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The Europeanisation of Local Government in Western Scotland, 1975 – 97.

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Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

The impact of European policy developments, or Europeanisation, upon sub-national authorities (SNAs) across the European Union has been subject to considerable debate in recent years, principally as a consequence of the establishment of a Single European Market and as a result, of Structural Funds to reduce regional disparities within the European Union. These developments have led to a widespread mobilisation of SNAs into the European policy process as European legislation began to increasingly impact upon the responsibilities of SNAs and as the European Commission became an important source of finance within the sphere of economic development.

This thesis considers the impact of Europeanisation upon local government in the West of Scotland through analysing firstly, the response of Strathclyde Regional Council to Europeanising influences and the policies which SRC subsequently pursued to respond to these developments. The impact of European policies as a form of multi-level governance is also evaluated through research into the role of local government within two institutions established in Strathclyde to deal with aspects of European policy :- Strathclyde European Partnership and the Overture programme. Lastly, the impact of local government reorganisation upon SRC's successor unitary authorities to engage with European policy is considered.

The research findings illustrate that the process of Europeanisation has developed through a number of cyclical stages which has resulted in the development of changing and varying responses from SNAs to European policy developments. The initial engagement of SRC with European Institutions occurred at an early stage as the Council attempted to discover new sources of finance. The pro-active stance of the Council resulted in financial benefits for Strathclyde but also an increasing engagement within SRC with European policy as the Council responded to the emerging Single European Market. This engagement also led SRC to attempt to utilise a variety of means to influence European policy. The research suggests that while local government was able to influence the European policy process this tended to occur where European Commission and / or member-state(s) interests overlapped with those of local government. While multi-level governance exists in Western Scotland, the key partners remain the European Commission and the member state.

The subsequent reorganisation of local government resulted in a diminished ability, on the part of local government in Western Scotland, to conduct a European policy at the same scale as had previously been conducted by SRC. However, the reorganisation of local government also demonstrated that the European function had become an integral component of the local government policy portfolio in Western Scotland despite the small size and limited finances of SRC's successor authorities.

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List of Abbreviations

AER	Assembly of European Regions
ARTM	Agency for Trans-Mediterranean Networks
CEMR	Council of European Municipalities and Regions
CBI	Confederation of British Industry
CE's	Chief Executives Department of Strathclyde Region
CI's	Community Initiatives
CoR	Committee of the Regions
COSLA	Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
CSF	Community Support Framework
DGI	Directorate General for External Relations
DGV	Directorate General for Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs
DGVI	Directorate General for Agriculture
DGXI	Directorate General for Environment, Nuclear Safety and Civil Protection
DGXVI	Directorate General for Regional Policies (and Cohesion)
DGXX	Directorate General for Financial Control
DoE	Department of the Environment
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
EC	European Community
ECOS	European City Cooperation Scheme
ECU	European Currency Unit
EEC	European Economic Community
EGS	Employment Grant Scheme
EIB	European Investment Bank
EP	European Parliament
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
IDO	Integrated Development Operation
LECs	Local Enterprise Companies
LGIB	Local Government International Bureau
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MLG	Multi-Level Governance
NPCI	National Programme of Community Interest
NUTS	Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics
PHARE	Polongne-Hongrie : Actions pour la Reconversion Economique
RETI	Traditional Industrial Regions of Europe
SBD	Strathclyde Business Development
SDA	Scottish Development Agency
SEA	Single European Act
SEM	Single European Market
SEP	Strathclyde European Partnership
SMEs	Small and Medium sized Enterprises

SNAs	Sub-national authorities
SPD	Single Programming Document
SRC	Strathclyde Regional Council
STUC	Scottish Trades Union Congress
WOSEC	West of Scotland European Consortium
WSOP	West of Scotland Operational Programme
UK	United Kingdom
UKREP	Office of the United Kingdom Permanent Representation to the European Community

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Glasgow, March 2000.

Chapter One - Introduction.

1.1 - Globalisation, European Integration and Regions.

The impact of globalisation upon regions and localities, or 'glocalisation' (Peck and Tickell, 1994, p.317) has been widely theorised upon in terms of the geographical, economic, social and cultural outcomes of these processes. The differentiated impacts of globalisation upon regions and localities has also received empirical attention (Amin and Thrift, 1994; Dunford and Kafkalis, 1992) with attempts to categorise regions and localities according to their location (or likely position) within global hierarchies (Hebbert and Hansen, 1990; Sassen, 1991). At the European scale, the creation of a 'Single European Market' has again shifted attention onto the regional implications of a European market, and latterly of political integration (European Commission, 1991; Dunford, 1993). Analysis of this kind in particular has attempted to map economic disparities between regions resulting in discussions of core and peripheral regions (Keeble et. al, 1988), regions which are 'winning and losing' (Dunford, 1994) and of grouping of regions at the EU level with similar economic characteristics resulting in terms such as "European super regions" (Gripaios and Mangles, 1993; Masser, 1992).

The impact of globalisation upon political structures has tended to focus upon the impact of such trends upon the 'sovereignty' of the state (Camilleri and Falk, 1992) as global processes result in a 'hollowing out' of state power as areas of policy competences are removed away from the state to international or supra-national institutions, sub-national institutions and to governance arrangements drawing the private sector into policy fields previously reserved to the state. For example Jessop (1993) comments that :-

"The nation state is subject to various changes leading to its 'hollowing out'. This does not mean that the national state has lost all importance but its capacities to project power even within its own national boundaries are becoming ever more limited due to a complex displacement of powers upward, downward, and to some extent, outward....For the national state's tendential loss of autonomy

creates both the need for supranational coordination and the space for subnational resurgence” (Jessop, 1993, p.10).

The increasing pace of European integration post 1986, is frequently alluded to as an example of such processes at the European scale for instance Rosamond (1995) comments that :-

“The observation that national and subnational identities are reimagined as awareness of external, globalising ‘threats’ takes place could be usefully applied to the politics of nationalism within the EU, where the notion of ‘globalisation’ is replaced by ideas of ‘Europeanisation’ and ‘Europeanising’ dynamics” (Rosamond, 1995, p.401).

More directly the impact of globalisation and European integration have been considered as causal factors resulting in a restructuring of territorial structures within states where “European integration has further enhanced the importance of regions, in the political and economic domains, and produced a new dynamic” (Keating and Hooghe, 1996, p.217). Events at the global and European scale allied to a resurgence of regionalism and nationalism within Western European states has led to a reassessment of the importance of ‘place’ (Agnew, 1987) and regions as significant actors with a new European polity. Such a dynamic has been envisaged and conceptualised in many ways resulting in terms such as a ‘Europe of the Regions’ (Coombes, 1991), ‘variable geometry state order’ (Keating, 1992, p.60) and ‘multi-level governance’ (Marks, 1992). Such terminology attempts to capture changing region-state relations as a consequence of European integration and globalisation. For instance Keating (1996) describes :-

“a complex political order in which European politics are regionalised; regional politics are Europeanised; and national politics are both Europeanised and regionalised” (Keating, 1996, p.51).

Underpinning such analyses is a recognition of a refocussing of attention onto the sub-national scale as an arena which may shed considerable light upon the changing territorial relationships occurring within nation-states. As Keating and Loughlin (1997, p.1) put it :- “The regional question is once again on the social science and political agendas in Europe and North America”. This thesis

considers the 'place' of Strathclyde Region between 1975 and 1997 within this emergent polity in terms of the impact of European policies upon the region and as an institution within a larger region / nation in which territorial politics (in the UK state) became re-emphasised. Prior to discussing the position of Strathclyde Region within Scotland and the UK, it is worth noting that the term 'region' is itself contested and subject to a variety of interpretations dependent upon the context within which it is used. ¹As Harvie (1994) observes, "Region implies a *division of government*" (Harvie, 1994, p.10) and it is this administrative definition of a region which I adopt in this thesis.

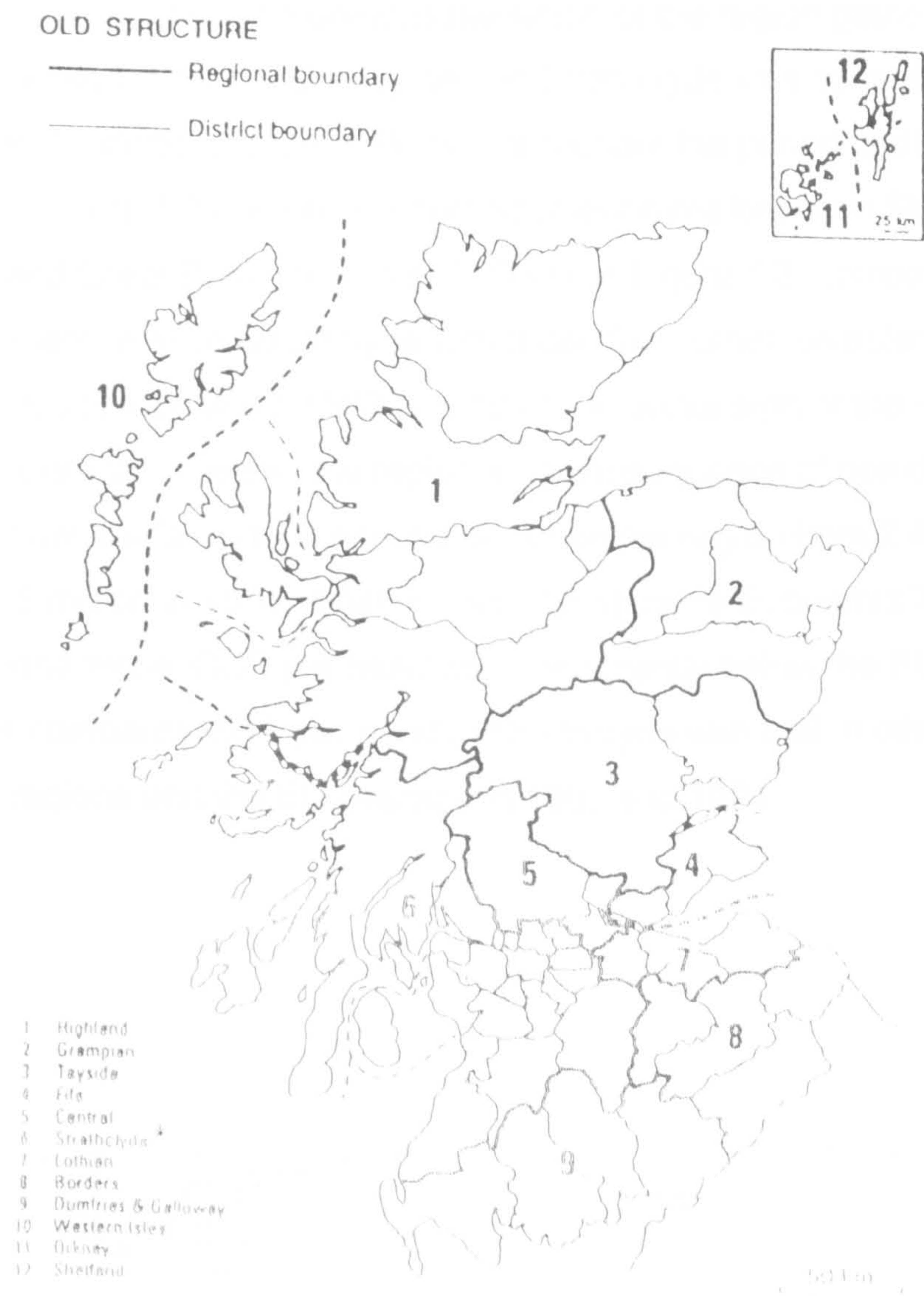
1.2.1 - Locating Strathclyde 'Region'.

Strathclyde Regional Council (SRC) emerged out of the Wheatley Commission (1969) becoming operational in 1975 as the largest Scottish local authority, accounting for nearly half the national population. The 1975 Reform of Local Government devised a two-tier structure with the Regional Councils responsible for a wide range of services including :- strategic planning, industrial development, highways, transport, water and sewerage, education, social work, police and fire, and consumer protection². The size and strategic competences of SRC made it one of the largest local authorities in Europe for the period of its existence. From 1975 to 1996, SRC was constantly controlled by the Labour party which held a massive majority of the councillors on the council with the scope for effective opposition from other parties minimal. Figure 1.1 displays the two-tier structure of local government between 1975 and 1996.

¹ Keating and Loughlin (1997) provide a useful typology of the many forms in which regions can be defined.

² District Councils had a range of competences which were non-strategic, the most important of which both politically and financially was the responsibility for housing policy.

Figure 1.1 - The Structure of Local Government in Scotland, 1975-96.



Source Paddison (1997), p.100.

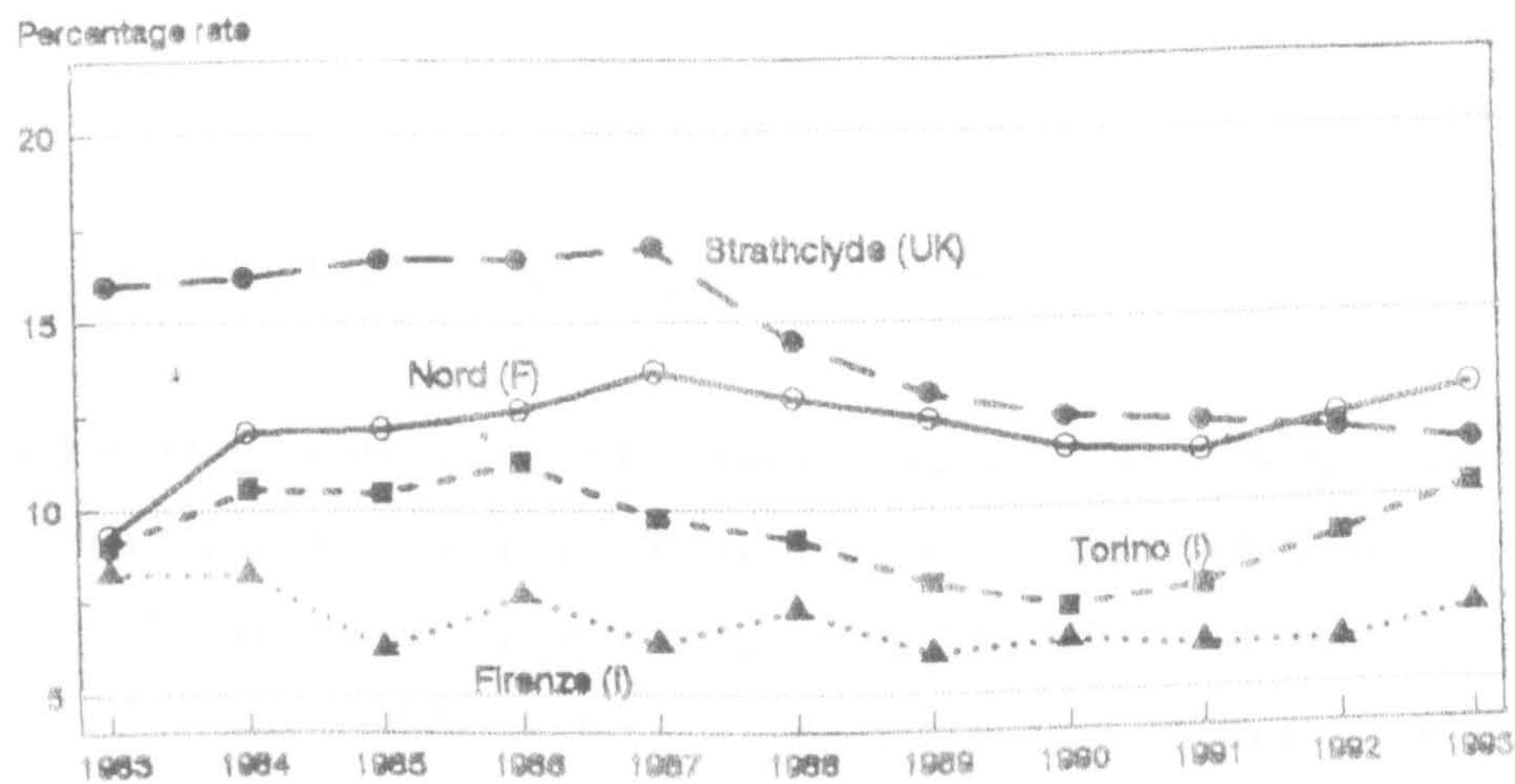
The location of Strathclyde (and Scotland) on the North Western periphery of Europe resulted in SRC being less likely to benefit from the creation of a Single European Market whilst the deindustrialisation of the region gathered pace during the 1980s ensuring that unemployment in Strathclyde was constantly higher than that in both Scotland and Great Britain throughout the period of the council's existence. Figure 1.2 compares unemployment rates between Strathclyde, Scotland and Great Britain from 1977-95 whilst Figure 1.3, compares unemployment rates in Strathclyde with those from other 'selected' industrial regions in Europe between 1983 and 1993. A further sign of the severe economic dislocation within the region as a consequence of deindustrialisation is apparent from the fall in total population within the region from 2.47 million in 1977 to 2.3 million in 1991, a fall of 6.9% (Strathclyde Economic Trends, 1995, p.25). Furthermore, GDP per head was consistently below the EU average. Figure 1.4 compares GDP per head in Strathclyde with that in other 'selected' industrial regions and the EU average in 1981 and 1991.

Figure 1.2 - Unemployment in Strathclyde Region, Scotland, and Great Britain, 1977-95.



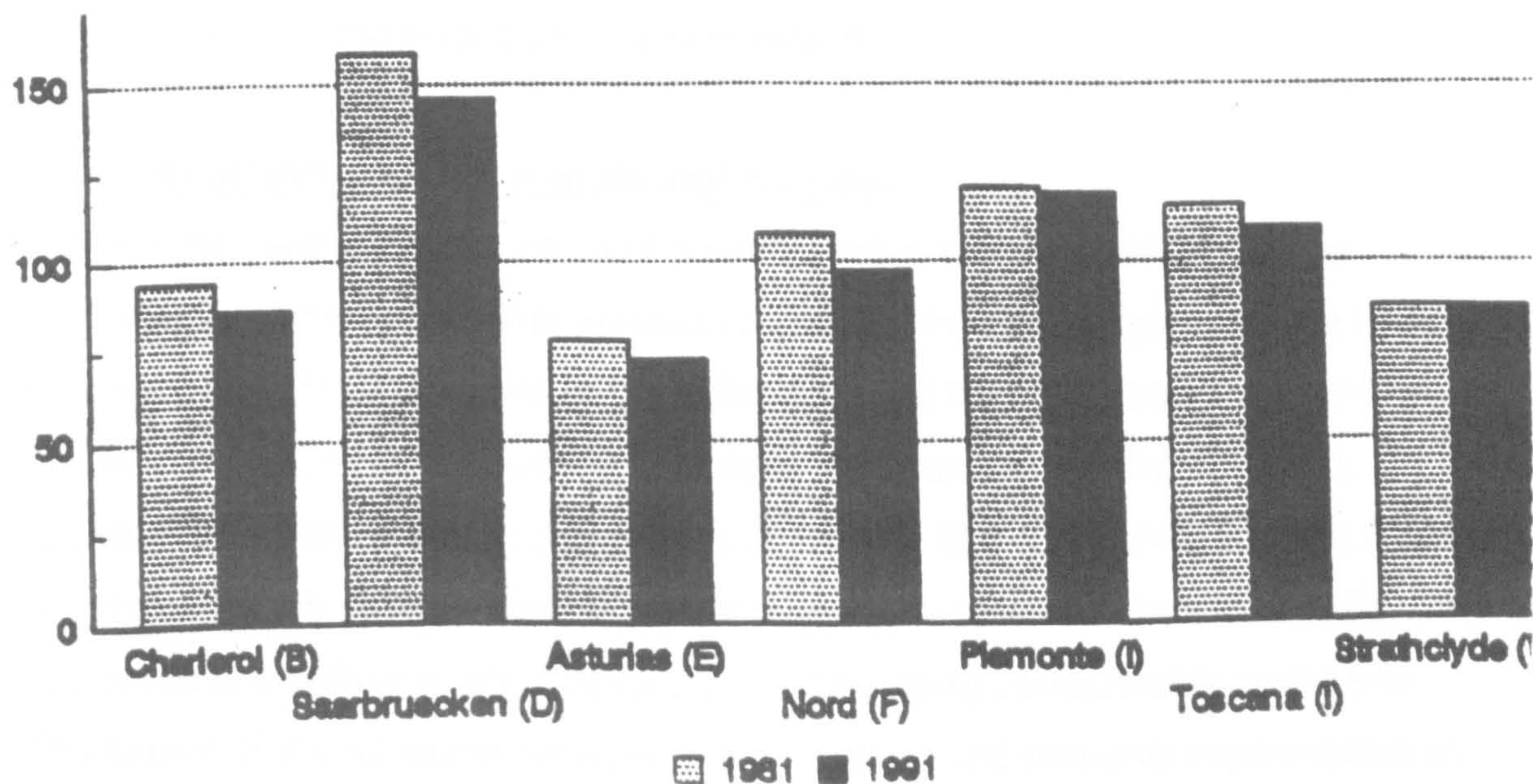
Source:- Strathclyde Regional Council (1995), p.20.

