balance has been kept between foreign (English) and native (French) language publications.

¹¹ Frogner, A., De Winter, L. (1996) La science politique en Belgique. In: *La science politique en Europe: formation, coopération, perspectives*. Paris: Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, pp. 158-159.

¹² The libraries and archives of the European Commission and the Council are open to the public.

¹³ Also Keating sees the proliferation of publications in English as the most important development regarding the study of European integration in Belgium and the Netherlands in the past decade, next to an increasing interest in EU affairs in general. See: Keating, M. (2005) Dutch and Flemish Political Science and the Study of European Integration, *Journal of European Public Policy*, 12(4), p. 751.

In addition, especially in comparison with writing in Dutch, writing in English increases the accessibility of work pieces and publications, including those presented at international conferences. The international orientation of Belgian scholars is also apparent from the growing group of scholars participating yearly in the ECPR, epsNET, EUSA and APSA conferences. At these conferences, they cannot only discuss their research with foreign colleagues, but also with former colleagues who have been swarming out, like for instance Liesbet Hooghe. Belgian scholars also regularly participate in summer schools organised abroad, both as students and lecturers.¹⁴ The participation in these conferences and meetings stimulates the interplay between paradigms generated within the country and imported from abroad – abroad sometimes referring to the other side of the linguistic border. As a result, most scholars consider them an important factor in the development of EU research in Belgium.

III. Evaluation of the State of Research on EU Multilevel Governance in Belgium

As stated, after more than 30 years of institutional reform, in 1993, the Belgian State became a federal state divided in Regions and Communities. Following the 2001 Lambermont Agreement, a further transfer of competences, notably in the fields of fisheries and agriculture, took place. As a result, from a legal point of view and within the Belgian legal order, the Belgian Communities and Regions enjoy the status of *Second-Level Players* rather than *Third-Level Players*.¹⁵ Indeed, to a certain extent, being *sub-national* actors, they enjoy privileges that are normally enjoyed by *national* actors only, especially where direct access to the Council of Ministers is concerned. This is the case with culture, education, tourism, youth, housing and town and country planning. Moreover, on various occasions throughout the 1990s, they have been trying to translate this enhanced domestic status at the level of the EU.

For instance, at the Intergovernmental Conference on Political Union of 1991, the German and Belgian delegations obtained a revision of Article 146 of the Maastricht Treaty presented, allowing also for non-national ministers to participate in the Council of Ministers meetings.¹⁶ Although it does not allow for a *decentralized* representation at the level of the EU, the revision of Article 146 changed the position of sub-national authorities from *outsiders* in EU decision-making to *insiders*, on the condition that they can commit their country *as a whole*.¹⁷ More recently, the 2001 Belgian EU Presidency was the first Presidency in which autonomous regional

¹⁴ Last summer, in Belgium, summer schools on EU affairs were organised by UCL (Summer School on the EU Criminal Area, Summer School on European Union Law and Policy on Immigration and Asylum, Summer School on External Relations of the European Union) and KUL (EU-Canada ICRPS Summer School). As for EMLG, advanced and doctoral students at UCL can participate in a Socrates Intensive Programme on 'Citizenship, democratic legitimacy and MLG governance in the enlarged EU' (CILGMUEE), bringing together the universities of Louvain-la-Neuve, Barcelona, Firenze, Frankfurt, Paris, Budapest, Katowice and Galasataray.