Figure 1.3 - Unemployment in Strathclyde and 'selected' industrial regions in Europe, 1983-93.



Source:- Strathclyde Regional Council (1995), p. 30.

Figure 1.4 - GDP per head in Strathclyde and 'selected' industrial regions in Europe, 1981-91.



Source:- Strathclyde Regional Council (1995), p.30.

Clearly the size and the range of strategic functions which SRC possessed enabled the Council to be a significant actor within the Scottish political environment. The extent of economic dislocation within the Region ensured that economic development / regeneration was a constant policy priority of the Council throughout its existence. Local government in Scotland was again reorganised in 1996, with the area formerly covered by SRC being divided amongst 12 single-tier unitary authorities³. The experience of, and response to

³ See Chapter Eight, for a discussion of the debates surrounding reorganisation.

Europeanisation of a large, strategic sub-national authority (SNA), and latterly of smaller, unitary authorities subject to both global and European economic change provides the backcloth to this research.

1.2.2 - Scotland, the Union State and Europe.

Despite the centralized structure of government in the UK prior to 1997, a significant degree of territorial variation existed within central government through the existence of the Northern Ireland, Scottish and Welsh Departments of State resulting in the use of the term 'union state' (Rokkan and Urwin, 1982), as opposed to unitary state, to convey this variation. The Scottish Office has been responsible for a steadily increasing set of policy responsibilities since 1885, with this process of administrative devolution accelerating considerably post-1945. The extent of this variation between policy-making and primarily implementation between Scotland and the rest of the UK has been the subject of considerable debate (Kellas, 1990; Midwinter et.al. 1991). Local government represents a key symbol of Scottish political differentiation as a result of Scotland having a system and structure of local government distinct from that in the rest of the UK. In terms of Europe, the UK Government position placed Scottish interests firmly within the context of the 'union state' as :-

"The Secretary of State's membership of the Government of one of the most influential EC Member States ensures Scotland a strong voice in formulating Community policy. The Scottish Office participates fully in the UK governmental machinery which determines the UK negotiating stance in determining EC discussions" (Scottish Office, 1993, p.21).

Scotland was not immune from the rise of regionalism / nationalism apparent in the rest of Western Europe from the 1960s onwards. Demands for a greater degree of Scottish autonomy, whether within or outwith the UK, became a central feature of Scottish political debate. Between 1975 and 1997, demands for constitutional change peaked in 1979 and then subsided following the lack of a sufficient majority in favour of devolution in the Referendum of that year and the election of a Conservative Government resolutely opposed to home rule. Devolution was back on the agenda by the mid-1980s and remained there

throughout the period of this study. Europe was a central element of the constitutional debate following the SNP in 1988 adopting a policy of 'Independence in Europe' instead of outright independence. The policy change placed Europe at the centre of Scottish constitutional debate and enabled the SNP to appear as "a modern, progressive force..[whilst also] providing an answer to the 'separatist jibe'" (Mitchell, 1996, p.234). The new policy also reflected changing attitudes in Scotland towards 'Europe' probably as a result of widespread opposition to the Conservative government within Scotland by the 1980s. For instance Keating comments that :-

"Class, sectoral, partisan and territorial oppositions have thus moved from hostility to the Community to seeing it as a means of outflanking a centralising, right wing UK government" (Keating, 1996, p.185).

Local government represented a key arena within which conflict between central government and Scottish opposition groups emerged, notably with regard to the poll tax, water privatisation and indeed local government reorganisation. More generally the approach of central government towards Scottish local government was frequently viewed by Government critics as representing an attack upon the post-war welfare consensus in Scotland via the imposition of 'alien' Thatcherite / New Right policies with regard to local government (Brown, et.al., 1998).

However, whilst the broad direction of policy with regard to local government pursued by the Conservative government in England was largely followed in Scotland, such as council house sales and the introduction of compulsory competitive tendering, the extent of this process was mediated and limited by the Scottish Office in areas such as opting out and water privatisation (Midwinter, 1995). Nevertheless, central-local relations during the majority of the period on which this research is based "have been uniquely conflictual and..the standing and status of elected local authorities has been subject to a more aggressive attack from the centre" (Stoker, 1991, p.12) as compared to the rest of Europe.

The United Kingdom has frequently been viewed as anomalous in terms of the territorial distribution of powers within the state, in comparison with other

European states which have tended to introduce decentralised structures of government, particularly since the late 1960s. Even in terms of local government (as opposed to federal governments such as the German Lander and Spanish Autonomous Communities) the UK was portrayed as out of step in the period pre-1997. For instance, Blair (1991) comments :-

“local government in continental Europe and in Britain is moving in quite different directions. Where in the one case there are numerous instances of decentralisation of powers and transfer of functions from state administrations to the local authorities, in the other there is a reduction of local responsibility through privatisation or transfer to appointed bodies” (Blair, 1991, p.56).

The centralised nature of the UK state pre-1997, led to an apparent paradox for UK analyses of Europeanisation, namely “the Europeanisation of sub-national government in the context of a strengthened and centralising national state” (John, 1996, p.131). The position of sub-national actors in Scotland, and to a lesser extent Wales, becomes more complex given the territorial identities and demands emerging from these nations during the period in which the research was conducted. This thesis considers the experience of local government in the West of Scotland, within this paradoxical context, as a significant sub-national actor within a centralised state and a nation / region subject to global and European economic change from the top-down and demands for increased autonomy from the bottom-up between 1975 and 1997. It is to the structure of this thesis that I now intend to turn.

1.3 - Thesis Structure.

Following on from the discussion above, **Chapter Two** considers the meaning of ‘Europeanisation’ in relation to local government prior to considering a number of conceptualisations of the role of sub-national actors within the European Union. In particular, the chapter examines ‘Multi-Level Governance’ as a framework of analysis with which to analyse some facets of SRC’s European policy. The process of Europeanisation as experienced by local authorities in the UK is discussed drawing attention to the different form which this process took post-1986 following the implementation of the Single European Act (1986) and

Maastricht Treaty (1992). Finally the role of the Scottish Office with regard to European policy is considered, prior to a range of research themes being established upon which the subsequent research is based.

Chapter Three deals primarily with the methodological approaches utilised in order to address the research themes established in Chapter Two. However the chapter initially considers these research themes in more detail, and divides these themes into two categories :- issues surrounding Europeanisation and questions dealing with Multi-Level Governance. A specific set of research questions, which are addressed in the subsequent chapters, are then developed. Subsequently the rationale for the selection of Strathclyde Regional Council as a suitable case-study of the twin processes of Europeanisation and Multi-Level Governance is considered. The research methods adopted in this study are then discussed which ranged from documentary analysis and participant observation to the use of elite interviewing and questionnaires. The various stages of the research process are considered with particular attention being paid to the selection of respondents at each period in the three distinct phases of the research.

Chapter Four deals with the internal impact of Europeanisation upon Strathclyde Regional Council. Firstly, the influence of European policy upon SRC in the period prior to 1986 is considered with a particular focus on the accessing of EEC finance and the process surrounding the establishment of a European Unit within SRC and of a representative office in Brussels. Secondly, the development of SRC's European policy post-1986 is evaluated, focusing particularly on the changing role of SRC's representative office; the participation of the Council within trans-regional networks; and finally, the changing structures established within SRC to deal with European policy post-1986.

Chapters Five and Six are both concerned with the experience of Strathclyde Regional Council within Multi-Level Governance institutions. Chapter Five deals

with the evolution of partnership arrangements in Strathclyde from 1985 to 1996. Three principal forms of partnership developed during this time-period, and the influence of SRC, Scottish Office and European Commission upon the evolution of partnership in Strathclyde is considered in detail. Chapter Six deals with the role of SRC within the (Ecos-) Overture programme. In particular, the chapter deals with the changing power relations within (Ecos-) Overture between sub-national authorities (SNAs) and the Commission and amongst SNAs involved within the programme and considers these experiences against the framework of Multi-Level Governance.

Chapter Seven deals with the ability of SRC to influence the European policy process via formal and informal mechanisms. Firstly, SRC's participation within trans-regional networks is evaluated focusing primarily upon its role within two networks :- the Assembly of European Regions (AER) and the Traditional Industrial Regions of Europe (RETI). Secondly, the role of SRC's representative office as a means of influence is evaluated. Finally, the role of informal networks as a means of influence is considered, concentrating mainly on the existence of Strathclyde-wide and Scottish networks with regard to European policy.

Chapter Eight analyses the impact of local government reorganisation upon the ability of local government in the West of Scotland to maintain a European policy. The chapter begins by considering the broader debate surrounding the 'need' for reorganisation and the consideration given to European policy during this period. The impact of reorganisation is considered across three axes. Firstly, the extent to which SRC's twelve successor authorities maintained a European function and the form this took. Secondly, the effect of reorganisation upon local government participation within the Strathclyde European Partnership and Ecos-Overture programme. Finally, the ability of local government of Western Scotland to articulate interests vis-a-vis European Institutions following reorganisation.

Chapter Nine then provides a synthesis of the conclusions reached in the previous chapters, whilst setting the research findings firmly within the framework of the research questions established in Chapters Two and Three. This final chapter also briefly considers the role of local government in Scotland with regard to European policy following devolution.

Chapter Two – The Europeanisation of Local Government.

2.1 – Introduction.

'Europeanisation' can imply a number of meanings, dependent upon the context in which it is used. For instance, in relation to member-states, 'Europeanisation' refers to:-

"an incremental process reorienting the direction and shape of politics to the degree that EC political and economic dynamics become part of the organisational logic of national politics and policy-making". (Ladrech, 1994, p.69).

In terms of sub-national authorities (SNAs), the 'process' of Europeanisation, in its most limited sense refers to "a collection of processes" (John, 1996, p.133), ranging from an awareness of EU legislation, accessing EU funds, networking with other SNAs, through to the establishment of regional offices in Brussels, implying the lobbying of EU institutions and thus possibly leading to the by-pass of national governments (see Goldsmith, 1993). It is not necessary for a SNA to carry out all of these functions for Europeanisation to be occurring, these merely represent a broad characterisation of the activities which SNAs have become involved in.

Engagement with the EU amongst SNAs, has increased markedly since the introduction of the Single European Act (1986) and the Maastricht Treaty (1993). As Bongers dramatically noted in 1990 :-

"The completion of the Single European Market will bring major changes in the way in which the UK is governed. These changes will affect every sector of society, they will affect every service provided by local government and, potentially at least, they will affect the constitutional position of local government in its relationship to the state". (Bongers, 1990, p.1).

Whilst Bongers may have over-emphasised the importance of these two legislative 'events', they do represent the key moments in terms of transforming the nature of SNA - EU relations. The Single European Act brought home clearly (to those not already aware) to local authorities, the necessity of being 'in touch' with potential EU legislation, due to the range of local authority competences over which Single Market legislation took 'precedence'. In relation to this, the

need for 'regional cohesion' within a single market, and the accordingly enlarged budget of the Structural Funds from 1988 onwards, ensured that UK local authorities would look to Brussels for 'finance', in a period of fiscal retrenchment at the national level. In addition, the reforms included the adoption of the 'partnership' principle concerning the requirement that sub-national actors be involved in the implementation of the Structural Funds (Armstrong, 1995, Keating, 1995; Marks, 1993). Equally, the Maastricht Treaty signalled the emergence of SNAs onto the European scene in a formal sense, through the creation of the 'Committee of the Regions' (CoR)⁴. Also included within the Maastricht Treaty, were clauses concerning 'subsidiarity' (Scott et. al., 1994). Traditionally, analyses of the EU policy process, have been dominated by state-centric conceptions of decision-making, most notably between functionalist / neo-functionalist versus liberal-intergovernmentalist accounts of policy-making (see Haas, 1968, Moravcsik, 1993; George, 1991). However, the increasing mobilisation of SNAs, particularly in the late 1980s, has resulted in a number of conceptual frameworks being developed to account for these developments, and to attempt to assess the ability of SNAs to feed their interests into the EU policy process. These models are by the nature of the subject matter exploratory, and have been subject to a process of continuous reformulation in recent years, as the literature upon SNA activity within Europe has expanded. I intend to discuss the literature surrounding some of the models which have been utilised to structure research upon SNA activity, before proceeding to focus upon the most frequently adopted approach of 'Multi-Level Governance'. Thereafter, I will outline the experience of UK SNA's in this area, through reference to existing research upon Europeanisation.

2.2.1 - Towards a Framework of Analysis ?

A wide variety of explanations have been offered as to the extending role of SNAs, within the EU policy process however, they can be 'collapsed' into three main categories. Firstly, 'Third Level' accounts, most commonly articulated through the term : 'A Europe of the Regions'. Secondly, through the lens of 'para-diplomacy', and finally, through the framework of 'multi-level governance'.

⁴ The Committee of the Regions (CoR) is not an EU Institution in a 'formal' sense, rather it is a consultative body, consisting of regional and local representatives, with the role of discussing EU policies that have a 'regional dimension'. (see Van Der Knaap, 1994; McCarthy, 1996).

2.2.2 - The 'Third Level'

Initial attempts to conceptualise the increasing involvement of SNA's in extra-territorial activities tended to rely upon a 'functionalist' logic, whereby the 'spillover' (Haas, 1968) of functions at the EU scale, also involved a devolving of powers to sub-national levels, in order to maintain legitimacy and fill the 'democratic deficit' (Martin, 1990). The most prominent example of such thinking, coalesced around the slogan:- 'a Europe of the Regions'. Such ideas were not entirely new, indeed Rhodes criticised the "considerable ambiguity in the notion of a 'Europe of the Regions'" in 1974 (Rhodes, 1974, p.105), whilst also drawing attention to the not inconsiderable difficulty in determining what constituted a 'region', and to the wide variations in power amongst SNAs across Europe. These depictions of the role of SNAs within Europe were not intended to describe current reality, but rather to set out an idealistic vision of an alternative 'Europe' to that being constructed by EU member-states. As such, "the vague and overworked slogan of a 'Europe of the Regions'" (Jeffrey, 1996a, p.57)⁵ was less an attempt to conceptualise SNA - EU relations, but rather a 'call to arms' for SNAs, as the EU began to increasingly influence their activities and sub-national actors mobilised as a result. Accordingly, the vision of a 'Europe of the Regions' was operationalised through the conception of the 'Third Level' by a wide range of SNAs in the negotiations leading up to the Maastricht Treaty.⁶ Sub-national lobbying appeared to result in the creation of the 'Committee of the Regions' and the inclusion of subsidiarity clauses within the Maastricht Treaty.

However, whilst Third Level conceptions do not provide an analytical framework, they did connect with wider debates, notably those surrounding globalisation, and the posited interplay between the global and the local (see Chapter One). Keating (1995) draws upon these themes when he attempts to steer a middle course through the two competing hypotheses that European integration is a

⁵ Jeffrey (1996b) draws a distinction between the usage of the 'Third Level' in the form of proclamations concerning proclamations of a 'Europe of the Regions', and a more 'neutral' usage of the term 'Third Level' which is intended to "describe the various and many forms of European engagement of regional and other sub-national authorities" (Jeffrey, 1996b, p.213). However, this neutral usage of the term, merely provides a descriptive function, rather than containing any conceptual underpinnings.

⁶ The term 'Third Level' refers to the scenario whereby the EU would develop a structure where the 'regions' (Third Level) would be present in European negotiations along with the European Institutions (First Level) and Member-States (Second Level). Most prominent amongst sub-national actors in lobbying for such an outcome, were the German Lander and the Belgian regions and communities. For a fuller account, see Jeffrey, 1996b.

process which maintains the state (and perhaps has rescued it, Milward, 1992) or that European integration and regionalism will result in the 'end' of the state, as it loses authority and competences to political regimes from above and below. Instead he argues that while states control the broad thrust of policy and 'events', nevertheless such control is not absolute, to the extent that some concessions have been made by states, which may not have been desired. This may be due to either territorial demands or by external economic and strategic interests. To this extent :-

"the processes and institutions of European integration and regionalism have brought into being new actors and new networks which themselves become an element in the political game" (Keating, 1995, p.11).

However, given the rather grand claims of 'Third Level' proclamations, it was inevitable that a rather more cautious conceptualisation of the role of SNAs within Europe would be necessary.

2.2.3 - Paradiplomacy.

'Paradiplomacy' refers to policies carried out by SNAs which may be "parallel to, often co-ordinated with, complementary to, and sometimes in conflict with centre-to-centre macro-diplomacy" (Duchacek, 1990, p.32). The concept has emerged through the study of the external activities of states in the US and Canadian provinces, with a concentration upon the activities of the external trade offices of North American sub-national authorities. As a result, studies of para-diplomacy tend to focus upon the direct interactions between SNAs and foreign institutions, without any mediating role being performed by the nation-state. Particular emphasis is placed upon the impact of globalisation upon sub-national actors, as the 'complex interdependence' (Keohane and Nye, 1989, 1991; Soldatos, 1993) of the world economy motivates states and provinces to follow a trade policy more closely focused upon the requirements of the locality, in order to cope with economic restructuring. As Brown and Fry comment :-

"regionalism is also being globalised and is contributing to the explosion of 'subgroupism". (Brown and Fry, 1993, p.7).

Whilst globalisation is central to the development of paradiplomatic activities, other factors may also spur such action, such as, the existence of a regional

identity which enables elites to perceive that their interests are divergent from national policy; the existence of sub-national elites within an institutional structure, may encourage the desire to carry out new functions, such as operating within the international sphere; the search for new sources of finance in order to fund public policies; and finally, where regional interests are not viewed as being represented by or are disadvantaged by national policy (see Soldatos, 1990). Keating (1999) views paradiplomacy as a strategy via which SNAs can obtain support / resources to support economic, cultural / linguistic or political agendas or strategies.

The concept of paradiplomacy has lent itself to the study of European SNAs⁷, in relation to the role and function of sub-national offices based in Brussels (John, 1994; Mitchell, 1994). However, paradiplomacy has been developed primarily within a North American context, which as a result emphasises direct contacts between sub-national actors and foreign institutions. This is a rather uncommon scenario within the EU, where sub-national activities tend to be mediated, to at least some extent, through state channels. As a result, "little evidence would seem to exist for a North American style paradiplomacy within the EU" (Jeffrey, 1996b, p.214). In addition, the term 'paradiplomacy' has been viewed as difficult to define (Aldecoa and Keating, 1999) in terms of the area of activity which paradiplomacy refers to and the type of actors / organisations which engage in paradiplomatic activity. For instance Keating (1999) comments that :

"Paradiplomacy is part of a broadening of the universe of international affairs, in which states are no longer the sole actors. Regions operate alongside firms, trade unions, social movements and transnational organisations like Greenpeace or Oxfam. This universe is complex, fragmented and unstructured" (Keating 1999, p.6).

2.2.4 - Multi-Level Governance.

The 'rise' of regional and sub-regional activity within the EU, has been the subject of considerable attention, in particular since the doubling of the Structural Funds budget in 1988 (Harvie, 1994). Indeed, much of the literature upon regions focused upon the potential 'entry point' to EU Institutions that the expansion of the Structural Funds contained for SNAs. Initially, analyses of the role of SNAs

⁷ For a wide ranging consideration of paradiplomacy both within and outwith the European Union, see Regional and Federal Studies (1999) Vol.9. No.1.

within Europe focused upon individual 'events', and the problems such examples held for neo-functionalist or liberal intergovernmentalist theorists. For instance, McAleavey (1993) in a discussion of the role of SNAs in the debates surrounding 'additionality', concludes:-

" Rejecting both state-centred and neo-functionalist frameworks, we need explanations of European Community policy-making in the field of regional development that encompass all levels of the new and complex inter-governmental relationships involved.The specific details of this system remain unclear, but the role of sub-national units of government should be incorporated into our analysis of its outline." (McAleavey, 1993, p.104-5).

The first attempt to provide a coherent framework within which to view the apparently triangular relationship between the EU, member-states and SNAs, was provided by Marks (1992, 1993), through his concept of 'Multi-Level Governance'. As with other academics, Marks drew his initial conception of 'multi-level governance' through an analysis of the role of SNA's within the sphere of regional policy. In particular, he drew attention to the 1988 reform of European regional policy which introduced partnerships into the management and implementation of Structural Fund packages. These partnerships he viewed as opening up "new arenas in which decision-making will take place" (Marks, 1992, p.214-5), through the involvement of SNAs⁸ in negotiations with the Commission and member-states, surrounding the implementation of the funds. Marks posited that these arenas were enabling policy networks to emerge between regional actors (from both the public and the private sector) and that, in particular, SNAs were creating direct links to European Institutions. Thus, within the field of structural policy, Marks was able to envisage :-

"a complex, multi-layered, decisionmaking process stretching beneath the state as well as above it" (Marks, 1992, p.221).

Marks expanded this initial hypothesis further, in later accounts, to include firstly, the involvement of subnational government within transnational networks; secondly, the establishment of 'regional' representative offices in Brussels; and finally, the establishment of the Committee of the Regions, as the main areas of

⁸ The 'partnerships' also introduced outside agencies, from the private sector and public sector, for example, educational establishments, which were eligible for funding. In this sense, these new decision-making arenas, also raised issues surrounding governance.

sub-national mobilisation within the EU (Marks, 1993, 1996). Marks describes 'multi-level governance', in a manner which diverges from the traditional triangular relationship between the sub-national - national and the EU, as:-

" a system of continuous negotiation amongst nested governments at several territorial tiers - supranational, national, regional and local - as the result of a broad process of institutional creation and decisional reallocation that has pulled some previously centralised functions of the state up to supranational level and some down to the local / regional level ". (Marks, 1993, p.392).

Thus, Marks develops a framework where a wide range of actors interact across several tiers of government, often within newly created institutional structures, such as the Structural Fund 'partnerships'. Marks contends that SNAs are drawn to interacting with Brussels, in order to obtain some degree of control over their policy environment. Thus, the greater the amount of policy competences which a SNA commands, the more likely it is that it will attempt to create links with EU Institutions. SNAs require information concerning forthcoming legislation, and concomitantly they wish to influence the drafting of legislation. Equally the Commission and the European Parliament in particular, are interested in obtaining information from as many sources as possible, and especially from non-state sources in order to obtain information which a member-state may not wish to disclose or which could undermine a member-state policy position within European negotiations . For instance, McAleavey considers the pressure applied upon member-states when information is passed by SNA's to the European Commission which undermines a central government position within the context of the additionality regulations for EU Structural Funds (McAleavey, 1993), while John (1999) also considers the potential for such alliances to undermine member-states. Additionally, Marks considers regions which have a sense of 'distinctiveness', identity or 'associational culture' (Marks et. al., 1996a) at odds from the national as being more likely to mobilise in Brussels, in order to "foster autonomous channels of informational exchange because they do not want to rely exclusively on national channels" (Marks and McAdam, 1996b, p.265)⁹.

⁹ Marks (1996b) when discussing the motivations for opening 'regional' offices, identifies the degree of political autonomy devolved to SNAs as a key factor in opening an office. As Marks states :- "Strong regional identity intensifies demands for regional governance; strongly entrenched regional governments intensify regional identity" (Marks, 1996a, p.60). However, this appears to denote a slight modification of his earlier position, where the policy autonomy whilst being viewed as important, was not seen as a key factor (see Marks, 1993).

Thus, 'multi-level governance' represents less of a transition to a 'Europe of the Regions', and rather to a 'Europe with the Regions' (Hooghe, L, cited in Marks, 1996b), where SNAs attempt to modify the state dominance of the EU, through obtaining access to the decision-making process, either through institutional creation (such as the Committee of the Regions) or by obtaining influence within existing structures (for instance, through the opening of 'regional' offices in Brussels). Most recently, Marks (1996c) attempts to account for the motivations of state 'actors' in dispersing functions to the supra-national and sub-national arenas, through tracing out situations in which a state may devolve powers in either a conscious or indeed unconscious manner.

Multi-Level Governance (MLG) has been applied widely to the activities of SNAs throughout Europe, most frequently in terms of the extent of mobilisation of SNAs within member-states.¹⁰ These accounts have tended to emphasise the differentiation between and within states in terms of SNA mobilisation, however this is not in itself a criticism of MLG, as the concept is itself a loose framework within which to categorise these variations which "appear to be about as great a variation as along any other political dimension in Western Europe" (Marks, 1996c, p.21). Multi-level governance has been criticised¹¹ due to the top-down implications of its initial premises, most notably, by Jeffrey (1996b) who considered MLG as being overly focused upon the interactions between member-states and the EU, with regions merely responding as 'passive agents' to the opportunities or spin-offs which arise out of these interactions. Instead, Jeffrey considers that more attention be paid to 'bottom-up' processes where SNAs :-

"may actively seek to, and succeed in changing those dynamics in ways which facilitate their European policy engagement". (Jeffrey, 1996b, p. 214).

¹⁰ For instance, 'Regional and Federal Studies', Vol.6, No.2, special issue on multi-level governance.

¹¹ Analyses of an emergent regional dimension have also been scrutinised from rather more 'sceptical' viewpoints, notably Anderson (1990) who sought to re-assert the liberal-intergovernmentalist paradigm within this sphere by asserting the centrality of the central state as a 'gatekeeper', which although "the ability of member states to retain their roles as gatekeepers varies, this capacity remain strong. Moreover, subnational actors often view the EC as yet another exogenous institutional constraint on action". (Anderson, 1990, p.417).

To achieve this, Jeffrey considers that MLG should concern itself more fully with the domestic arena, as :-

"the real transformation on the relative roles of SNAs and the central state in EU policy-making has taken place in the intra-state arena.....SNAs have begun to wrest away from central state institutions some share of the competence to represent their member state in the process of EU policy-making, and to mobilise this *through* rather than beyond the established structures of the member state. 'Europe', for SNAs, has become *domesticised* rather more than they have become genuinely internationalised". (Jeffrey, 1997, p.3).

'European Domestic Policy' draws upon the experience of regions within federal constitutions, such as the German Lander or the Belgian regions or communities, where there has been a constitutional settlement between the central state and the regions as to their respective rights across the European policy agenda, so that there is now considerable involvement of SNAs in the formulation of the member-state position through institutionalised structures.¹² Additionally, Jeffrey contends that the extent of mobilisation of SNAs will be a function of the number of competences they hold which are affected by EU legislation. Thus, Jeffrey concurs with Marks (1996a) that access to funding is not the main motivation for SNA mobilisation within the EU. Equally, Jeffrey recognises the diversity which exists between and within member-states, in terms of SNA mobilisation. As such, he outlines five factors which determine the success of a SNAs 'European policy'. These are :-

- A) Constitutional - SNAs with extensive constitutional powers are more likely to exert more influence over European policy than less well endowed SNAs.
- B) Intergovernmental Relations - Formal structures of state - SNA relations will create a relationship of 'close interdependence' and so enable SNAs to influence policy more effectively than through informal interactions.
- C) Administrative Adaptation - Early and extensive adaptation to the Europeanisation process by SNAs will improve the likelihood of influencing European decision-making.

¹² For a discussion on the procedures developed to include SNAs in the formulation of a member-state's position within the EU, see Jeffrey (1996) on the German Lander, Morass on the Austrian Lander and Kerremans and Beyers (1996) on the Belgian regions and communities. Belgium, Germany and Austria represent the prime examples of the domesticisation of European policy.

D) Coalition - Building - The establishment of coalitions with other actors with compatible European policy interests is likely to improve the prospects for successfully influencing European decision-making.

E) Legitimacy - The 'credibility' of SNA claims to an influence in European policy-making, will be enhanced by the legitimacy that institution holds, particularly when underpinned by a regional identity / civil society.
(Jeffrey, 1997).

'European Domestic Policy' does not represent a radical split away from MLG, but rather a refinement of the focus of academic engagement, back onto the SNAs themselves and the policy environment within which they are embedded. Whilst, 'European Domestic Policy' may represent a useful approach, in terms of analysing the rather more structured relationships which exist within federal frameworks, the UK requires a looser framework due to the largely informal structures which exist between local government and central government within the European policy sphere. However, 'European Domestic Policy' does allow a useful refocussing of analysis onto the domestic political sphere and in particular, onto the scope available to SNAs in attempting to influence EU decision-making.

Analyses of the role of SNAs within the EU are evolving constantly, due to the relatively recent nature of these processes. However, MLG in its widest sense (including the reformulation inherent within 'European Domestic Policy') raises a number of issues for this study including :-

- 1) Where sub-national actors enter into institutional relationships with outside actors, how do the relationships between these actors (in particular, between SNAs, central government and the European Commission) evolve over time?
- 2) Which actors dominate these relationships?
- 3) How extensive is the influence of SNAs within such relationships?

In terms of the frame of reference of this thesis, institutional developments resembling multi-level governance arrangements are of direct relevance to two institutional structures established within Strathclyde involving a 'partnership' of actors from a range of governmental tiers, namely, the 'Strathclyde European Partnership' and the 'Ouverture' programme. Accordingly these institutions will be evaluated using a multi-level governance framework.

Finally, as Jeffrey (1997) notes, the key emphasis of any research into SNA activities within the EU should be what difference does SNA mobilisation make to policy outcomes within the EU ?, or "is there really a *multi-level* governance in which sub-national mobilisation has led to a 'real shift of decision-making power' to the advantage of SNAs in EU policy processes?" (Jeffrey, 1997, p.15). Perhaps more accurately, this question can be rephrased to 'fit' the purposes of this thesis to read :- to what extent do 'local' actors *believe* SNA mobilisation has 'made a difference' ?. Accordingly, what policy outcomes were changed and what were the strategies used ?.

Given this re-assertion of the domestic environment, I now intend to briefly summarise the literature upon the role of UK SNAs within the EU, both in terms of 'multi-level governance' and in the wider sense of the overall 'Europeanisation' of local government within the UK.

2.3.1 - Europeanisation within UK local government.

The experience of UK local government can be divided into two distinct time periods. These are the role of local government prior to 1986, and accordingly the impact of Europeanisation post-1986, when the impact of the signing of the 'Single European Act', began to filter through. Given the focus of this thesis upon Strathclyde and thus Scotland, attention will be drawn to 'regional' differences within the UK discussed within the literature, and in particular, to the process of Europeanisation within Scotland.

2.3.2 - The Europeanisation of Local Government within the pre-1986 EEC.

Prior to the 1986 Single European Act, the extent of involvement with EEC institutions amongst local government actors tended to be limited to obtaining finance from Brussels, through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) or the European Social Fund (ESF). The primary use of this finance for local authorities would be:-

"to reduce the amount which has to be borrowed to finance an existing committed project and hence reduce interest charges and debt service costs which they would otherwise have to pay." (Mawson and Gibney, 1985).

However, access to these funds tended to require co-ordination with central government rather than EEC institutions, as nation-states tended to exert a very strong influence over "how the money was spent and who received the assistance" (Armstrong, 1995, p.35-6). One area where local authorities could potentially engage in fruitful contact with the European Commission, was in attempting to access 'non-quota' funds under the ERDF, where the Commission had greater discretion in determining eligibility. However, the comparatively small amount of funds available, as opposed to the overall ERDF budget, ensured that only the more pro-active local authorities were involved in such contacts. Thus, UK central government can be viewed in the period up until 1986, as fulfilling a 'gatekeeper' role (Anderson, 1990; Keating, 1995), between European Institutions and UK local authorities.

The process of applying for ERDF assistance on a regular basis tended to be limited to larger authorities, as Mawson and Gibney (1985) stated:-

"those authorities with a large population base and those with second tier strategic functions are more likely to have the staff resources and range of activities to be successful in securing ERDF support. In contrast, smaller local authorities and those in the areas of lower regional priority may well be less familiar with the workings of the EC, and indeed, consider that it is not worth the time and effort of putting forward applications". (p.154).

In UK terms, two local authorities which fulfilled these criteria were Strathclyde and Birmingham, which both opened offices in Brussels during 1984, these were the first sub-national representative offices to be opened by UK actors. In this sense, these two local authorities can be considered 'pioneer' authorities onto the European scene (John, 1994). Scale is clearly an important factor determining whether a local authority was able to engage actively with EU Institutions. Mawson and Gibney (1985) stress the importance of employing staff to deal primarily with EU affairs and in particular with funding applications. The positioning of such a section within the Chief Executive's Department was also regarded as important, if the local authority was to liaise effectively with government ministries and individual departments, in terms of assessing the impact of EU legislation. Moreover, the development of close contact with Commission officials was viewed relevant (particularly with regard to ERDF

funding), in order to stay aware of funding possibilities and potential changes in regulations. Clearly such activities would only be feasible for a larger local authority.

Whilst Mawson and Gibney emphasise the dominance of the Department of the Environment and the Welsh Office over English and Welsh local government, Scottish local government experienced a more co-operative relationship with the Scottish Office. Keating and Waters refer to the Scottish Office as providing both "a channel of influence and, given the close links between the Scottish Office and local authorities, a source of support in dealing with EC matters" (Keating and Waters, 1985, p.71). Scottish local government at this time, appears to have worked primarily through the Scottish Office, although direct contact would be maintained by Scottish actors at the European level for information purposes. This emphasis upon the Scottish Office may be reflected in the lack of a European division within COSLA (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities), although Scottish local government was represented through the LGIB (Local Government International Bureau) on the International Union of Local Authorities and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions. Scottish local government was active in obtaining funds across the whole spectrum of schemes from the European Investment Bank to ERDF. However, ongoing concerns over additionality ensured that the real benefit of such monies was in terms of reducing borrowing, and therefore avoiding loan charges. Thus, "the Funds, though publicly visible, are in practice a relatively less important aspect of Scotland's relationship with the EC" (Keating and Waters, 1985, p.87). In terms of lobbying over funding regulations or EU directives which impacted upon Scottish local government, there was little activity, although Strathclyde was notable for having set up a representative office, and having "seized the initiative in developing contacts with Brussels, to a certain extent bypassing the formal channels through central government" (Keating and Waters, 1985, p.69-70).

2.3.3 - The Single European Act and Maastricht.

The Single European Act (1986) and the Maastricht Treaty (1993) completely transformed both the scale and form of SNA mobilisation with Brussels. The major impact of the SEA lay primarily with the requirements placed upon UK local authorities from Community legislation. Areas of local authority competence such as public procurement, environmental policy, social issues, education

through to employment practices in areas such as health and safety were heavily influenced by EU legislation. As a result, it became necessary for local authorities to be aware of EU legislation and to stay aware of potential policy changes, whilst also altering internal procedures in order to come into line with existing European legislation (Bongers, 1990; Hart and Roberts, 1995; Roberts et.al. 1990). The Single European Act also influenced the policies of local authorities within the field of economic development, where they were becoming increasingly important 'players', whilst the Structural Funds and policies on areas such as Research and Development, offered significant financial possibilities for local authorities. Due to the increasing impact of Community decisions upon localities and local authorities, it was hardly surprising that SNAs should attempt to mobilise to influence the decision-making process in Europe. Hart and Roberts describe the rationale for SNA strategies in response to '1992' in the following terms:-

"Putting support behind representative bodies for regional and local authorities, and making greater efforts to forge interregional links, may be a means by which sub-national government bodies can help overcome the 'democratic deficit' in the Community - not this time that between elected members and the legislative process, but that between the legislative process and the localities affected by its consequences, and that between Community programmes and those responsible for their effective implementation." (Hart and Roberts, 1995, p.105-6).

The Maastricht Treaty whilst not having as direct an impact upon UK local authorities as the SEA, did however have a rather more symbolic effect¹³. The creation of a Committee of the Regions in Article 198 of the Maastricht Treaty ensured that sub-national government "was for the first time officially acknowledged as part of the European Union" (Stolz, 1994, p.13)¹⁴, whilst the inclusion of clauses concerning subsidiarity (Scott et. al, 1994; Van Kersbergen and Verbeerk, 1994)¹⁵, provided further legitimacy to the mobilisation of SNAs within Europe.

¹³ Martin (1992) provides an example of a European Parliamentarian's view of the Maastricht Treaty, and in particular of the impact it was expected to have upon the 'regional dimension' of EU affairs and correspondingly upon EU 'governing structures'.

¹⁴ Van der Knapp (1994) also gives an informative overview into the origins of the Committee of the Regions.

¹⁵ These two articles provide interesting insights into the origins (historically and politically) of subsidiarity, and the contested nature of its meaning and indeed its application, or perhaps more accurately lack of application, given the debates surrounding its meaning.

2.3.4 - The Europeanisation of UK Local Government, post-1986.

The United Kingdom was frequently perceived as being out of step with the rest of Europe, in terms of its structure of sub-national government in the period between 1986-97. Whilst, the majority of Western European countries decentralised powers away from the central state, the UK was viewed as moving towards a more centralised structure of governance (Batley and Stoker, 1991). Additionally, sub-national government in the UK tends to be rather transitory in nature due to the history of British local government which consists of :-

" repeated revisions of boundaries and structures, carried out for reasons which have often paid scant regard to historical community identities or communities of sentiment and interest. The only European parallels with this orgy of reorganisation are to be found in the new democracies in Eastern Europe, where the structures of local and regional government have been repeatedly changed to meet the demands of ideologies and occupying Powers." (Elcock, 1997, p.1).