¹⁵ Kerremans, B., Beyers, J. (2000) The Belgian Sub-National Entities in the European Union. *Regional and Federal Studies*, 10(1), p. 47.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

¹⁷ Beyers, J., Delreux, T., Steensels, C. (2004) The Europeanisation of Intergovernmental Cooperation and Conflict Resolution in Belgium: The Case of Agriculture. *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, 5(1), p. 116.

entities played an active role on behalf of a Member State.¹⁸ Ministers from the Regions and Communities not only presided over a number of informal and formal Council meetings, they also occupied the Belgian seat at several of these meetings. Especially for the Flemish government, the 2001 Presidency provided a unique opportunity to put the role and position of *constitutional regions* on the European agenda.¹⁹

Therefore, it is no real surprise that, at least from a *thematic* point of view, in the past ten years, Belgian EMLG research has been focusing on the *institutional architecture* of this governance and more specifically on the involvement of regional actors within the multilevel setting of the EU. Research paid attention to the representation and participation of regional actors in EU decision- and policy-making, especially to the involvement of these actors in the determination of the Belgian position in the Council of Ministers. Here, an important research focus has been the practice of coordination, especially the domestic coordination mechanisms in policy domains like environment, agriculture and social policy. In particular the regional involvement in EU policy-making on environmental issues became a popular case to study, attracting attention from political scientists at the universities of Antwerp (UA), Gent (UG) and Leuven (KUL), even before the Flemish Government established the Centre of Expertise for Environmental Policy Sciences (CEEPS) in 2001.

Chronologically and *methodologically* speaking, research started with rather *descriptive* work on the formal characteristics of regional involvement and evolved into *analytical* research paying attention to the differences in the involvement of Belgian sub-national authorities in EU decision-making across different policy sectors. In later years, research also looked at the Belgian case from a broader perspective by comparing it with the experience of other federal(ised) Member States, hereby drawing on the examples of Germany, and, to a lesser extent, Austria and Spain. As this comparative perspective gained importance, Belgian research on (E)MLG was influenced by federalism research and literature. Mainly at the universities of Brussels (VUB) and Leuven (KUL), scholars enriched the conceptual debate on (E)MLG with insights from comparative and cooperative federalism. Recently, these insights also proved to be useful to study the ongoing process of constitutionalisation of the EU.²⁰

Paradoxically, although Belgium is traditionally seen as one of the staunchest supporters of supranational European integration, it is everything but at the top of the class when it comes to the implementation of EU legislation into national law.²¹ Notwithstanding a clear improvement of the situation in the immediate run-up to

¹⁸ Kerremans, B., Drieskens, E. (2002) The Belgian Presidencies of 2001. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Annual Review of the European Union 2001, 40(3), p. 168.

¹⁹ An excellent overview of the Flemish initiatives can be found in the *Flanders and the Belgian EU Presidency* report which was published by the Flemish Administration of Foreign Affairs in 2001. In preparation of the Presidency, and more specifically of the Flemish viewpoints for the 2004 IGC, the Flemish government made an appeal to the Law and Political Science departments of the universities of Ghent (UG) and Leuven(KUL).

²⁰ See, for instance, Swenden, W. (2004) Is the European Union in Need of a Competence Catalogue? Insights from Comparative Federalism. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, pp. 371-392 and Swenden, W. (2005) What – *if anything* – can the European Union learn from Belgian federalism and vice versa? *Regional and Federal Studies*, 15(2), pp. 187-204.

²¹ Bursens, P., Helsen, S. (2005) Waarom België maar een middelmatige Europese leerling is. *Burger, Bestuur & Beleid: Tijdschrift voor Bestuurskunde en Bestuursrecht*, 2(2), pp. 114-115.

the 2001 Presidency, in the past ten years, the Belgian government often failed to comply with its obligation to implement directives. As a result, it was condemned regularly by the Court of Justice. According to Bursens and Helsens, not only a low degree of Europeanization of the Belgian political actors, but particularly the complex political and administrative structure of the Belgian State explains this *implementation deficit*. Indeed, the Belgian government has also been condemned because the Regions and Communities did not implement EU legislation properly. In consequence, during the 1990s, the focus on the involvement of Belgian sub-national authorities in (Belgian) EU policy-making has been extended to include MLG ramifications for Belgium's implementation record.