Nevertheless the period post-1986 saw UK local government mobilise onto the European arena on a scale comparable with the most active SNAs from other member-states. For instance, the opening of a regional office in Brussels can be taken as a measure of the extent of SNA mobilisation within member-states. John (1994) shows that the UK had 18 SNA offices located in Brussels in 1994, with only France establishing a higher number of 'regional offices'. Whilst in part this is symptomatic of the comparatively fragmented nature of UK local government, it is also a product of the process of Europeanisation going on within local government in the post-1986 period. Thus, the UK appears to present a paradox as a state which is experiencing "the Europeanisation of sub-national government in the context of a strengthened and centralising national state" (John, 1996, p.131).

The extent of Europeanisation within UK local authorities became increasingly apparent during the late 1980s, perhaps culminating in two key events. Firstly, the dispute between DGXVI (Commission Directorate-General for Regional Policy) and the UK government concerning the application of 'additionality'¹⁶,

¹⁶ Additionality has been defined as a principle of the Structural Funds which "aims to ensure that financing from Community funds is not used to replace national structural aid. More specifically, each Member State has to maintain, in the whole of the territory concerned, its public structural or comparable expenditure at least at the same level as in the previous programming period, taking

which culminated in an "alliance between the European Commission and British local authorities over the Rechar initiative [and] produced a climbdown by the UK government" (McAleavey, 1993, p.105). British local authorities had been prominent in this dispute, through the 'Coalfield Communities Campaign', which consisted almost entirely of Labour-controlled local authorities which represented (ex-) coal mining areas. Secondly, the lobby by a grouping of 'industrial regions' under the auspices of RETI (Association of European Regions of Industrial Technology), and notably under the leadership of Strathclyde Regional Council, appeared¹⁷ to lobby successfully for the retention of Objective 2 funding within the enlarged Structural Funds budget, arising out of the Maastricht Treaty (McAleavey and Mitchell, 1994). These events perhaps signified the 'high-water mark' of UK local authority activity in Europe, as most commentators tend to temper the influence of UK local government action, with considerations of the dominant role of central government across the more routine aspects of European policy, or whether the "sound and fury" (Jeffery, 1997, p.15) of British local authority engagement with Europe is as significant as such individual events portray. A number of commentators note the continued dominance of central government over European policy even within policy areas such as the Structural Funds (Burch and Holliday, 1993; John, 1996). However, significant variations exist within the UK, with particular emphasis being placed upon areas which can form 'regional coalitions' of public and private actors around a development consensus, thus enabling a region to project itself onto outside actors as a coherent voice for a locality (Burch and Holliday, 1993). The most significant examples within the UK of such a 'regional coalition', exist in Scotland and Wales. The 'territorial offices' of the central state provide a focal point for channelling 'regional' interests into the national decision-making process, thus producing a 'territorial network', distinct from other areas of the UK (Keating and Jones, 1995; McAteer and Mitchell, 1996; Rhodes, 1988).¹⁸ Given the distinct

into account, however, the macroeconomic circumstances in which the funding takes place, as well as a number of specific economic circumstances, namely privatisations, an unusual level of public structural expenditure undertaken in the previous programming period and business cycles in the national economy. Member States must provide the financial information needed to verify additionality when submitting plans and regularly thereafter during the implementation of the programmed assistance" (European Commission, 1996, p.20).

¹⁷ The lobby can only be said to have 'appeared' to be successful, due to the impenetrable nature of Council of Ministers meetings, alongside the bargaining which accompanies such negotiations.

¹⁸ Interestingly, Garnise (1996) provides evidence that the Welsh Office was rather hostile to attempts by the Welsh 'territorial network' to extend their influence within the sphere of European

nature of Scottish local government as a result of the 'Treaty of Union' (1707) (Kellas, 1989), and the increasingly 'Scottish' dimension to European policy amongst Scottish local government in the post-1986 period, I intend to briefly to discuss some of the major developments within European policy in Scotland, and in particular within the Scottish Office (as well as related theoretical analyses) as the Department represented the prime political actor in Scotland. Accordingly, the relationship of Strathclyde Regional Council and indeed Scottish local government with Europe, was influenced heavily by Scottish Office responses to European policies.

2.4 - The Scottish Dimension.

The importance of the Scottish Office as a 'territorial manager' is well documented (for instance, Keating and Midwinter, 1981; Kellas, 1991), and this extends into the European policy arena, where a plethora of organisations with European interests orbit the Scottish Office, including local authorities. Mazey and Mitchell (1993) note the increase in sub-national activity within Europe post-1986, and the 'regional impact' of a large proportion of European legislation, in particular, the Single European Act. Correspondingly, they observed an increase in the scale of the Scottish Office's involvement with European affairs across a range of policy, notably in terms of European funding. This process they viewed as a form of Europeanisation, to the extent that :-

"The intention within the Scottish Office has been to raise the number of civil servants working on secondment in Brussels each year, to increase the European dimension of training and encourage trainee EC officials to spend time working with the Scottish Office. Training sessions for staff to increase awareness of the European Community has become a standard part of the development of the Euro-profile of the Scottish Office." (Mazey and Mitchell, 1993, p.110).

Perhaps the most noticeable development within the Scottish Office, concerning its profile with Europe was the creation of Scotland Europa¹⁹ as an umbrella organisation to bring together the disparate range of Scottish interest groups, including local authorities, based in Brussels under the one roof. At the same

policy. Notably, the Welsh Office was hostile to the creation of a 'Welsh' European office in Brussels, and to the inclusion of non-central state actors in funding partnerships.

¹⁹ The origins, function and development of Scotland Europa, including the role of SRC within it, is discussed fully in Chapter Seven, Section 3.2.

time, this enabled the Scottish Office to gain a foothold in Brussels through Scottish Enterprise which formally owned the controlling stake in Scotland Europa (Mitchell, 1994). However, the creation of Scotland Europa symbolised the constraints upon Scottish Office activities in Europe, as the Department had to ensure that it remained in step with Whitehall's European policy. Such concerns were clearly expressed in the Weeple papers, which recommended that the office in Brussels should :-

"articulate the Scottish Office view of Scotland's interests but it could not be too closely associated with the Scottish Office as it was feared that the Treasury and FCO [Foreign and Commonwealth Office] would oppose any prospect of the Scottish Office being able to articulate a view they did not share." (Mitchell, 1994, p.11).

It is this tension which runs through all the Scottish Office's activity with European policy, and in particular with the Scottish 'territorial network', as the Scottish Office attempts to reconcile the demands of Scottish interests groups with Whitehall policy. Keating and Jones (1995) acknowledge this mediating role of the Scottish Office within European policy, and consider ultimately, that the 'territorial ministries' must at best "content themselves with minor modifications of the overall UK line" (p.101). However, Keating and Jones consider that even here the influence of the Scottish Office is limited as the power of the Department declined during the 1980s, due to "an English backlash to the devolution episode of the late 1970s and the weakness of the Secretaries of State who, lacking majority support at home, could no longer credibly claim to speak for their respective territories" (p.101). McAteer and Mitchell (1996) whilst recognising that the Scottish 'territorial network' is constrained in its dealings with the Scottish Office, consider "the relationship between Scottish sub-central government and the Scottish Office [to be], in practice, a mutually productive one" (p.14). Alternatively, Bomberg (1994) views British 'territorial networks' to be rather uninfluential in terms of European decision-making, due to "significant structural or constitutional constraints" (p.59). Constitutional constraints refer to the position of the Scottish Office within the UK, and its inability to take a policy line 'at odds' with Whitehall. Structural constraints, that limit the effectiveness of the Scottish 'territorial community' according to Bomberg, are the small size of the network, and accordingly the relatively small amount of policy expertise,

information, contacts and even finance, in comparison with larger or issue-specific networks.

This ongoing process of Europeanisation both within the UK and at a Scottish level, raise a wide range of questions within the context of this thesis, namely:-

- 1) How extensive was the process of Europeanisation within Strathclyde Regional Council, and how did the process change over time ?. In other words, which departments were drawn into developing a European remit, and equally, which departments did not require or failed to develop such a function ?. Additionally, how important were trans-regional networks and a representative office in Brussels, as Europeanising influences ?.
- 2) In terms of external relationships, how did Strathclyde actors perceive their relationships with central state (primarily Scottish Office) officials and with Commission officials ?. Did these relationships change over time?. Did Strathclyde actors form alliances with the Commission 'against the state', or work with member-state officials, in a 'mutually productive relationship' ?.
- 3) How important was the 'territorial network' as a lobbying device, and what were its strength and weaknesses ?. What was the role of local authorities, and in particular Strathclyde within this 'territorial community' ?.
- 4) Were Scottish local authorities and / or the Scottish 'territorial network', able to modify UK policy positions within Scotland ?.

2.5 - Summary and Conclusions.

Studies of sub-national activity vis-à-vis Europe have tended to split into two categories. Firstly, analyses of the impact of sub-national mobilisation upon the European decision-making process have attempted to re-formulate the traditional debate surrounding neo-functionalist and liberal intergovernmentalist approaches to EU decision-making. The most prominent attempt to achieve such an outcome has been developed within the broad conceptual framework of 'multi-level governance'. Whilst, 'European domestic policy' denotes a shift to a greater focus upon the interactions within the nation-state, a significant amount of research already exists concerning the 'embeddedness' of sub-national institutions within the nation-state, and the interactions which take place between actors and institutions (from both the public and private sector) at regional and national scales, within the context of 'Europeanisation'. In addition, research

concerning the impact of 'Europeanisation' has also considered the necessary conditions for sub-national mobilisation within local authorities themselves.

This thesis will draw upon both approaches, as it attempts to provide an account of Europeanisation upon an SNA with significant 'resources' and strategic competences, whilst also considering the approaches used by Strathclyde Regional Council, to mobilise the institution as a significant European actor on both the Scottish and European stages. As McAteer and Mitchell observe :- "few have as yet investigated exactly how sub-central government lobbying strategies have been affected by changes within the European polity." (McAteer and Mitchell, 1996, p.2).

Martin and Pearce (1999) emphasise the need for 'bottom-up' analyses of Europeanisation upon SNAs through commenting:

"The differentiated pattern of local responses revealed by the survey findings has implications for methodology, theory and future policy development. In terms of research methodology, it highlights the importance of detailed, 'bottom up' analyses of local responses in addition to broader brush studies of developments at national and supranational levels" (Martin and Pearce, 1999, p. 46).

The longitudinal nature of this thesis will enable an exploration of the changes which occurred within SRC as the nature of European integration changed during the 1980s and into the 1990s. Additionally, the re-organisation of Scottish local government in 1996, will allow an assessment to be made of the extent to which 'Europeanisation' has taken place within Scottish local government, through analysing to what extent European functions continued to be undertaken by the reorganised councils. This will also allow a useful comparison to be made, as to the extent to which smaller 'unitary' councils with less strategic competences, have the capacity to develop a European policy. However, further consideration will be given to the 'methodological approaches' adopted in the research design of the thesis in Chapter Three.

Chapter Three.

Methodological Approaches.

3.1 - Introduction.

The previous chapter outlined the range of processes which come under the term: - 'the Europeanisation of local government' (Goldsmith, 1993), whilst also discussing a variety of conceptual frameworks which have been advanced to account for the increasing activity of sub-national authorities (SNAs) within structures and networks which extend beyond the state. This study will assess the extent to which the trends identified in the literature (as outlined in Chapter Two) were evident within one SNA, namely Strathclyde Regional Council (SRC). In a broad sense, there are two central aims underpinning this research.

Firstly, to assess the extent to which a process of 'Europeanisation' had been taking place within SRC over the period from 1975 to 1996, and correspondingly, the depth of such a process, when dealing with institutional change through the replacement of one Regional authority by twelve unitary authorities (Paddison, 1996). As a result, the study aims to assess the extent of Europeanisation which has taken place within local government in the West of Scotland as a whole during the previous two decades and the form such a process has taken.

Secondly, where SRC (or its successor unitary authorities) have created or entered into structures which involve actors from sub-national, national and supra-national arenas, I intend to analyse the development of such institutions through the framework of 'multi-level governance'.

This chapter will elaborate upon the research questions initially sketched out in Chapter Two, in order to refine the precise research questions this thesis will address. Having framed the research questions, the chapter proceeds onto an explanation as to the reasons for the selection of Strathclyde Regional Council, as the case-study adopted to analyse the process of Europeanisation. The methodologies adopted to address the study area are then discussed, with

regard to the effectiveness of the research methodologies selected, in answering the research questions. This is followed by an exposition of the various stages the field-research progressed through, and the rationale behind adopting such a research structure. In essence, this chapter is a recognition of the need to clarify the research process adopted prior to discussing the case-study findings premised upon the methodological approaches used, or as Newcomb succinctly states: -

"It is a truism that no research results are any better than the methods by which they are obtained" (Newcomb, 1965, p.1).

Chapter Two set out a number of issues with which this study engages, under the broad categorisations of 'Europeanisation' and 'Multi-Level governance'. Accordingly, discussion of the research questions maintains this two-pronged approach.

3.2.1 - Europeanisation.

As noted in Chapter Two, the process of Europeanisation within SNAs refers to a wide range of activities with which SNAs could become involved, ranging from: -

1. an awareness of European legislation,
2. willingness to search for European finance,
3. networking with other European SNAs,
4. engaging in contacts with European Institutions (in particular the Commission), in order to obtain information concerning EU legislation or potential future legislation,
5. the direct lobbying of European Institutions, in particular the Commission, and,
6. the establishment of a representative offices in Brussels.

This list of actions which represents the scale of Europeanising influences upon UK local government (John, 1994a; See also Chapter Seven, Table 7.1), raises a number of questions which can be sub-divided into three categories :-

- 1) What was the impact of Europeanisation upon the internal structures of SRC?
- 2) To what extent was SRC able to develop direct links to European Institutions?
- 3) What role did 'formal' and 'informal' networks fulfil in terms of SRC's European policy?

1) What impact did Europeanisation have upon the internal structure of Strathclyde Regional Council ?

The research conducted within Strathclyde Regional Council set out to establish the extent to which the local authority had engaged with European policy developments and correspondingly of the impact of such processes upon SRC. At an internal level, the questions to be addressed include the manner in which the 'European function' was incorporated into SRC's organisation; which departments were involved with European affairs; and more generally, to ascertain the awareness and opinions of councillors and officers concerning the extent to which European issues impinged upon the affairs of the council. Such considerations would enable an assessment to be made of the extent to which SRC was able to stay aware of EU legislation and the efforts made to obtain funding from EU sources, in relation to the structures put in place to facilitate such activities.

2) To what extent was SRC able to develop direct links with EU Institutions ?

The extent to which SRC was able to gain access directly to EU Institutions, and therefore unmediated by national structures, would provide a yardstick against which to test the extent to which SRC was able to 'bypass the nation-state'. The literature tends to suggest that such direct contacts are sought by SNAs in order to enable the sharing of information between themselves and EU Institutions, perhaps leading to an improved process of policy implementation (Goldsmith, 1993). The undertaking of para-diplomatic activities raises further questions, as to the role of the representative office in Brussels in developing contacts with EU Institutions; on which issues would representations be made; and which institutions would be lobbied. Most importantly, the extent to which direct

contacts were perceived by sub-national representatives to be an effective device with which to influence EU decisions will be considered.

3) What role did 'formal' and 'informal' networks fulfil in terms of SRC's European policy ?

'Formal networks' refers to 'Inter-Regional Associations' (Weyand, 1996) such as AER and RETI, which bring together SNAs from across the EU (and frequently from outside the EU) usually with the aims of attempting to engender co-operation between regions or to act as organisations which can provide a 'single voice' for SNAs upon particular issues when lobbying EU Institutions. This study aimed to assess the extent to which SRC became involved in such structures of 'horizontal integration', and the purpose of membership for the Council within such bodies. As before, the attitudes of SRC councillors and officials regarding the effectiveness of 'formal networks' will be assessed.

In terms of 'informal networks', the research set out to assess whether SRC developed contacts with other regions based in Brussels or EU officials and politicians in order to advance the Region's European policy. Of particular concern to the research (as noted in Chapter Two), was whether a Scottish 'territorial community' existed in Brussels, which attempted to express a distinctly Scottish 'line' to EU Institutions, and the role which SRC (and Scottish local government in general) pursued within such a network. At the Scottish level, the study set out to assess the extent of contacts and co-operation amongst Scottish actors concerned with European issues, for instance, the extent of interaction between the Scottish Office and SRC over European issues.

3.2.2 - Multi-Level Governance.

As noted earlier (see Chapter Two), there were two institutions created with the active involvement of Strathclyde Regional Council, which brought together actors from the sub-national, national and supra-national arenas. These were the Strathclyde European Partnership and the Overture programme. These

institutions provide the opportunity to analyse the relationships which developed between the various partners over a period of time, whilst assessing how the power relationships between the various 'partners' evolved over time. In essence, did such institutions allow SRC the opportunity to enter into the decision-making arena alongside the European Commission and the UK government within these policy arenas ?

Previous studies of the European dimension of UK sub-central government have tended to focus upon individual 'events' rather than upon the impact of Europeanisation upon SNAs in a holistic sense. This study intends to outline the response of Scotland's largest local authority to changes within the European polity across a broad time-period, in order to evaluate the extent to which a process of Europeanisation has been taking place within Scottish local government over the previous two decades. This longitudinal approach also covers a period of institutional change following the reorganisation of Scottish local government in 1996, in order to evaluate the extent to which the 'European function' continued to be developed amongst unitary authorities which represented smaller populations and possessed fewer resources than Strathclyde Regional Council. It is to the selection of SRC as the chosen case-study, which I now intend to turn.

3.3 - The Selection of Strathclyde Regional Council as a Case-Study.

In order to test the extent to which a process of Europeanisation was ongoing within Scottish local government, I set out to select an institution which would appear to fulfil the criteria, outlined in Chapter Two, of an SNA most likely to mobilise onto the European policy arena. As Mawson and Gibney (1985) noted, local authorities containing a large population allied to responsibility for a number of strategic services would be likely to have been successful in obtaining ERDF from the European Commission and presumably, in developing contacts with actors from European Institutions. Strathclyde Regional Council certainly fulfilled these criteria, as the authority covered roughly half the population of Scotland.

For example in 1981, SRC contained 2,400,000 people out of a Scottish population of 5,135,634 or 46.7% of the Scottish population (Kellas, 1989). The population of Strathclyde remained at roughly this proportion of the total Scottish population throughout the period of study. For instance, in 1991 the population for Scotland fell to 4,962,152 (Office of Population, Censuses and Surveys, 1991), whilst the population of Strathclyde Region stood at 2.3 million (SRC, 1995) or 46.3% of the Scottish total. In comparison with other Regional Council's in Scotland, Strathclyde is again significant in terms of its population base, with the second largest Regional Council in Scotland, Lothian, containing a population of only 735,892 in 1981 (Kellas, 1989).

The two-tier structure of local government in Scotland post-1975 left the Regional Councils with the major strategic and planning functions delegated to local government, including industrial development, transportation, roads, water and sewerage, education, social work, and the police and fire services (Midwinter et.al, 1991). Thus, the range of competences which SRC managed covered many areas which would subsequently be influenced by Single European Market legislation. In addition, the Region's location within an area of marked de-industrialisation (Keating, 1988) and its subsequent designation as an Objective 2 Region²⁰ (a declining industrial area) in 1989 under the Structural Funds ensured that SRC was likely to have engaged with the EU in terms of obtaining finance. The likelihood of SRC engaging with European funding was also enhanced due to the complementarity of SRC's policy aims and the funding aims of ERDF and ESF finance. The Council's principal policy priorities of addressing economic and social cohesion within Strathclyde were clearly outlined, as early as 1983, through SRC's 'economic and social strategies'²¹. Thus SRC's extensive engagement with European funding, in particular following the creation

²⁰ Whilst the majority of SRC was eligible for Objective 2 funding, it is worth noting that some of the regions outlying areas were eligible for Objective 1 funding. This will be considered further in the following chapters.

²¹ See Chapter Four for a fuller discussion of the impact of SRC's economic and social strategies upon the Council's engagement with European funding in the early 1980's and SRC (1983 and 1993) for detail of the social strategy and SRC (1994) for the economic strategy.

of an Integrated Development Operation in Strathclyde in 1988 (See Chapter Five), enabled the Council to utilise European funding as a financial mechanism via which to pursue SRC's economic and social strategies.

As noted in Chapter Two, John (1994) terms Strathclyde Regional Council a 'pioneer authority', due to the establishment of a representative office in Brussels during 1984, whilst Goldsmith (1993) notes the creation of an Integrated Development Operation (IDO) in 1988 covering Strathclyde, and Redmond and Barrett (1988) refer to the success of the region in obtaining finance through the ERDF. To this extent, it was possible to assume that SRC had been involved to some extent in European issues. On a more anecdotal basis, it was possible to find considerable evidence of Strathclyde's engagement with European issues (in particular with the Structural Funds) in the Scottish Press. Typically, such articles warned of possible cuts in European funding to Scotland, however Strathclyde frequently drew media attention to its European operations, for instance, The Herald commented in October 1991 :-

"Few regional authorities in Scotland, with the exception of Strathclyde however, have the population and financial resources to compete with their continental equivalents" (Herald, 30/10/91).

The engagement of local authorities with European finance would also obtain significant comment amongst the Scottish media. For example, the agreement to a package of funds for the Strathclyde IDO elicited the following response from the Herald in 1989 :-

"Whoops of delight throughout Strathclyde yesterday greeted the announcement of £56m worth of infrastructure projects funded from the European Regional Development Fund.....The four-year programme, known as the Strathclyde Industrial Development Operation, was agreed just in time, according to Charles Gray, leader of the council (SRC). (Herald, 24/11/89).

Equally, the location of Strathclyde Regional Council within the wider Scottish political environment, and in particular as an institution which formed part of the Scottish policy network surrounding the Scottish Office (Keating and Midwinter, 1981; Kellas, 1991), and the actions of SRC within this territorial arena

would provide a useful case-study of the extent to which sub-national actors would be able to draw upon 'regional coalitions' (Burch and Holliday, 1993) in any efforts to influence European policy-making. In relation to this point, the role of regional identity or regional civil society is frequently posited as a catalyst in enabling the mobilisation of SNAs onto the European policy-making arena²² (Jeffrey, 1997; Keating, 1996,). Scotland is frequently considered as a society which has a distinct regional identity and civil society, to the extent that it has been perceived as a 'stateless nation' (McCrone, 1992). This study therefore attempted to ascertain whether SRC attempted to accentuate the distinct nature of Scottish politics and accordingly of Scottish interests, in its efforts to obtain 'legitimacy' within European policy-making circles, or in order to form coalitions with others actors from Scotland when attempting to influence the EU.

Therefore, the selection of Strathclyde Regional Council as the case-study with which to assess the extent to which a process of Europeanisation had been taking place within local government in the West of Scotland over the period 1975-97, was due to a number of factors. The size of the authority itself and the range of competences for which it was responsible lent credence to the impression that SRC was likely to be the major sub-national authority within Scotland to be active in European terms. While other local authorities did engage to a considerable degree with European developments, notably in the cases of Highland and Lothian Regional Councils, the size of SRC in population terms and correspondingly of its budget in comparison to other Scottish councils ensured that SRC was clearly likely to be able to suggest the extent to which a process of Europeanisation was taking place within Scottish local government. While such trends may not prove to have been evident to the same extent in other Scottish local authorities, if SRC was found to have been largely unengaged with a process of Europeanisation this would also tend to suggest that other Scottish councils were largely unaffected by Europeanisation. Thus the choice of SRC as the focus for this thesis results from the extent to which

²² See Chapter Two for a broader discussion of this premise.

SRC dominated the pre-1996 structure of Scottish local government and was thus clearly as likely (if not more so) to be subject to a process of Europeanisation than any other Scottish local authority. Furthermore, SRC also fulfilled many of the 'conditions', outlined in the literature, as being likely to induce mobilisation onto the European arena such as eligibility for Structural Funding, being located within a 'region' with a distinct regional identity and a polity which is to some extent differentiated from that of the rest of the UK. These factors allied to the preliminary literature review (in which SRC was frequently referred to as an active SNA in European terms and more particularly, in terms of local authorities within the UK), provided the basis upon which SRC was selected as the case-study for this research.

3.4 - Initial Exploratory Fieldwork.

Prior to 'entering the field', I set out to obtain background information on the European affairs of SRC through a wide variety of methods. This was necessary as the primary method I intended to utilise, in order to answer the research questions outlined above, were elite interviews. Therefore, a thorough awareness of the issues surrounding the case-study would ensure that upon conducting field-work a considerable amount of evidence could be obtained within a short time-period without the need for basic areas of knowledge to be covered by the respondent for my benefit. Indeed many respondents would enquire as to your knowledge of a subject area prior to an interview. Consequently, carrying out the initial exploratory stages of the research ensured that the maximum benefit was obtained during the later research stages. The advice of Wagstaffe and Moyser on the value of background research prior to entering the field proved invaluable in this regard :-

"Interviewers need to arm themselves with as much background information as possible before venturing to begin the survey. The importance of full use of secondary sources, documentation and archival material cannot be over-emphasised" (Wagstaffe and Moyser, 1987, p.196).

Following the initial literature review, I undertook an archival search of the minutes of Strathclyde Region, focusing primarily upon the European and International Affairs sub-committee of the council which was established in 1992. These minutes²³ which were prepared by the Chief Executive's Department of SRC (which fulfilled a co-ordinating role concerning European policy) provided information demonstrating the wide scope of SRC's European policy over the period 1992-94. In addition, the minutes included a substantial amount of background reports for the period prior to this, which were issued upon the establishment of the Committee to enable Councillors to have an awareness of the manner in which European policy had developed within the Council, and the 'motivations' for SRC's involvement in particular projects. Additional information for the period prior to 1992, was also obtained from the Policy and Resources Committee which dealt with European affairs prior to the setting up of the aforementioned Committee.

Whilst the minutes of the Committee meetings tended to be rather formal documents, nevertheless, they provided vital information regarding the composition of the Committee, the extent to which members attended the Committee as well as enabling the identification of politicians who were involved in trans-regional networks and other European policy related organisations. Of particular importance were the background reports given upon the establishment of the Committee, to brief the Councillors on the development of SRC's European policy, and of the role of the various organisations with which SRC was a member or involved. Most Committee meetings received reports from officials concerning the development of policy within their own sphere of responsibility. These again gave invaluable information concerning the development of policy, as well as allowing me to identify the officials who were concerned with particular

²³ Prior to the full Committee meetings comprising politicians from all the political parties, the Labour group would hold a meeting at which they would agree a common position on policies. Unfortunately, the ruling Labour group papers have all been destroyed, and thus a large array of documented material, which would have been of huge interest has been lost. Occasionally, individual members would provide me with such papers which they had kept, however, this tended to only reinforce my sense of loss at the lack of an archive containing such documents.

policies. The Committee meetings covered a wide range of issues, which extended my awareness of the extent to which SRC was involved in European affairs, aside from issues surrounding European funding which were fairly well documented amongst the academic literature. For instance, to give a flavour of the range of issues which would be covered at the European and International Affairs Committee, the meeting of the 6th September 1994 provides a fairly representative example (See Table 3.1).

Whilst undertaking the archival search, I also began a process of participant observation²⁴, through attendance at the European and International Affairs Committee meetings of SRC. These meetings tended to take place once a month, although the workload of the Committee reduced as the re-organisation of local government drew closer. In total I attended seven Committee meetings which provided me with information regarding current debates within the Council regarding the European function within the new unitary authorities, in the build-up to re-organisation, and of the structures which would be put in place to conduct European affairs in the West of Scotland following reorganisation. Attendance at the Committee meetings also enabled me to make first contact with key actors, thus gaining me an entry mechanism when the interviews within the Council began²⁵.

²⁴ For a discussion on the issues surrounding undertaking participant observation, and the 'ethics' involved, see Spradley (1980); Jorgenson (1989); and, Punch (1994).

²⁵ The process of attending Committee meetings continued throughout the first series of interviews, until the abolition of Strathclyde in April 1996.

Table 3.1 - European and International Affairs Committee of Strathclyde Regional Council. Meeting of the 6th September 1994.

Agenda Items.	Contents.
Agenda Item No.1 :- Presentation on the Ouverture project, by the Director of the Programme.	The presentation outlined the development of the programme in recent months, and of the creation of a number of new projects.
Agenda Item No.2 :- Current European Issues.	A report was forwarded by the Brussels-based officer and presented by the Assistant Chief Executive which dealt with :- the newly agreed Community Initiatives package; the chairs of the new Committees of the European Parliament; the commissions established within the Committee of the Regions; comment on the Delor White Paper on 'Growth, Competitiveness and Employment'; and the conclusions of the Greek Presidency of the EU at a recent conference.
Agenda Item No.3 :- Community Initiatives.	A report by the Chief Executive's Department on the preparations being made to apply for Community Initiatives.
Agenda Item No.4 :- Growth, Competitiveness and Employment.	A report by the Chief Executives Department on the Delor's White Paper.
Agenda Item No.5 :- European Social Fund (Objective One).	Potential submissions for ESF support by SRC under the Objective 1 partnership, to be approved by the Committee.
Agenda Item No.6 :- European Social Fund (Voluntary Sector Organisations).	Potential submissions for ESF support in partnership with the voluntary sector, to be approved by the Committee.

Agenda Item No.7 :- Objective Two Lobby.	Update the members on the progress SRC was making with an Objective 2 lobby it was organising with other Objective 2 regions, concerning the distribution of Structural Funds for the period 1997-9.
Agenda Item No.8 :- European Dimension in Education.	A report outlining the European policy of the Education department for the year 1993-4.
Agenda Item No.9 :- European Social Policy.	A report by the Chief Executive's Department on the European Commission's Green Paper on European Social Policy, and how it would influence the Commission's work programme.
Agenda Item No.10 :- Progress Report on the Ouverture Programme.	A report by the Chief Executive's Department on the financial contributions of SRC to the programme over the next year, and to ask permission for the Chief Exec's Dept. to negotiate a contract for further funding with the PHARE programme.
Agenda Item No.11 :- Villes et Ports.	A report from the Physical Planning Department of the role of SRC's involvement in the Villes et Ports exchange of experience programme, and to propose holding a conference of the network in Glasgow.
Agenda Item No.12 :- Trans-European road network.	Report by the Director of Transport of a revised European Commission view on a network of 'Euro-routes' for the UK.
Agenda Item No.13 :- Conferences.	Applications by members to attend conferences dealing with European issues. Total of seven applications at this meeting.

Source:- SRC (September 1994), European and International Affairs Committee Papers.

Observation of the Committee meetings enabled me to 'pick out' the more active members of the Committee, in terms of the contribution made by individual Councillors to the meetings. As a result, I tended to leave the more fully involved

actors to the end of my first series of interviews amongst SRC actors, in order to be armed with as much information as possible before approaching these individuals. The Committee meetings also yielded valuable insights into the various factions within the Council, in particular within the ruling Labour party group. As the Labour party dominated the Council in terms of political representation throughout the existence of the authority, divisions within the ruling Labour party tended to be of greater importance than the role of opposition party groupings²⁶. This awareness proved particularly useful when it came to interviewing individual Councillors, as it enabled a sensitivity with regard to the phrasing of questions relating to internal politicking and its impact upon European policy²⁷.

In addition to the analysis of official documents, a search of newspaper articles dealing with SRC's involvement with Europe, was also carried out. These articles dealt primarily with the allocations of Structural Funds to SRC and proved an interesting source of documentation, regarding the public statements made by leading SRC figures at this time, as well as the perception which the Council was attempting to convey regarding its European policy to the general public, as well as the media's treatment of such activities (as referred to above). More generally, newspaper articles dealing with European issues within a wider Scottish context were also studied. These articles covered a wide range of issues, such as, the debates surrounding additionality and the setting-up of Scotland Europa, although they tended to focus once more on the lobbying process surrounding the re-negotiation of Structural Fund packages. Thus, these articles helped to provide a wider contextualisation of the Scottish political debates surrounding Europe, as SRC developed a European policy.

²⁶ To illustrate the dominance of the Labour party in terms of political representation within the Council, following the Scottish Regional Council elections of May 1982, of the 103 Councillors elected to Strathclyde Regional Council, 79 (77% of Councillors) represented the Labour party with the remaining Councillors being split between the Conservatives (15), Liberal (4), SNP (3), and Independents (2) (McCrone, D ed., 1982, p.268).

Finally, a series of preliminary interviews were carried out with actors involved in European affairs across Scotland (see Table 3.2). These individuals were primarily involved with the development of European policy within the Central Belt of Scotland, and the respondents came from a diverse range of institutions. The vast majority of respondents were not directly involved with the operation of European policy within SRC, although most had at some point come into contact with SRC in relation to European policy. An exception, was the interview carried out with an official from SRC's Chief Executives Department, who was interviewed to provide clarification on informational points regarding the organisation of the European function within Strathclyde²⁸. The preliminary interviews were undertaken, in order to further contextualise my understanding of the role of Scottish local government vis-à-vis the EU, and also to ascertain insights into areas where I required further knowledge concerning my understanding of the role of various actors within Scotland and their European activities. However, the primary aim in carrying out exploratory interviews, was to 'pilot-test' my elite interviewing technique, in order to develop my experience of this form of research, prior to entering into the field. The material obtained from these interviews has not been included in the research presented here, rather these exploratory interviews acted as a 'scene-setting' exercise, and whilst the information obtained guided my later questioning, the interviews were carried out in order to obtain information not available from other sources, rather than to test the research questions outlined earlier. Table 3.2 illustrates this point, as these preliminary interviews were conducted with respondents from a diverse range of institutional backgrounds. The interviews conducted with the European Commission representative and at European Information Centre were clearly intended to provide further information regarding linkages between SNAs and the EU whilst the remaining interviewees considered the practical experience of a

²⁷ See Chapter Four, Section Four with regard to the issue of the impact of internal Labour group conflict upon the management of European policy.

²⁸ Two other individuals were also interviewed from institutions, which although not directly from SRC, were closely linked to the authority. These were the Strathclyde European Partnership and the Ouverture programme. Again, this was done for informational purposes.

variety of respondents concerning the extent of SNA - EU relations within both Strathclyde and Scotland.

Table 3.2 - List of Preliminary Interviewees.

European Officer, Industry Department, Scottish Office, Edinburgh, June 1995.
European Commission Representative, European Commission Office in Scotland, Edinburgh, June 1995.
Representative from the European Information Centre, Glasgow, June 1995.
Representative from the Scottish Trade Union Congress, Glasgow, July 1995.
Official from the Strathclyde European Partnership, Glasgow, July 1995.
Official from the Ouverture Programme, Glasgow, July 1995.
Official from the Chief Executive's Department, Strathclyde Regional Council, July 1995.
Scottish Labour MEP, Glasgow, August 1995.
Scottish Labour MEP, Edinburgh, August 1995.

This process of exploratory fieldwork enabled me to enter the field, armed with a wealth of background information concerning the development of SRC's European policy and the wider context of European policy throughout Scotland. Additionally carrying out elite interviews enabled me to gain experience in conducting semi-structured interviews. The research 'proper' undertaken in the 'field', was based upon elite interviews. However prior to elaborating upon the research structure employed in 'the field', I will discuss the rationale surrounding the selection of elite interviewing as the most suitable technique with which to realise the research aims of this thesis, and the manner of their operationalisation.

3.5.1 - Methodological Approach.

In order to ascertain the extent of SRC's engagement with European policy, this study intended not to focus purely upon institutional structures as tends to be the case in accounts of multi-level governance, which has an implicit emphasis towards new 'decision-making arenas' (Marks, 1992). The research was also concerned with the broader process of Europeanisation and thus intended to take into account the role of formal and informal networks. This was in part a recognition of the complexity and fluidity of the EC policy process, with extensive lobbying and political activity occurring outside institutional arenas (Mazey and Richardson, 1993). Thus, in order to comprehend the European policy of SRC, it would be necessary to analyse informal lobbying strategies pursued by the Council vis-a-vis EU Institutions. Equally the conception of informal networks at the domestic level, such as 'territorial communities' (Rhodes, 1988, p.78), implied a focus upon non-formalised political interactions. This is not to state that the research does not analyse institutional arenas, on the contrary, where this is applicable documentary materials are utilised to analyse institutions, such as the Strathclyde European Partnership. However, this study focuses upon the motivations of actors in pursuing particular strategies, and the perceptions they hold as to their utility, in order to understand the development of European policy within SRC.

In order to achieve these aims, I decided to utilise semi-structured elite interviews. Elite interviewing has the advantage of enabling the researcher, to go into detail with key actors over the research area. Given the research aims of this study, and the relatively small nature of the sample population, the undertaking of elite interviews appeared the most effective way to achieve these aims. In addition, elite interviewing had previously been widely used in order to ascertain the attitudes of sub-national elites (for example, Putnam, 1993). However, elite interviewing has been criticised for its inability to be readily systematised or made comparable. In part, this is a problem for in-depth research amongst elites within any policy sphere. As a result, the research

design I employed attempted to mitigate against these criticisms in two ways. Firstly, the interviews were semi-structured, with a pre-arranged 'interview guide' designed for each series of interviews where a number of subject areas were identified as having to be discussed in the interview. Thus, each interview covered certain subject areas, whilst allowing the respondent to elaborate upon issues they wished to discuss further. Secondly, the earlier stages of the research process enabled a cross-checking to occur between accounts given in interviews and evidence obtained from documentary analysis.

3.5.2 - Elite Interviewing.

"If the focal data for a research project are the attitudes and perceptions of individuals, the most direct and often the most fruitful approach is to ask the individuals themselves" (Cannell and Kahn, 1965, p.330).

The process of defining or categorising any particular group as being an 'elite' is widely contested²⁹, however for the purpose of the research conducted in this study I adopted Laswell's general definition of an 'elite' as "the influential" (Lasswell, 1950, p.3). Clearly in terms of the frame of reference of this study the elite constituted those who exerted *influence* over the development of SRC's European policy, with these individuals being identified via the 'positional' and 'reputational' approaches.

Prior to setting-out to conduct a series of interviews, I developed a sampling strategy, which in all three series of interviews followed the pattern of initially identifying individuals via their position (the 'positional' approach) within a particular institution. Thus, in the case of the first series, I identified potential interviewees, either through their position upon the European and International Affairs Committee, or in the case of officials, by contacting the appropriate department. Once the process of interviewing had begun, I would frequently ask interviewees to recommend individuals they considered relevant to the research,

²⁹ For a discussion of theories concerning elites and elitism see Evans, M, in, Marsh,D and Stoker, G (1995), p.228-247.

although additional contacts would frequently be offered spontaneously throughout the course of an interview. This 'reputational' approach not only improved my knowledge of the area concerned, but also gave me an insight into the 'network' of the interviewee³⁰. From this process of 'snowballing', further interviews could then be obtained (Arber, 1993). Thus, the 'reputational' approach enabled me to uncover the 'network' of the respondent, whilst the initial 'positional' approach ensured that I did not merely interview those who were connected to a particular network, and who shared common interests. In the majority of cases, contact was made with the respondent via a letter, outlining my research area and my reasons for wanting to interview the potential interviewee. However, on some occasions, contact was initially made by telephone, particularly where a respondent had been interviewed previously³¹.