Research on this topic also developed from a mere observation and description of the problem to theory-driven analysis from a comparative perspective. In addition, this research has been characterized by a marked policy-oriented approach, witness for instance the creation of a database – the *Dataset European Legislation* – by the Universities of Antwerp (UA) and Louvain-la-Neuve (UCL) to minimize the problems of continuity and communication as to enable the Belgian State to comply better with its obligations of implementing EU legislation. As most EMLG research in Belgium has been university-based, this policy-related component was often missing. Like part of the research carried out on the involvement of the Regions in EU decision-making on environmental policy, also research on the Belgian transposition deficit shows that research funding by the government has been an important incentive to provide a bridge between fundamental and policy-oriented research.

As indicated by the cooperation between UA and UCL, it is worth stating that the Belgian *implementation deficit* aroused interest in both Flanders and Wallonia. This clearly differs from the research on the role of the sub-national authorities in Belgian EU policy-making mentioned above. Indeed, as also indicated by the list of contributors to the special issue on 'The Consequences of Multilevel Governance', which was published by *Res Publica* in the spring of 2001, here, research on the Flemish side of the country clearly outnumbers that of the Francophone part.²² In the first part of this report, following Frogner and Dewinter, we stated that this kind of fragmentation has been typical of Belgian (political science) education in general.²³ However, already in 1996, the year Frogner and Dewinter wrote, in Belgian political science, efforts of renationalisation were under way, as the younger generation of researchers tended to co-operate more often on research projects than their predecessors did.

From an *interdisciplinary* point of view, it is equally important is that on the implementation question research cooperation between legal scholars and political scientists has been quite intensive. This was also the case for research on the involvement of the Belgian Communities and Regions in Belgian EU policy-making in general,

²² Beyers, Bursens, Crikemans, Helsens, Kerremans, Kovziridze and Salomonson wrote EMLG-related contributions for this issue.

²³ Frogner, A., De Winter, L. (1996), pp. 158-159. Note that there is no Belgian political science association. In 1979, the former Belgian Association for Political Science split into the *Politologisch Instituut. Vereniging voor Vlaamse Politologen*. on the one hand and the *Association Belge de Science Politique. Communauté Française de Belgique*. on the other hand.

as the challenge of determining a European policy in a multilevel setting and the capacity of the Belgian intergovernmental system to play a role in the EU raised questions about both legal competence and the costs of not reaching an agreement. Here as well, an explanation for the interaction between law and political science, and the at times even interdisciplinary character of the research conducted, can be found in the origins of Belgian political science. Indeed, its emergence and initial development were influenced by political history, political philosophy, sociology and (public) law. As stated by Dewachter and Witte, in particular in the development of international relations and European studies, the influence of (international) law has been perceptible for a long time, mainly because the politicological study of international and European politics developed rather reluctantly.²⁴

In conclusion, following the ongoing and complex reform process of the Belgian state, during the 1990s, Belgian MLG research mainly focused on *domestic* MLG, and more specifically on the often complex vertical relationship(s) between the local, provincial, regional and federal authorities. Yet, one could argue that this body of research acted as a catalyst for EU research in Belgium in general, resulting also in a young, yet important research tradition in both Flanders (KUL, UA, UG, VUB) and Wallonia (UCL, ULB) dealing with European governance as a multilevel form of governance.²⁵ Especially UA and VUB researchers were in a position to weigh on the development of this tradition because of the financial means they received from the Research Councils of their respective universities.