This combination of the 'positional' and 'reputational' approaches to data sampling for elite interviews represented an attempt to minimise the problems of each single sampling method. The problems associated with these approaches are, in the case of the positional approach that individuals may be interviewed who hold positions of authority but in reality do not exert influence, while a reputational approach may lead the researcher into a network of individuals who share similar interests / views but who do not represent the whole spectrum of individuals who exert influence within a particular policy field (See Moyser and Wagstaffe, 1987). The utilisation of these two approaches to sampling, was viewed as a means of overcoming the difficulties associated with adopting a purely reputational or positional approach. "Intra-method triangulation" (Sarantakos, 1993, p.155) is a common means of attempting to overcome the deficiencies of a single technique while also providing a means from which to

³⁰ Moyser, G and Wagstaffe, M (1987) include a number of essays containing discussions of the various benefits of the 'positional' and 'reputational' approaches to sampling in the context of elite interviews. In essence, the 'positional' approach is seen as useful in the initial stages of gaining 'access', whilst the 'reputational' approach is often viewed as worthwhile at a later stage. Moyser and Wagstaffe also consider the problems associated with these sampling approaches as a means of obtaining a sample for elite interviews.

obtain as diverse, and representative, a sample of respondents as possible within the confines of a qualitative methodology.

In order to assess the perceptions of interviewees to past events, and to obtain their judgement concerning the research questions, the elite interviews carried out during this research project, were 'semi-structured' interviews with the questions asked being 'open-ended'. This approach was adopted, in order to allow the respondent to focus upon areas of particular interest of concern to themselves, whilst staying within the frame of reference of the research question. In order to encourage the interviewee to talk freely, I always emphasised the confidentiality of all interviews at the outset. Whilst, the interviews were tape-recorded, it was again emphasised that the tape could be switched off at any time³². I viewed my role as interviewer, as being that of an 'outsider', attempting to develop 'trust' with the interviewee, in order to facilitate a 'frank discussion' with the respondent (see Fielding, 1993 and Arthur, 1987). Particularly in situations where a respondent had been interviewed previously it was frequently apparent that they would become more 'open' and display a greater interest in the research project. The objective of the interview was not to uncover 'truth', but rather to ascertain the interviewees perceptions and beliefs regarding particular events and actions. As Dexter states:-

"The informant's statement represents merely the perception of the informant, filtered and modified by his cognitive and emotional reactions and reported through his personal verbal usage's" (Dexter, 1970, p.120).

During the period in which the interviews were being undertaken, local government throughout Scotland was experiencing a period of considerable 'turmoil' as respondents sought employment in the new councils, and

³¹ The exception to this, were the series of interviews conducted in Brussels, where all the respondents were contacted by telephone.

³² This was a frequent occurrence, with a majority of respondents wishing that either the tape be switched off at some point, or that 'on-tape' comments be considered as 'off the record'. I would attempt to verify 'off the record' comments (as I would with other statements on tape) with other respondents, in order to try and verify accounts, although in every case the name of the initial informant was never mentioned. Occasionally, respondents would prefer not to be recorded at all, in which case I kept hand-written notes.

subsequently, settled into their new positions. Thus, it is worth mentioning the 'time-bound' nature of elite interviewing as respondents could possibly begin to see the previous era of relative stability with Strathclyde as a 'golden era'. This combined with the 'memory bias' of respondents when recalling the development of European policy, particularly during the first series of interviews, may again have led respondents to add a 'gloss' onto past events. Thus, a constant effort was made throughout the interviewing process to 'cross-check' accounts of past events with various interviewees.

Qualitative methods and the analysis of the results generated are frequently critiqued for their lack of verifiability and resulting reliability (See Devine, 1995). The sampling strategies and the approach taken within interviews outlined above, were intended to ensure that the research was undertaken in a systematic manner which would minimise any distortion in results caused by the methods utilised or the effects of the researcher upon the individuals researched. Equally, the interpretation of transcripts required that they were organised in a systematic manner in order to be analysed. This process involved a number of stages. Initially, the transcripts from a particular series would be read, in order to develop categories out of the data. Filing cards were used to list these various categories according to the section of a particular interview from which they were drawn, thus enabling me to access all comments on a particular subject. These passages were then re-read, in order to draw conclusions upon these particular topics, with particular attention being made to ensure that both majority and minority views were accounted for³³. In addition, where transcript material is utilised within the research, the viewpoint expressed was triangulated against other respondents to assess whether at least two other respondents from other positions (such as, a politician view being corroborated by an official and an individual from another institution) corroborated the perception expressed. If such an opinion is also expressed by a minimum of two other respondents then

the perception would be considered valid. Interviewees would be asked to comment on a particular perspective of a previous respondent in order to facilitate this process without being told that a previous respondent had elicited such an opinion. This approach of ensuring that at least three individuals expressed similar views regarding a particular issue, independently of each other, was intended to ensure that a consistent approach was advanced in determining how excerpts from the interview transcripts would be used within the research presented³⁴. The views expressed by respondents were also checked against other sources of information, such as, minutes of Council meetings, to ensure that the accounts given by respondents were consistent with other sources of documentation.

Transcript material has been integrated into the thesis in a number of ways, from direct quoting of particularly relevant accounts to assimilated references to the perceptions of actors upon a particular issue. However, such a process does raise concern that the 'voice' of the respondent(s) could be conflated or confused with that of the researcher. As a result, close attention was paid throughout the writing-up of results that the opinions of respondents are clearly differentiated from that of the researcher and are clearly referenced as being the opinion of an interviewee. At all times, individuals are not named due to the assurances of confidentiality given to all respondents. However, all quotes are preceded by a positionality statement, as to the role which the particular respondent held, for example, 'a prominent Labour SRC politician commented' etc. Following all quotes, a case number is given which relates to the interviewee list, where all respondents are listed according to their case number (see Tables 3.3 to 3.5).

³³ It was decided not to use the Nu-dist package, despite the many advantages this could have provided in terms of analysing transcripts, due to a lack of memory space in terms of the computing facilities available, thus rendering the package 'unmanageable'.

³⁴ See Raab, C, in Moyser and Wagstaffe (1987) on this approach to analysing interview transcripts.

3.5.3 - The Local Government Reorganisation Questionnaire.

The questionnaire dealing with the impact of reorganisation upon the European policy of local government in Western Scotland was clearly limited in scope, as it dealt with respondents following the reorganisation of local government, and thus was only completed by respondents during the final series of interviews (see Appendix Two). The decision to use a questionnaire for this final stage of the research process was taken in recognition of the increased number of local government officials and politicians dealing with European policy in the twelve successor authorities to SRC. An initial assessment of the number of officials dealing with European policy in Western Scotland following reorganisation had been ascertained from a COSLA document which listed the officials appointed as 'European policy officers' within unitary authorities in Scotland. Twenty-one European policy officers had been appointed to SRC's successor authorities according to this document (COSLA, 1996). Clearly to conduct a sampling strategy as applied to SRC would have been a costly and time-consuming exercise as a substantial proportion of Councillors on each Council European Affairs Committee and officials in a wide range of department beyond those titled as being European policy officers would have to be interviewed. Accordingly, four unitary authorities were selected as case-study authorities³⁵ whilst a questionnaire was sent to each Chair of a European Committee and European Policy Officer within SRC's twelve successor authorities³⁶. In total 17 questionnaires were completed from the target sample of 24 (a councillor and an official from each of SRC successor authorities) however one of these questionnaires was completed by a WOSEC³⁷ representative who was not directly employed by a unitary authority. The response rate from the unitary authorities was therefore 66.6%. Of the remaining 16 questionnaires, seven were

³⁵ Section 3.6, outlines the rationale for the selection of these four authorities as case studies.

³⁶ As the reorganisation of local government occurred in the middle of the research process, the questionnaire was not pilot-tested amongst 'practitioners', but rather amongst academics and researchers in the Departments of Politics and Geography, at Glasgow University.

³⁷ WOSEC (West of Scotland European Consortium) is an organisation formed by the twelve successor authorities to SRC and Dumfries and Galloway Council to represent the West of Scotland in the EU post reorganisation.

completed by politicians and nine by officials, a 58% response rate amongst councillors and 75% response from officials. In the case of North Lanarkshire two officials were interviewed and thus two questionnaires completed. Table 3.3 provides a breakdown of completed questionnaires by unitary authority.

Table 3.3 – Completed Reorganisation Questionnaires by Unitary Authority.

Unitary Authority.	Number of completed questionnaires from politicians.	Number of completed questionnaires from officials.
Argyll and Bute	1	1
Dumbarton and Clydebank	0	0
East Ayrshire	1	1
East Dunbartonshire	0	1
East Renfrewshire	1	1
Glasgow City	0	0
Inverclyde	0	0
North Ayrshire	0	1
North Lanarkshire	1	2
Renfrewshire	1	0
South Ayrshire	1	1
South Lanarkshire	1	1
Total	7	9

The questionnaire was divided into three elements (See Appendix Two). The first section dealt with the internal operation of European policy within individual councils, such as the number of staff dealing with European affairs and the councils structure of departments and Committee's which had been established to deal with the management of European affairs, in order to gauge the extent to which the unitary authorities had adopted common structures or developed their

own systems to deal with such a corporate function (Questions 1-4). This section also asked respondents to identify the key priorities of the council in terms of European policy and attempted to ascertain the extent of awareness of European issues through questions concerning the councils involvement in trans-regional networks and whether applications were being prepared for Community Initiatives (Questions 5-7). The second section concerned the extent of contacts between councils and external actors with an involvement with European issues, in order to gain an impression of the networks which the unitary authorities were likely to be involved in (Questions 9-15). The final section of the questionnaire contained questions concerning the impact of reorganisation upon local government in the West of Scotland as whole, whilst also attempting to assess the extent of European experience amongst those in European positions within the new councils (Questions 16-19).

The reorganisation questionnaire required respondents to provide factual answers concerning the new structures put in place following reorganisation, as well as attitudinal questions concerning the impact of reorganisation. This was due to the nature of the research process amongst the reorganised councils, where four unitary councils were selected as case-studies, whilst the remaining councils were only contacted via the questionnaire³⁸.

Accordingly, interviews were undertaken in the case-study unitary authorities, and the questionnaires were given to respondents at the end of the interview and returned by post. The remaining councils received the questionnaires by post, with the chief European officer within each council being identified from COSLA document listing all the main European officers within the reorganised councils throughout Scotland³⁹. Upon receipt of the questionnaires from officers, the questionnaire would then be sent to the politician who was Chair of the Committee within each council, as identified by the corresponding officer in the

³⁸ The research process, including the study of the reorganised councils (including the selection of the four case-study councils) is discussed later in this chapter (Section 3.6).

³⁹ This document was received upon request from COSLA, which due to its internal status, has not been published.

opening section of the questionnaire (Questions 1a and 1b). Where questionnaires were not returned, the individuals concerned would then be contacted by telephone. Thus, the third series research identified individuals via a 'positional' approach, however given that all twelve successor authorities were contacted and a high response rate was achieved, it is considered unlikely that such an approach led to a skewed sample, as the experiences of officials and politicians from the vast majority of authorities was ascertained by questionnaire thus a considerable amount of data was obtained ensuring that results were representative of experience across authorities in Western Scotland.

3.6 - The Research Process.

As has been stated previously, the design of the research process divided into three distinct stages, each dealing with a group of actors who held differing positions in relation to the research topic. Thus, those analysed fell into three categories :- firstly, individuals within Strathclyde Regional Council who were involved in the development of European policy; secondly, respondents external to SRC who were based in Brussels or Scotland, who had an involvement with SRC's European policy activities; and finally, actors who were involved in the development of European policy amongst the new unitary authorities. Accordingly, each stage of the research varied according to the sample population being approached whilst the methods applied remained uniform, with the exception of the reorganisation questionnaire.

Stage One - Individuals within SRC who were involved in the development of European policy.

The first research stage targeted officials and politicians from SRC with an involvement in European policy. The politicians selected for research were all drawn from the European and International Affairs Committee. A target sample of ten politicians was established prior to the research proceeding, with the politicians being selected due to the extent of their involvement in European affairs (for example, through representing the Council on trans-regional

networks) and also to provide a balance across party political representation. As mentioned above, my attendance at the Committee made it relatively straightforward to gain access to elected members, and indeed this was borne out in my response rate which stood at 70%, with 7 politicians interviewed, including a representative of each party which had a member on the Committee⁴⁰ (See Table 3.4). Thus roughly 54% of the Councillors who were members of the European Committee were interviewed.

The response rate amongst officials was also high, with eight departments initially being targeted, and an official being interviewed from five separate departments. Departments which had made representations to the European Committee were chosen as targets for interview due to their involvement in European affairs. Departmental involvement with the European Committee was ascertained from the minutes of the Council. However, a degree of 'snowballing' took place amongst this sample, as I was referred onto other contacts and as it became increasingly clear that certain departments, such as Chief Executive's and Strathclyde Business Development, occupied a central position with regard to the research topic. As a result, three interviews were carried out amongst officials from the Chief Executive's Department⁴¹ and two with officials from Strathclyde Business Development (See Table Three). Thus, eight interviews were conducted with officials from SRC representing five departments out of the eight departments initially targeted.⁴²

⁴⁰ Throughout the lifetime of the European and International Affairs Committee, it had 22 members, usually with around 13 members at any one time. When the interviews were carried out, I selected 10 members for interviews, of whom 7 were interviewed. In addition, one further SRC Councillor was interviewed, regarding the overall policy of the labour party within SRC, who had a limited involvement in European affairs, whilst the respondent was pursuing a fellowship at the University of Glasgow, thus accounting for the later interview date of Case Eight in comparison to other first series interviews.

⁴¹ In one case, an official from the Chief Executive's Department was interviewed on three separate occasions, as I required further information, although this is counted as one interview.

⁴² The majority of these interviews were conducted with the use of a tape recorder and transcribed later, however three officials requested that their interviews were not taped and thus hand-written notes were taken and written-up following the interview.

Prior to each research stage, an interview schedule was developed which identified the key issues I intended to address with every respondent. In the case of the first research stage, the interviews dealt with the motivations amongst politicians and within individual departments in developing a European agenda within a particular sphere of responsibility. Questions also centred on the relations between departments in terms of co-ordinating a European policy, and in particular upon the role of the Chief Executive's Department in such a process. The interview then moved on to the respondent's involvement in particular networks, and the informal channels of information and influence which a respondent would utilise in order to draw attention to a particular issue. Contact with external agencies was then discussed, with an emphasis upon relations with the Strathclyde European Partnership, Scottish Office and the European Commission. The interview would conclude on the topic of the respondent's perception of the impact of reorganisation upon European policy in the West of Scotland, which was particularly pertinent given that the changeover was approaching rapidly when the interviews were carried out.

Table 3.4 - Respondents from the First Series of Interviews.⁴³

Case Number	Position of the Respondent	Date of Interview
Case One	Senior Labour Councillor within SRC.	January 1996.
Case Two	Labour Councillor within SRC.	January 1996.
Case Three	Senior Labour Councillor within SRC (and CoR representative). Reinterviewed in third series.	January 1996.
Case Four	Liberal Democrat Councillor within SRC.	January 1996.
Case Five	Conservative Councillor within SRC.	January 1996.
Case Six	Scottish National Party Councillor within SRC (and CoR representative).	April 1996.
Case Seven	Liberal Democrat Councillor within SRC.	January 1996.
Case Eight	Former Labour Party Secretary within SRC.	February 1997.
Case Nine	Official from the Department of Physical Planning.	February 1996.
Case Ten	Official from the Roads Department.	February 1996.
Case Eleven	Official from the Education Department. Interviewed on three occasions.	February 1996.
Case Twelve	Official from the Chief Executive's Department. Interviewed on three occasions (once as a Third Series respondent).	March 1996.
Case Thirteen	Official from the Chief Executive's Department.	April 1996.
Case Fourteen	Senior Official from the Chief Executive's Department.	April 1996.
Case Fifteen	Senior Official from Strathclyde Business Development.	March 1996.
Case Sixteen	Official from Strathclyde Business Development.	April 1996.

Stage Two - Non-SRC respondents, located in Scotland or Brussels.

The second-series of interviews covered a wide range of actors, ranging from Strathclyde-based MEPs, Scottish lobbyists resident in Brussels through to European Commission officials and non-Scottish lobbyists in Brussels who had a frequent contact with SRC. The majority of these interviews were conducted

⁴³ As stated above, all respondents were assured of their anonymity and to the confidential nature of the interview, as a result, I do not identify the respondent's by name but rather by their

during a one month period in Brussels. Additionally, individuals throughout Scotland were interviewed from a range of organisations which were closely involved with SRC in various aspects of European policy (See Table 3.5). The field-work in Brussels was conducted within tight time-limits, as a result of financial constraints resulting in the field-work in Brussels being conducted in one month (October 1996), with respondents being targeted for interview according to their position within institutions. A range of institutions were initially identified with a target list of 11 individuals / institutions being drawn-up prior to arriving in Brussels. The targets were :-

- the Strathclyde-based MEPs (five).
- Commission officials who had come into contact with SRC or Scottish SNA representatives. For instance, the DGV and DGXVI officials interviewed both had a responsibility in dealing with a Structural Fund partnership in Scotland.
- Scottish lobbyists from Scotland Europa and a local government lobbyist (two).
- Non-Scottish lobbyists such as the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), the Local Government Information Bureau (LGIB) and an Ouverture partner-region representative.

All these targets were met, although I was unable to obtain an interview with the DGXVI official with responsibility for the Ouverture programme or with the DGV representative for the West of Scotland. In compensation, a DGV official with a similar responsibility for another area of Scotland was interviewed as were a number of individuals with an involvement in the Ouverture programme. In addition to these early targets, further interviews were carried out as a result of recommendations given by the initial interviewees and through the Scotland Europa publication, 'Jock Tamson's Bairs' ⁴⁴. This publication listed 'Scots'

positional status. Each respondent is given a case number which will be referred to whenever a quote is used from a respondent in the following chapters.

⁴⁴ 'Jock Tamson's Bairs' provides a listing of Scots (or people with Scottish connections), living and working in Brussels and Luxembourg. The listing is used fairly extensively by Scots in Brussels, for example, one Scottish DGXI official commented :-

"you're probably aware of 'Jock Tamson's Bairs'. We use that, I think its used quite heavily. Any issue that somebody is finding difficult or strained, they can resort to phoning up the

resident in Brussels and provided me with a range of further contacts amongst areas not previously identified such as Scottish journalists. In total 25 interviews were carried out in Brussels thus providing a wealth of data on the activities of a wide range of actors and the form their interaction with the West of Scotland took.

In Scotland four interviews were conducted with Scottish based actors, from the five institutions initially targeted, as no representative from Scottish Enterprise was available for interview (See Table 3.5). Two of the institutions were closely related to SRC, however they were left for analysis until the second series of interviews as they were largely unaffected by the reorganisation of local government. On only three occasions did interviewees decline to be tape-recorded, whereupon hand-written notes were taken and written up after the interview.

The second series of interviews dealt primarily with the respondent's involvement with SRC and their perceptions of the manner and effectiveness with which SRC conducted their European affairs, particularly with regard to lobbying techniques and the channels of communication which SRC used to attempt to influence EU institutions. In addition, questions were asked concerning the links between sub-national actors and the areas where co-operation would regularly occur. Attempts were also made to ascertain the existence of networks amongst actors and in particular between institutions at different tiers of government, for example, between SNAs and the European Commission.

nearest member of the Scottish Mafia and sorting out the issue or at least getting a way round it" (Case 32).