Within this burgeoning tradition, towards the turn of the century, scholars moved their research focus from a mainly *vertical* definition of EMLG towards a more *horizontal* one, focusing no longer on the increased interdependence of governments operating at different territorial levels only, but also on the growing interdependence between governmental and non-governmental actors at these levels.²⁶ Here, an important focus became the involvement of civil society in European governance, including the question how public and private actors try to impact upon policy making in the EU as a multilevel governance system.²⁷ In recent years, the low popular identification with European governance, indicated by a decreasing trust in the European institutions, a declining attendance of the European elections, the difficult ratification procedures of the Maastricht and Nice Treaties and a rising amount of protest generated by EU policies and politics, also put the legitimacy problem facing the EU on the Belgian research agenda.²⁸ Nevertheless, when seeing regional

²⁴ Dewachter, W. (1974) De politieke wetenschap in België: resultante van Franse cultuur en elitair pragmatisme. *Acta Politica*, 9(1), pp. 29-30; Witte, E. (2003) Over Bruggen en Muren. Hedendaagse politieke geschiedenis en politieke wetenschappen in België (1945-2000). Leuven: Universitaire Pers, pp. 36-37.

²⁵ In particular at UCL, researchers could graft this research on an older tradition of mainly historical research on European integration.

²⁶ Bache, I., Flinders, M. (2004) *Multilevel Governance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 3; Pollack, M.A. (2005) Theorizing EU Policy-Making. In: Wallace, H., Wallace, W., Pollack, M.A. (eds.) *Policy-Making in the European Union*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 39-46.

²⁷ Beyers, J. (2000) *Het maatschappelijk draagvlak van het Europees beleid en het einde van de permissieve consensus. Een empirisch onderzoek over politiek handelen in een meerlagig politiek bestel*. Leuven: Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.

²⁸ De Jonge, K., Bursens, P. (2003) *The Quest for more Legitimacy in the European Union as a Multilevel Political System: a Conceptual Framework*. Paper presented at the ECPR Joint Sessions in Edinburgh, 28 March – 2 April 2003, pp. 3-5.

involvement as a means for enhancing the democratic character of European governance, one could also argue that this problem has been on the Belgian research agenda since the beginning of the 1990s.

An overview of the projects and networks included in the CONNEX database shows that in Belgium, network based research has been the exception rather than the rule. The CONNEX database includes 41 projects yet only 3 networks – EPIN (European Policy Institutes Network), PEACE-COM (Peace Processes in Community Conflicts: From Understanding the Roots of Conflicts to Conflict Resolution) and SEGEI (Socio-Economic Governance and European Identity).²⁹ Moreover, only a minority of the projects included [9] are part of a research network. In consequence, the conclusion that the number of projects and networks included should not be considered the only indicator for the status quaestionis of EMLG research in Belgium particularly applies to networks. After all, whereas Belgium has been the home basis of only two networks dealing with aspects of EMLG, in recent years, Belgian researchers have been cooperating frequently in foreign networks including CONNEX, DOSEI, GARNET and RINGS.

The same overview learns that project and network based research on EMLG has been clustered around about ten scholars heading research teams at the universities of Antwerp (UA), Brussels (ULB, VUB), Ghent (UG), Leuven (KUL) and Louvain-la-Neuve (UCL). As the main focus has been the regional dynamics of EMLG, it is no surprise that most research has been conducted by political scientists. As the majority of project leaders have been senior professors it is also not a surprise that the gender gap is not just fiction: a woman scholar acted as project leader for only one research project included; for two other projects women scholars shared the project leadership with male colleagues.³⁰ Yet, on the contrary, at the level of PhD students and research/teaching assistants involved, women have been less underrepresented.

As noted, for Belgian researchers, government funding has been a key incentive to include a policy-oriented dimension in their research. Projects have not only been funded by the EU and the federal and regional governments, the universities also chipped in. As indicated, especially UA and VUB invested in the development of this research tradition. These financial means made it possible for the project leaders involved to build solid research teams including not only junior and senior members, but also researchers at post-doctoral level. In most universities, EMLG-related PhD research has also been carried out without special funding, the researchers being employed as teaching assistants. Generally speaking, these researchers are in a less favourable position in terms of time they can spend on their research. Moreover, their financial possibilities are often more limited, especially as for giving their research a clear empirical dimension. Finally, screening the

²⁹ The SEGEI and PEACE-COM networks are based at UCL. CEPS hosts EPIN.

³⁰ For an overview of the state of the art of women in political science in general, see, for instance, Agapiou-Josphides K. (2001) *Women in the Profession: Assessing the Gender Gap in European Political Science. A Preliminary Report*. Paris: epsNET. Agapiou-Josphides argues that although women remain underrepresented at whatever academic position taken into account, the higher the position, the lower the proportion of women is.

database reveals that the conclusions on the publication venues and languages mentioned above also go for research on EMLG. Here as well, most scholars aim to valorise their research activities to the largest extent possible by publishing their findings in international refereed journals, often after having them discussed first at international conferences and workshops. For the same reason, researchers tend to publish their (first) results at the same time in national language (refereed) journals. These journals are relatively quick and attainable at publication venues (in particular, for researchers focussing on Belgian aspects of EMLG).

IV. CONCLUSION

This report aimed to present a status quaestionis of the research conducted on EMLG in Belgium since 1994. Generally speaking, this status quaestionis is positive. As indicated, in the past ten years, an important research infrastructure was developed in a considerable number of Belgian universities. To use EU jargon, in the period researched, Belgian EMLG research not only *widened* but also *deepened*. A growing group of researchers borrowed these concepts and insights and the initial focus on *multilevel* was broadened to include *governance*. In addition, research has been conducted in a more systematic and analytical way. In the period researched, EMLG concepts and insights also became part of mainstream EU research in Belgian universities, even acting as its catalyst.

When asked about the possible contribution of Belgian EMLG research on the European scientific debate in the near future, one could argue that Belgian scholars, given their large research experience, are in a favourable position to contribute to the further development of research on the regional dimension of EMLG. However, there is also room in Belgium for further development. A higher degree of interuniversity cooperation, national as well as international, and a higher degree of interdisciplinary cooperation, including social sciences other than political science and law, could add new dimensions to the research conducted. Such cooperation could also diminish the *ad hoc* character of the research sometimes carried out. Driving force for the further development of EMLG research in Belgium could be the increasing internationalisation of humanities research. Yet, important obstacles remain the heavy teaching load facing most senior researchers and a lack of (long-term) funding.

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Annex I: Overview of the Belgian projects and networks included in the CONNEX database

[Status quaestionis 10 October 2005.]

Project or network title	Project leader	Researcher	Contact email	Duration
Center for European Policy Studies (CEPS) — www.ceps.be				
[PROJECT] European Liberty and Security: Security Issues, Social Cohesion and Institutional Development of the European Union	Thierry Balzacq Sergio Carrera		tbalzacq@yahoo.fr	2002-2005
[PROJECT] The Sources of Legitimacy of the EU	Ben Crum		bjj.crum@fsw.vu.nl	2002-2004
[NETWORK] EPIN (European Policy Institutes Network)	Sebastian Kurpas Marco Incerti		marco.incerti@ceps.be sebastian.kurpas@ceps.be	Since 2002
Facultés Universitaires Saint Louis (FUSL) — www.fusl.ac.be				
[PROJECT] The participation of the Region of Brussels to the production of the EU's public policies. A contribution to a multigovernance approach of the european integration	Gaëlle Hubert		ghubert@fusl.ac.be	2003-2007
Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (KUL) — www.kuleuven.be				
[PROJECT] Civil Society and the Belgian European Policy	Jan Beyers		jbeyers@fsw.leidenuniv.nl	1997
[PROJECT] National Civil Servants and European Institutions: a survey of the structure of intergovernmental networks in an emerging federal polity	Jan Beyers Guido Dierickx Bart Kerremans		jbeyers@fsw.leidenuniv.nl	1993-1996
[PROJECT] The social basis of European policy and the end of the permissive consensus. An empirical research on political action in a multilevel polity	Jan Beyers		jbeyers@fsw.leidenuniv.nl	1997-2000
[PROJECT] Scenario for the Belgian EU-presidency of 2001	Bart Kerremans		bart.kerremans@soc.kuleuven.be	2000
[PROJECT] Access and Legitimacy. A research study about how internationalisation of policymaking leads to a drawing of access possibilities for societal interests.	Bart Kerremans		bart.kerremans@soc.kuleuven.be	2002-2005
[PROJECT] International Agreements and Development	Bart Kerremans Patrick Develtere Jan Wouters Johan Swinnen		bart.kerremans@soc.kuleuven.be	2003-2006
[PROJECT] European or national actors? An investigation into the representation behaviour of the EU Member States in the UN Security Council.	Edith Drieskens		edith.drieskens@soc.kuleuven.be	2006-2008
[PROJECT] The effectiveness and legitimacy of the EU in international negotiations: a comparative case study of three external Community policies (working title)	Louise van Schaik		louise.van-schaik@ceps.be	2004-2008
[PROJECT] The European Union as external environmental actor: an analysis of the internal policy-making process	Tom Delreux		tom.delreux@soc.kuleuven.be	2003-2008