Or on another occasion, a Scottish lobbyist stated :-

"Scotland Europa produces a booklet of all the Scots in Brussels, and if you are really stuck, you go into that booklet. If you find that you really don't have any contact in DGVI for instance, if you find somebody in there who is Scottish, then its a lot easier" (Case 25).

The high response rate is also due to the ease of access to institutions and individuals within Brussels, as well as the assistance of the Scotland Europa centre in Brussels. In addition, prior to conducting interviews in Brussels, I attended a Joint Conference of the EP and CoR entitled 'Towards a Europe Based on Democracy and Solidarity' (1-3/10/96), which enabled a number of contacts to be made. I also attended a seminar held in Scotland Europa, which again enabled me to make contact with representatives from a wide range of organisations.

Table 3.5 - Respondents from the Second Series of Interviews.

Case Number	Position of the Respondent	Date of Interview
Case Seventeen	Assistant to West of Scotland Labour MEP.	October 1996.
Case Eighteen	West of Scotland Labour MEP.	October 1996.
Case Nineteen	Scottish National Party MEP.	October 1996.
Case Twenty	West of Scotland Labour MEP.	October 1996.
Case Twenty One	West of Scotland Labour MEP.	October 1996.
Case Twenty Two	West of Scotland Labour MEP.	October 1996.
Case Twenty Three	Scotland Europa Official.	October 1996.
Case Twenty Four	Scotland Europa Official.	October 1996.
Case Twenty Five	Scottish Local Government lobbyist.	October 1996.
Case Twenty Six	Scottish Local Government lobbyist and former Ecos-Ouverture official. ⁴⁵	October 1996.
Case Twenty Seven	Senior Scotland Europa official.	October 1996.
Case Twenty Eight	Scottish Journalist.	October 1996.
Case Twenty Nine	Scottish Journalist.	October 1996.
Case Thirty	Scottish Journalist.	October 1996.
Case Thirty One	DGXVI official	October 1996.
Case Thirty Two	Commission official and formerly a member of Millan's 'Cabinet'.	October 1996.
Case Thirty Three	DGXI official.	October 1996.
Case Thirty Four	DGV official.	October 1996.
Case Thirty Five	DGXVI official.	October 1996.
Case Thirty Six	CEMR official.	October 1996.
Case Thirty Seven	Wales European Centre lobbyist.	October 1996.

⁴⁵ This respondent was interviewed twice. The first interview concerned her role as a lobbyist for a Scottish local government organisation, whilst the second dealt with her previous employment with Ecos-Ouverture.

Case Number	Position of the Respondent	Date of Interview
Case Thirty Eight	LGIB lobbyist.	October 1996.
Case Thirty Nine	Merseyside partners lobbyist.	October 1996.
Case Forty	Lancashire Enterprises lobbyist.	October 1996.
Case Forty One	Saschen-Anhalt lobbyist. Partner region in Ecos Ouverture.	October 1996.
Case Forty Two	Senior Official, Industry Department, Scottish Office.	January 1997.
Case Forty Three	Senior Official, Strathclyde European Partnership. ⁴⁶	July 1996.
Case Forty Four	Senior Official, Ecos-Ouverture. ⁴⁷	February 1996.
Case Forty Five	Former European Commissioner and Scottish Labour politician.	July 1996.

Stage Three - Individuals dealing with European affairs in the new unitary authorities.

The final series of interviews were carried out in order to assess the impact of reorganisation upon the overall development of the West of Scotland's European policy, and in particular to what extent the new authorities would be able to continue pursuing the policies previously undertaken by SRC. Whilst all the new unitary authorities were sent questionnaires, four unitary authorities were targeted for interviews:- Glasgow City, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire. Glasgow City Council was selected due to the size of the Council, as it covered a population of 623,850 residents (SLGIU, 1995), thus making it the largest local authority in Scotland post-April 1996. In addition, as the council represented Glasgow which is the metropolitan centre of the region, it was likely that Glasgow would continue to be involved in European affairs, at least partly in order to maintain the profile of the city and to obtain funding in order to address the economic and social priorities of the Council. North and South Lanarkshire

⁴⁶ This respondent was re interviewed in April 1997, in order to stay aware of developments following the first interview.

⁴⁷ This respondent was re interviewed in March 1997, in order to obtain information on developments within Ouverture post-February 1996.

both represented areas⁴⁸ experiencing de industrialisation, and as a consequence were expected to receive substantial amounts of Objective 2 funding. The proximity of the councils to each other, and the similar problems they were likely to face, presented the opportunity to assess whether similar structures were put in place to deal with European issues and whether the degree of engagement with European issues varied between the two authorities. North Lanarkshire was also of interest as it provided the base for the West of Scotland European Consortium (WOSSEC)⁴⁹, whilst the Chair of North Lanarkshire's European Committee was also the Chair of WOSSEC. Finally, Renfrewshire Council was also selected due to the legacy of de-industrialisation within this council area, whilst the smaller size of the authority (population of 176,970) offered the possibility to analyse the degree of Europeanisation within a smaller local authority.

Prior to conducting the third stage of research, the target group of respondents was drawn-up, with an official and a politician being contacted from each case-study authority. This was carried out in the same manner as the distribution of the reorganisation questionnaires, with the main European officer within each council being contacted from the COSLA document, and the Chair of the Council's European Committee being approached after being identified by the officer. Thus, the sample was selected purely according to the position of the respondent. From the initial sample of eight respondents, seven were interviewed⁵⁰ as the Chair of North Lanarkshire's European Committee was not available for interview (see Table 3.5). Thus, two extra interviews were conducted in North Lanarkshire Council, firstly, with a Councillor who had previously been heavily involved in the development of SRC's European policy

⁴⁸ North Lanarkshire covered a population of 326,750, whilst South Lanarkshire contained a population of 307,100 (SLGIU, 1995). Again this highlights the similar size of the two authorities.

⁴⁹ WOSSEC is the umbrella organisation established by the twelve successor authorities to SRC, and Dumfries and Galloway (initially), which coordinates the policy positions of these councils on European issues (see chapter eight).

⁵⁰ The interview with European officers conducted at Glasgow City Council, was a joint interview with two European officers from the Council.

and was acting as an advisor to the Chair of the European Committee. Secondly, aside from the Council's European officer, a senior official from North Lanarkshire was interviewed, as the official attended all European meetings with the Chair of the European Committee. Three further interviews were conducted with individuals not drawn from the case-study councils. An official representing WOSEC was interviewed, in order to outline the operations of the umbrella organisation, as were two COSLA officials in a joint interview, as COSLA had significantly extended and enhanced its European organisation post-reorganisation. Finally, an interview was conducted with a representative of Argyll and Bute Council, due to the authority's peripherality and rural setting, combined with its location within the Objective One funding area for the Highlands and Islands and Objective Two area in Strathclyde. Despite not being a case-study council, it was considered worthwhile obtaining further information on the impact of reorganisation upon this area, and its ability to participate within the Highlands and Islands European Partnership and the Strathclyde European Partnership (See Table 3.6). All the interviews conducted in the third series were tape-recorded.

The third series interviews addressed the internal structures dealing with European affairs within the new unitary authorities, the role which the respondents viewed WOSEC as fulfilling and its relationship with COSLA following their reorganisation of the European function. Relations with external agencies following reorganisation were discussed, with a particular emphasis upon the interactions with the European Commission and the Scottish Office. The extent of participation within decision-making arenas such as Ecos-Ouverture and the SEP was also a key issue in the reorganisation interviews. Perceptions of the role of local government in the West of Scotland in terms of European policy following reorganisation was also discussed, as was the overall impact of reorganisation upon the operation of European policy within both the West of Scotland and Scotland itself.

Table 3.6 - Respondents from the Third Series of Interviews.

Case Number	Position of Respondent	Date of Interview
Case Forty Six	Labour Councillor (and CoR member), North Lanarkshire Council. Also interviewed in First series.	January 1997.
Case Forty Seven	European Officer, North Lanarkshire Council.	February 1997.
Case Forty Eight	Senior Officer, North Lanarkshire Council.	May 1997.
Case Forty Nine	European Officer, WOSSEC. Also interviewed in First series.	February 1997.
Case Fifty	European Officer, Renfrewshire Council.	May 1997.
Case Fifty One	Labour Councillor (Chair of COSLA's European Committee), Renfrewshire Council..	May 1997.
Case Fifty Two	European Officer, South Lanarkshire Council.	March 1997.
Case Fifty Three	Labour Councillor, South Lanarkshire Council.	May 1997.
Case Fifty Four	Labour Councillor, Glasgow City Council.	February 1997.
Case Fifty Five	European Officers, Glasgow City Council.	March 1997.
Case Fifty Six	European Officers, COSLA.	March 1997.
Case Fifty Seven	European Officer, Argyll and Bute Council.	March 1997.

In total, fifty-seven individuals were interviewed on at least one occasion, across the research period as a whole. The process of undertaking field-work, and in particular elite interviews, involves extensive human interaction, which no matter how many safeguards are put in place may result in the skewing of results. I now intend to consider some of the problems surrounding the research process in order to acknowledge such problems, whilst also recognising that the re-creation of laboratory conditions within social science research, and in particular research utilising qualitative methodologies, is an impossible task. As a result, it is inevitable that the results will have been affected to some extent by such considerations, although the methodology outlined above, was designed to mitigate such effects as far as is possible.

3.7 - Problems Encountered and Issues Raised.

The process of carrying out social research, is always imbued with power relationships, however, elite interviewing is relatively unusual in terms of social science research, in that the researcher is relatively powerless due to a reliance upon the interviewee being forthcoming and willing to engage with the subject matter. Thus, it is necessary to reassert the importance of ensuring all interviewees of confidentiality, and to structure the interview as an informal conversation, in which the respondent's would be asked for clarification of an opinion, but where the opinion would not be challenged outright. Equally, adequate preparation before entering the 'field' is essential in such forms of research. This situation is amplified where the researcher is studying actors within a specialised policy field, in a society that is relatively small to start with.

MacLeod (1996) considers the Scottish elite to resemble a 'village community', due to their small numbers and close interaction, and this was especially true amongst my respondents, due to the limited number of individuals concerned with European affairs in Scotland. Thus, I was always aware of the importance of respecting my interviewee's wishes, as knowledge of broken confidences would presumably have closed many 'avenues' for further research, especially when proceeding via a 'reputational' approach. In part, this issue is a result of researching a policy community / elite which is relatively small in terms of both the size of the society itself and the number of individuals engaged with European issues in the West of Scotland and indeed, Scotland. To an extent this concern was minimised through research being conducted with non-Scottish actors in Brussels but nevertheless the interconnectedness of individuals within this policy sphere was apparent when conducting the research. For instance, on an anecdotal basis, on one occasion a respondent in one interview was aware of an interview I had conducted at an entirely different institution less than twenty-four hours earlier. Raab (1987) refers to the close contacts between individuals within the Scottish educational policy elite in the following terms:

“In a small country with a small policy and administrative stratum, each could, as his career progressed through its stages, move across to occupy positions in different but interrelated institutional or geographical parts of the educational system” (Raab, C, 1987, p.118).

The impact of the environment in which the research was conducted necessitated that interviewees confidentiality was ensured and that a variety of sampling structures were adopted and the research design minimised any potential bias or drawbacks inherent in the methods adopted. Alternatively, a Scottish background was a considerable advantage, especially in Brussels, where respondents would go out of their way to give an interview, often outside of working hours. Equally, due to the substantial changes taking place within local government during the research period, this heightened the insecurities of many respondents, as they were often involved in searching for future employment. Thus, interviews carried out around the time of reorganisation had to be handled with particular sensitivity. The third series of interviews dealing with the impact of reorganisation, was postponed not only until a new set of European structures were established, but also to enable respondents to have, to some extent, settled in to their new environment.

Elite interviewing is a dynamic method, in which the researcher is constantly re-evaluating his own performance, whilst also re-assessing the priorities of the research program as new information emerges. Undoubtedly, I would have changed some of my initial lines of questioning, given the awareness of the issues I have now, although in some cases this was rectified by re-interviewing. It is also worth commenting that this research dealt with individuals who were heavily involved with European affairs and predominantly drawn from sub-national government who may over-exaggerate the importance of the policy area. In the following chapters, efforts are continuously made to ensure that the impact of Europeanisation upon Scottish local government is not over-emphasised via reference to corroborative evidence, primarily drawn from the literature on the European policy of SNAs and documentary evidence, in order to mitigate against

this possibility. An alternative approach to sample selection from that taken in this research would have been to randomly sample local government politicians and officials, in order to obtain their views as to the possibility of local government having experienced a process of Europeanisation. However, the research design is biased in that it focuses upon those involved with European affairs, in order to assess the degree of Europeanisation, whilst the contextualisation of the research results attempts to ensure that the role of SNAs and the impact of Europeanisation is not overemphasised.

When conducting the primarily qualitative research for this thesis every effort was made to minimise the impact of the researcher upon those interviewed, to ensure that the format in which the research was undertaken minimised any potential bias and attempted to obtain as representative a sample of respondents as possible. Furthermore throughout the research process, there was a concerted effort to ensure that there was not an over reliance on any one particular approach (for instance, utilising a reputational and positional approach to sample selection) and checking the responses of interviewees against other respondents and external sources of documentation. The use of two sampling strategies was also a means of ensuring that an adequate number of individuals were interviewed in order to ensure that the research process would be able to gain a representative cross-section of respondents engaged with European issues. Equally the triangulation of interviewee responses and the checking of transcripts against documentary evidence, where possible, was also a means of checking that the quotes presented within this thesis were reliable and had been verified against the perceptions of other respondents and external sources.

In this way, the manner in which the research was designed, implemented and subsequently analysed was intended to be systematic, rigorous and consistent throughout the entire research process. Nevertheless, the selection of any particular methodology involves the recognition that there are disadvantages, as well as advantages, inherent within the approaches and methodological

decisions made in terms of their implications upon the research. This chapter has attempted to clearly outline the methods utilised in the research presented here and recognise the disadvantages of these methods. The impact of these disadvantages upon the research process cannot be entirely removed, however the research design made every possible effort to minimise the impact of the weaknesses of the methods adopted whilst also recognising the shortcomings of the approach adopted.

3.8 - Summary.

This chapter has set out the structure which underpinned the field research. In particular, the methodological approaches used concentrated on the need to ensure reliability and verifiability to as great an extent as possible. The research design employed both qualitative and quantitative methods, following an extensive process of background research. A particular emphasis has been placed upon elite interviewing, due to the central position this occupies in the following chapters. Whilst, elite interviews cannot be carried out without some degree of interviewer - interviewee reactivity, extensive measures were taken to reassure the respondents as to the aims, scope, function and confidentiality of the research. Despite, the problems identified with the methodology adopted, the combination of the methods adopted and safeguards used in operationalising the field-work, were designed to limit as far as possible the limitations which pervade any methodological approach.

Chapter Four. The Europeanisation of Strathclyde Regional Council, 1975-96.

4.1 - Introduction.

This chapter addresses the impact of European policies on the internal organisation of Strathclyde Regional Council, and the affect this had upon the perceptions of actors within SRC as to the role which the Region could pursue within the European context. In other words, the chapter is concerned with the process of Europeanisation within SRC across the period of study, in terms of the changing nature of European activity within the Council during this time-period, and the perceptions of individuals as to the policy which the Region developed with regard to the European function of SRC. The role of SRC within external structures and networks is considered in terms of the impact of such activities upon the internal organisation of European policy within the Council.

There are two main time-periods which distinguish the impact of European policy on SRC (and indeed, SNAs across Europe). This distinction arises due to the impact of Single European Market legislation in transforming the relationship between European Institutions and SNAs (see Chapter Two)⁵¹. As a result, I intend firstly to consider the European policy of SRC from the period 1975 to 1985, in isolation from the period 1986-96, in order to assess the extent to which SRC's relations with the EU differed between the two periods, and correspondingly the effect this had upon SRC's European policy. In addition, this chapter will examine the tensions created at a political and officer level during the period of study as SRC's involvement in European affairs expanded.

4.2 - The Emergence of a European Policy within SRC :- 1975-85.

The initial contacts which developed between SRC and the Institutions of the European Community were a result of the Council attempting to tap into the funding possibilities available at the European level. The main sources of finance available to SRC over the period 1975 to 1986 were the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund (ESF) and loans

⁵¹ Chapter Two, identified the Single European Act (1986) as a watershed in terms of the relationship between the EU and SNAs. This was a process which continued in later 'legislative events', such as the Reform of the Structural Funds and the Maastricht Treaty.

from the European Investment Bank (EIB). Whilst the EIB had been in operation since 1958, the ERDF and ESF schemes were created in 1975 as a result of UK entry into the EEC, largely in order to re-reimburse the UK Exchequer for the minimal benefit it obtained from other schemes such as the Common Agricultural Policy, as compared to other member states (Dinan, 1994). The engagement of UK local authorities as a whole with these schemes was initially rather limited during the 1970's (Keating and Waters, 1985). Nevertheless, by the early 1980's, SRC was beginning to draw significant degrees of funding from both the ERDF and ESF (See Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 - SRC ERDF Receipts, 1975-84. (Quota Section, £).

Year	SRC ERDF Receipts.	SRC Receipts as a % of Total Scottish ERDF Receipts.
1975	888,634	14.7%
1976	1,601,919	15.5%
1977	784,825	12.6%
1978	4,779,548	26%
1979	11,730,440	33.2%
1980	3,670,777	23.7%
1981	12,693,358	23.7%
1982	3,235,020	5.4%
1983	13,722,421	21.9%
1984	10,564,350	17.8%
Total	63,761,292	19.5%

Source:- Keating and Waters (1985).

Table 4.1 illustrates that whilst SRC obtained roughly around 20% of total Scottish ERDF receipts over the period 1975-1984, the actual sums involved began to increase markedly in the early 1980s. However, funding obtained through the ERDF was not genuinely additional, as central government would tend to cut back capital allowances according to the funding obtained. Nevertheless, ERDF finance did represent a financial benefit to SRC, as the Council did not have to pay loan charges on the finance. Strathclyde also obtained finance through the Non-Quota Section of ERDF (See Chapter Two),

which was additional to SRC's capital allowance. However, the sums of money involved were smaller, as the Non-Quota section of ERDF represented only 5% of the total ERDF budget. As a result SRC obtained only £645,877 through this fund, to deal with the decline of the steel and shipbuilding industries over the period 1980-84 (Keating and Waters, 1985). In total, SRC received £83 million in ERDF grants between 1975 and 1986, which were directed towards infrastructure programmes, which in terms of SRC's competences were primarily utilised by the Roads, Water and Transport departments of the Council. A similar increase in funding from the ESF during the early 1980s can also be detected in SRC's dealing with the fund (See Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 - SRC ESF Receipts (1978-83) (£).

Year	SRC ESF Receipts	SRC ESF Receipts as a % of Total Scottish ESF Receipts.
1978	0	0%
1979	0	0%
1980	0	0%
1981	0	0%
1982	1,014,000	29.8%
1983	2,933,400	44.1%
Total	3,947,400	39.3%

Source:- Keating and Waters (1985).