[PROJECT] Preparation of the Flemish viewpoints for the Intergovernmental Conference 2004	Koen Lenaerts Frank Delmartino Inge Govaere Hendrik Vos	koen.lenaerts@law.kuleuven.be hendrik.vos@ugent.be	2001-2003
[PROJECT] The Reform of the Legal Instruments of the European Union	Marlies Desomer	marlies.desomer@law.kuleuven.be	2002-2006
[PROJECT] The European Union in search of a constitutional and democratic theory	Amaryllis Verhoeven	amaryllis.verhoeven@cec.eu.int	1996-2001
[PROJECT] Europeanisation from a Neo-Institutionalist Perspective: Experiencing Territorial Politics in Spain and Romania	Ana Maria Dobre	anamaria.dobre@soc.kuleuven.be	2003-2008
[PROJECT] Prospects for regional governance in Turkey on the road to EU membership: Comparison of three regions	Ebru Ertugal	ebruertugal@yahoo.com	2001-2005
Université Catholique de Louvain (UCL) — www.uclouvain.be			
[PROJECT] Socio-economic networks and governance in the XXth century in Europe	Michel Dumoulin	dumoulin@cont.ucl.ac.be	2002-?
[NETWORK] SEGEI (Socio-Economic Governance and European Identities)	Michel Dumoulin	dumoulin@cont.ucl.ac.be	Since 2002
[PROJECT] The external relations policy of the Regions, Communities and federated entities	Françoise Massart-Pierard	massart@spri.ucl.ac.be	1996-?
[NETWORK] PEACE-COM (Peace Processes in Community Conflicts: From Understanding the Roots of Conflicts to Conflict Resolution)	Lieven De Winter	dewinter@spri.ucl.ac.be	2004-2007
[PROJECT] Application and Application-control of the community law under Belgian administration	Yves Lejeune	lejeune@euro.ucl.ac.be yves.lejeune@publ.ucl.ac.be	2000-2002
[PROJECT] The interaction of the national administrative laws and the European right in the field of the State aid	Yves Lejeune	lejeune@euro.ucl.ac.be yves.lejeune@publ.ucl.ac.be	1999-2002
[PROJECT] The Implementation of European Union's Policies in the Member States. The Belgian Experience	Yves Lejeune	lejeune@euro.ucl.ac.be yves.lejeune@publ.ucl.ac.be	1995-1999
Université de Liège (ULG) — www.ulg.ac.be			
[PROJECT] The multilevel governance of international migration and its consequences for immigration policies in the European Union and in other regions.	Sonia Gsir	sonia.gsir@ulg.ac.be	2005-
Université Libre de Bruxelles(ULB) — www.ulb.be			

[PROJECT] The European political Union: transformation of modes of governance and legitimacy	Mario Telò	Olivier Costa, Elodie Lavignotte Guerin, Erol Kulahci, Marta Latek, Cécile Robert, Laurence Weerts, Eric Remacle, Paul Magnette, Barbara Delcourt	mtelo@ulb.ac.be	1998-2004
[PROJECT] Evaluation of the Lisbon Strategy and its relevance for the future of the EU: analysis of its content, evolutions and results from a political economy and political science perspective	Goetschy Janine Mario Telò	Goetschy Janine, Mario Telò, Vaia Demertzis	Janine.goetschy@skynet.be mtelo@ulb.ac.be	2004-2009
Universiteit Antwerpen (UA) — www.ua.ac.be				
[PROJECT] Dataset European Legislation	Peter Bursens Yves Lejeune		peter.bursens@ua.ac.be yves.lejeune@publ.ucl.ac.be	2002-2003
[PROJECT] Europeanisation of the Flemish administrative system	Peter Bursens		peter.bursens@ua.ac.be	2001-2006
[PROJECT] Implementation of European Environmental Policy in Belgium	Peter Bursens Guido Dierickx		peter.bursens@ua.ac.be	1999-2000
[PROJECT] Legitimacy in multilevel political systems: democratisation and identification in the EU	Peter Bursens		peter.bursens@ua.ac.be	2002-2005
[PROJECT] Transposition, Application and Application-Control of European Policies in Belgium	Peter Bursens Guido Dierickx Yves Lejeune		peter.bursens@ua.ac.be yves.lejeune@publ.ucl.ac.be	2000-2001
[PROJECT] 'Who elected WTO'? Political Legitimacy of International Organisations (EU and WTO)	Stefaan Walgrave Peter Bursens Hilde Van den Bulck		stefaan.walgrave@ua.ac.be	2002-2004
[PROJECT] The Flemish region and multilevel environmental governance: defining effective upward and downward strategies	Peter Bursens Pieter Leroy		peter.bursens@ua.ac.be p.leroy@fm.ru.nl or pieter.leroy@ua.ac.be	2002-2006
[PROJECT] Flanders and other subnational entities in the future European Constitution	Johan Meeussen Gert Straetmans		johan.meeussen@ua.ac.be gert.straetmans@ua.ac.be	2004-2008
Universiteit Gent (UG) — www.ugent.be				
[PROJECT] Democracy in the European Union: the role of (regional) parliaments	Hendrik Vos		hendrik.vos@ugent.be	2002
[PROJECT] European decision-making process in regionalised states. A comparative study and drawing consequences for federal Belgium.	Hendrik Vos Rik Coolsaet		hendrik.vos@ugent.be rik.coolsaet@ugent.be	2000-2002
[PROJECT] Recent developments in European environmental policy and opportunisms for Flanders with a view to the Belgian presidency of the EU in 2001	Hendrik Vos		hendrik.vos@ugent.be	1999-2000
[PROJECT] Regions in the European Union	Hendrik Vos		hendrik.vos@ugent.be	1994-1998
[PROJECT] The Role of the Civil Society in the EU Member States and Candidate Countries: Where does Turkey Stand in the General Picture?	Hendrik Vos	Levent Kirval	levent.kirval@ugent.be	2006-2008
Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) — www.vub.ac.be				

[PROJECT] Politics beyond the state? Decision-making in the new institutional organization of modern politics	Kris Deschouwer	Kris Deschouwer Theo Jans Petra Meier Tamara Kovziridce Irina Stefuriuc Jo Buelens Marjolein Paantjens Bruno Coppieters Michel Huysseune Joanne Poirier Claus Schultze	kris.deschouwer@vub.ac.be	1999-2008
[PROJECT] Regional representations in Brussels	Theo Jans	Michel Huysseune	theo.jans@vub.ac.be	2004-2006
[PROJECT] The role of public authorities in a European Integrated Product Policy (IPP): regulators or co-ordinators?	Theo Jans	Isabelle Bédoyan Irina Tanasescu Delphine Misonne Aaron McLoughlin	theo.jans@vub.ac.be	2004-2006