The uptake of ESF funding amongst Scottish local authorities, was virtually nil in Scotland until 1980. However, the scale of SRC's engagement with ESF funding signified not only the emergence of the Social Fund as an important source of funding for Scottish local authorities, but also of an increasing awareness within SRC of the role which European finance could provide in the attempt to meet the Council's policy priorities. The major challenge for SRC from its inception was to attempt to minimise, if not alleviate, the impact of deindustrialisation within the region. In this respect, ERDF and ESF support provided a financial instrument with which to address the problems of high unemployment, social dislocation and population loss which were endemic within the Region during the early 1980s. The extent of the task facing Strathclyde in the early 1980s cannot be

overemphasised. For instance, the unemployment rate within Strathclyde was 36% above the UK average in 1984 (SRC, Annual Report, 1984, p.3) whilst severe pockets of unemployment and multiple deprivation existed within boundaries of SRC.

The approach of SRC towards these issues became increasingly apparent in the period 1982-3, with the publication of the 'Economic Strategy' in 1982 and the 'Social Strategy' in 1983. These critical initiatives guided overall policy development within SRC throughout the 1980s, and the increased funding obtained by the Region from 1982 onwards was channelled towards their objectives. These two strategies were both broadly concerned with addressing the problems facing the region resulting from deindustrialisation. Thus the 'Social Strategy' identified five issues which the Council intended to target :- poverty, health, housing, employment and community development (SRC, 'Social Strategy for the '80s, 1983; SRC Annual Report, 1984). The dramatic increase in ESF funding reflected these priorities, with the Council attempting to obtain funds from the European Social Fund, in order to lend financial support to the Council's 'Social Strategy'. In particular, funding secured from the ESF, was being channelled into the 'Employment Grant Scheme' (EGS), which the Council had created in an attempt to address long-term unemployment. The scheme provided a wage subsidy to employers, if the firm employed an individual who had been unemployed for 6 months or more. Between 1982 to 1986, this scheme provided support to over 14,000 individuals categorised as being long-term unemployed (SRC, 1986/7). The success of EGS, both in terms of obtaining European finance and in inducing employers to recruit the long-term unemployed, appeared to make a significant impression upon both officials and Councillors. For instance one Councillor commenting upon the success of the scheme, claimed :-

" I would be boasting now, but I think you'll discover that probably more than 90% of the people taken on under that scheme, over a full decade later were kept on. Absolutely remarkable. And had we not done that, it [the unemployment rate in Strathclyde] would have been the highest in Europe, as well as the UK". (Case Three).

Whilst the EGS may have made the largest impact upon SRC's institutional consciousness, with regard to the benefit which could be obtained from European funding, ESF monies were also used to initiate schemes which

broadly dealt with the retraining of the unemployed, such as the 'New Technology Training Scheme, and the 'New Start' programme. Thus the practical impact of European monies, in providing a mechanism with which to finance the Council's policy priorities within the employment and social spheres was central to a re-evaluation of the role which European Institutions could fulfil. However the response which the Council received when approaching 'Brussels' was also a significant influence upon SRC's engagement with European policy. Whilst the prevailing neo-liberal ideology within central government was perceived as being antithetical to the stated aims of SRC, it was clear to SRC politicians and officials that the Commission, in the form of DGV(Social Policy) and DGXVI(Regional Policy), were keen to encourage SRC to develop new programmes of assistance through European finance. Thus to Labour politicians within SRC during the early 1980's, the situation resembled :-

" the usual story of finding the open doors in Brussels, and realising that we had some soulmates there, which we didn't have in London". (Case 8).

The increasing awareness amongst senior officials and politicians⁵² of the value of European funding with regard to SRC's policy priorities, and of the openness of the Commission to approaches from sub-national government, led to the formal incorporation of a 'European function' within SRC through two institutional innovations. Firstly, in 1980 a policy division was transferred from the Department of Physical Planning, into the Chief Executive's Department which as well as having responsibilities for aspects of economic and social policy, was given control over European affairs. The principal functions of the unit were to co-ordinate the Council's overall policy position vis-a-vis the EEC and act as an administrator for the application of funds⁵³. This group of five officials, reported directly to the Chief Executive of the Council, whilst liaising with individual departments concerning their applications for funds and co-ordinating the policy position taken when approaching 'Brussels' upon a particular issue. The positioning of such a unit at the centre of the Regional Council's administration clearly illustrated how seriously SRC was taking the possibilities offered through engagement with European Institutions, or more precisely the financial

⁵² The centrality of senior politicians and officials to the development of European policy within SRC is discussed later in this chapter.

⁵³ European Affairs also started to be brought to the attention of politicians in Committees, as European issues began to be channelled through the Economic and Industrial Development Committee, which was a sub-committee of the Policy and Resources Committee.

possibilities available. The Chief Executive's Department determined overall policy for the Council and was central to any process of policy innovation within SRC, for example the department had developed SRCs economic and social strategies. As an official within this policy group from its inception stated :- "The policy role initially was to simply see the extent to which we could tap into European resources available for regional development, in order to help the economic and social policy of the Regional Council. Basically, we were initially looking at it as, are there any schemes we can tap into, and the very first thing we did was to tap into the ERDF, and the Council had been using the ERDF in a small way since 1976. So, in that sense, there was an appreciation of the use of the Regional Fund, what was different was the identification of the Social Fund as having the potential to help the Regional Council". (Case 14).

The second institutional development, which signified the Regional Council's engagement with European issues, was the creation of a representative in Brussels, in 1984. In many respects, the establishment of the office was a symbolic gesture, in terms of signifying the importance which SRC attached to European issues whilst also raising the awareness of SRC amongst European Institutions, and in particular the European Commission. The innovative nature of such an action on the part of the Regional Council is apparent when it is considered that the office was only the second to be opened by a UK local authority⁵⁴, whilst sub-national representative offices from any area of the EEC, were relatively unknown even amongst more powerful 'regions', such as the German Lander. On a practical level, the office was intended primarily to maximise the funding which SRC obtained from the European Commission. Thus, the role of the office was to maintain close contacts with Commission officials regarding ongoing projects within Strathclyde, whilst also being aware of new funding opportunities for the Council emerging from within the Commission. However, with the approach of the Single European Market legislation, the office also took on an a role as a 'listening-post', from which the Council would be kept abreast of policy developments emerging from Brussels. Strathclyde did not however, at this stage, have a policy on how to attempt to influence legislation emerging from Brussels, rather that:- "We were quite simply aware of the fact and we were aware of it ahead of most other Councils, that legislation from Brussels was becoming increasingly

⁵⁴ Birmingham City Council opened a representative office two months prior to the opening of the SRC office.

important in relation to the activities of the Council as a whole". (Case 14 – Senior Official within the Chief Executives Department).

The lobbying function of the office in Brussels was also taking on a critical role in the period between 1984 and 1986, as SRC was beginning to make progress in the Council's long-term strategy to obtain an Integrated Development Operation (IDO) for the West of Scotland. The European Commission had created funding packages combining ERDF and ESF support for the cities of Belfast and Naples in 1982, which provided for a sum of money agreed between the European Commission, member state and local organisations, which were termed 'Integrated Development Operations'. SRC was aware of the designation given to these two cities, and was keen to obtain a similar scheme for the West of Scotland. The attraction to SRC in obtaining an IDO, lay in the removal of uncertainty from the process of bidding for individual projects and the securing of funds directly allocated to the West of Scotland over a set time-scale, drawing upon all the Regional Funds. In addition, the potential existed for obtaining superior funding through negotiations with the member-state and European Commission, rather than being subject to individual project approvals. In 1982, the Economic and Industrial Development sub-committee agreed to the Council approaching the Commission regarding the possibility of obtaining an 'Integrated Development Operation'⁵⁵. After a series of meetings, DGXVI agreed to setting-up a pilot-study to assess the potential of Strathclyde Region to cope with such a scheme, in terms of the capabilities of development agencies within the region. The costs of this preparatory study came to £90,000, with the European Commission covering 75% of the expense incurred.

The report judged the potential of Strathclyde favourably to cope with an IDO, however the Commission took the view that the concept of IDOs required further work, and offered SRC an interim 'National Programme of Community Interest' (NPCI) covering the City of Glasgow. In particular, the Commission was unsure as to whether local institutions in Strathclyde had the leverage to provide the match funding for the significant funds which would be provided via an IDO covering the whole of the region. Thus the NPCI can be viewed as a pilot

⁵⁵ The negotiations leading up to the designation of an Integrated Development Operation (IDO) in Strathclyde and the role, functions and organisational structure of the IDO is discussed in Chapter Five.

scheme to assess the potential of the region to cope with an IDO. The NPCI provided £68.2m of ERDF support for the City of Glasgow over the period June 1984 to December 1987⁵⁶. The funds being managed by a 'Co-ordinating Committee', bringing together the Scottish Office Industry Department, Strathclyde Regional Council, the Scottish Development Agency, the South of Scotland Electricity Board, the Scottish Gas Board, British Railways, the Strathclyde Passenger Transport Executive, and a representative from DGXVI. To officials within SRC, whilst this designation of the NPCI did possess the potential of developing into an IDO, it did not fulfil ambitions within the Council:- "it was very much an ERDF programme, it wasn't all embracing, an IDO was of course meant to involve all of the European funding brought to bear in a coherent and integrated programme for the economic development of a particular Region, with all the local bodies involved". (Case 14).

As a result, SRC continued to lobby the European Commission and the Scottish Office as to the possibility of Strathclyde being designated an IDO. It was against this background of negotiations between the European Commission, SRC and the Scottish Office, that SRC opened a representative office in Brussels, as the representative in Brussels would prove pivotal in maintaining contact with DGXVI concerning the NPCI and later regarding the possibility of obtaining an IDO. Thus, the timing of opening an office in Brussels can be viewed as not entirely coincidental, given that the Commission was receiving the study into the NPCI around the same time as the office opened. In this sense, an office in Brussels offered the potential to lobby increasingly directly with the Commission, whilst the cost of maintaining a presence in Brussels⁵⁷ would seem minimal as compared to the benefits to Strathclyde, should the Region be granted an IDO.

The creation of a National Programme of Community Interest irrevocably changed SRC's engagement with European funding. The initial contacts which Strathclyde developed with DGV and DGXVI were carried out unilaterally, with the European Commission becoming aware of SRC :-

⁵⁶ The decision to approve the NPCI was not taken by the European Commission until December 1985, however the funds were back-dated to June 1984.

⁵⁷ The full cost to Strathclyde Regional Council of maintaining an office in Brussels in 1991 stood at £87, 190.

"because we had taken the trouble to visit Brussels on a number of occasions and over the course of this time, and during the course of this dialogue we got to know the people in DGXVI and DGV very well". (Case 14).

Whilst SRC was applying for funding on a project-by-project basis, it was able to develop proposals on its own initiative whilst keeping the Scottish Office informed of its activities. This situation changed as the negotiations concerning the NCPI progressed, with the Scottish Office becoming gradually more involved as the proposals took on a more concrete form. As has been noted above, the structure of the NCPI 'Co-ordinating Committee', introduced a number of institutions into a new decision-making arena, which would make executive decisions concerning the eligibility of individual project applications, with the Scottish Office chairing the Committee. Thus, SRC's control over the funding process lessened through the creation of the NCPI, although this was compensated for by the existence of an improved funding package.⁵⁸

Strathclyde had also begun to become involved with other actors involved within the European arena during the early 1980s, through beginning to participate in trans-regional networks. In the period leading up to 1986, SRC was most active within the network of 'Traditional Industrial Regions of Europe' (RETI). The Regional Council became interested in the role of the network, as it was primarily concerned with the economic development strategies being pursued within different regions across Europe, which were attempting to cope with de-industrialisation. The Council had also sent representatives to conferences organised by the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) which dealt with economic development and urban regeneration. However, the Regional Council's participation within these networks was mainly limited to observing proceedings, rather than subscribing to membership of them. The Regional Council was also a member of the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA), and was represented on COSLA working groups dealing with European issues, although again the Council's involvement was related primarily to issues dealing with economic development.

⁵⁸ The role of 'partners' within funding partnerships, is considered in detail in the following chapter, with a particular emphasis upon the changing nature of SRC's role within these funding partnerships.

Summary.

The early engagement by Strathclyde Regional Council with European Institutions was motivated by a desire to obtain finance with which to further the policies the Council was developing within the economic and social spheres. Whilst the size, range of functions and correspondingly budget of SRC, maybe viewed as necessary conditions for mobilisation onto the European arena, they were not sufficient. Equally important catalysts in the emergence of a European policy were the impact of de-industrialisation upon the Region, and the increasingly tight fiscal environment which central government was setting for local authorities across the UK. Additionally, the desire of key individuals within SRC, and in particular within the Chief Executive's Department that SRC should be an innovative authority and that it should be seen to 'make a difference', given the widespread misgivings upon its creation, stimulated policy developments such as the creation of a representative office in Brussels to occur.

Thus by the end of 1985 the internal structure which would guide the expansion of SRC's European policy through the period 1986-97 was in place. Policy was directed and co-ordinated from the Chief Executive's Department in liaison with the representative in Brussels, with other departments being drawn into the process when applying for or implementing European funding. The Council's involvement within trans-regional networks, whilst at this stage rather limited and exploratory in nature, would become increasingly significant in the following years, as a platform for engaging with European policies. Finally, the creation of the NCPI for the City of Glasgow, established a new institutional arena in which bargaining over funding applications would take place between 'local' actors, the Scottish Office and DGXVI. This intermediary institution removed the direct nature of the funding process between SRC and the Commission⁵⁹, whilst drawing in a wide range of interests which would guide the overall development strategy underpinning the eligibility for regional funding within Strathclyde Region.

⁵⁹ Initially, this was only true for the City of Glasgow, however the NCPI would later transform into an institution covering the whole of Strathclyde.

4.3 - The Europeanisation of Strathclyde Regional Council, 1986-96.

4.3.1 - Introduction.

Whilst the early years of SRC's engagement with European policy was underpinned by the desire to maximise the amount of funding available to the authority, the period from 1986 to 1997 witnessed a widening of the Council's European activities. Funding remained central to the role of Strathclyde in Europe, however, as noted above, by the end of 1985 the autonomy of SRC within this sphere was somewhat weakened through the creation of the NCPI for the City of Glasgow. This was a process which would intensify in the following four years to the extent that by December 1988 the European Commission had designated the whole of Strathclyde (with the exception of Argyll and Bute) as an 'Integrated Development Operation', thus ensuring that applications for the vast majority of European funding would be assessed within the various Committee's of the IDO. Thus the necessity for direct contact with DGXVI and DGV over funding bids was limited to contact with individual 'desk officers' who represented the European Commission within the IDO. The only exception to this rule, was when the Structural Fund budget (as it became, post-1988) was under review, where direct representations would be made in Brussels. However, the nature of these approaches were significantly different from the pre-1986 era, in that such representations were increasingly undertaken in alliance with other sub-national actors either through trans-regional networks, or distinctly 'Scottish' or UK networks, dependent upon the issue or tier of government being lobbied. Apart from changes within the European funding regime, the primary areas of European integration impacting upon SNAs cited in the literature over the period 1986-97 were:-

- 1) The impact of Single European Market legislation upon the competences of SNAs.
- 2) The increasing activity of SNAs with regard to lobbying European Institutions, primarily through the establishment of SNA representative offices in Brussels, the increasing prominence of trans-regional networks and the creation of the Committee of the Regions (CoR).

It is to these developments and the form in which they impacted upon SRC, which I now intend to turn.

4.3.2 - The Internalisation of Europeanisation within SRC.

The Single European Act (1986) altered the nature of the relationship between SNAs and European Institutions, as the EC was now an arena which could confer legal obligations upon SNAs through regulations, as well as being a means of obtaining finance. Within Strathclyde Regional Council, Single European Market legislation was expected to impact upon the authority in three principal ways. Firstly, an 'organisational' impact was expected to be a result of the SEM, through the Council having to restructure the manner in which it dealt with issues such as the tendering of public contracts, and ensuring that Council services met European technical standards in areas including consumer protection and the health and safety of Council employees. Secondly, the expansion of EC competences under SEM legislation was likely to have an impact upon Council departments which whilst not being directly affected by EC regulations, could nevertheless expect to be influenced by the increasing pace of European integration as a result of the SEM. For instance, the European Commission had made clear its intention to foster the exchange of experience between practitioners in fields such as education and social services. Finally the economic impact of the Single European Market required that the economic development arm of SRC (Strathclyde Business Development) consider the consequences for their development strategies against the backdrop of how the Strathclyde economy was likely to respond to the Single Market, given that the Region was 'peripheral' in European terms, and still coping with the deepening processes of deindustrialisation.

The main responsibility for ensuring that SRC was prepared for the SEM, lay with the Chief Executive's Department, in co-ordination with the 'European Liaison Officer' based in Brussels. In essence, the Council's response to the SEA, was directed towards ensuring that the various departments of the Council were fully informed as to the likely consequences of the Single European Market legislation as well as fulfilling the strictures of European regulations, as the deadline of the 31st December 1992 grew closer. For instance, the Chief Executive's Department organised :-

"a corporate group of all departments of the Council, to whom it [the SEM] was relevant to look at the implications of the SEM to the Regional Council as a whole. And Norman [the European Liaison Officer] came over regularly and

reported to that group on the latest policy developments in Brussels, and how they might influence the Regional Council" (Case 14).

Experience within the Council as to the European role of SNAs remained largely concentrated within the Chief Executive's Department and the Brussels representative, with the dissemination of information being directed through these channels. Direct responses by individual departments to the prospect of the SEM, such as participation within specialised trans-regional networks dealing with specific subject areas, did not occur between 1986 to 1992. However, the response to the SEM in terms of the internal organisation of departments did vary according to the extent to which the department had been involved with European policy in the period leading up to 1986. Thus departments, which had previously been involved in the process of drawing up applications for European funding, would tend to delegate the responsibility of remaining aware of the departmental implications of SEM to the officer previously responsible for this task. Other departments with no previous European experience would tend to form internal Committees to discuss the implications of the SEM for the department, usually chaired by the head of the Department. By 1996 the majority of departments within the Council had at least one officer designated as having responsibility for European issues concerning the department.⁶⁰ This process of Europeanisation and 'institutional learning' within departments was due to the increasing involvement of departments which did not expect to be heavily affected by the SEM becoming engaged in trans-regional networks which dealt with 'technical' and policy issues relating to the role of the department.⁶¹

The changing nature of SRC's engagement with European issues, was most clearly evident within the Chief Executive's Department. Whilst the Department still contained two officers dealing solely with European funding (one with ERDF and the other with ESF), the Council found that it was becoming increasingly involved in an 'advocacy' role vis-a-vis European issues, through the gathering and dissemination of information concerning European developments both to departments within the Council and to outside actors, in addition to attempting to

⁶⁰ The departments outside of the Chief Executive's Department, which became most heavily involved with European policy were the :- Department of Consumer and Trading Standards; Department of Education; Department of Physical Planning; Department of Roads; Department of Social Work; and, Strathclyde Business Development.

⁶¹ The role of SRC in trans-regional networks is considered in detail, later on in this chapter.

find mechanisms with which the Council might be able to obtain a 'voice' within the European decision-making process. Two areas were central to this development, firstly, the changing role of the European Liaison Officer in Brussels and the Council's involvement within trans-regional networks.

4.3.3. The Changing Remit of SRC's Representative Office in Brussels.

By 1988, it had become clear within SRC that the role which the representative office in Brussels fulfilled had altered since its establishment. As noted above, the office was created primarily so that SRC could pursue the funding opportunities it could see emerging from European sources in the early 1980's. However, the vast majority of European funds were now disbursed from the 'Strathclyde Integrated Development Operation' with any direct lobbying over funding issues with Brussels being largely limited to the periodic reviews of the Structural Funds every five years. Thus, the future impact of a representative office in Brussels in terms of generating finance, was at best likely to be minimal. As a result, the office increasingly became concerned with the impact of SEM regulations upon the Council and facilitating SRC's activities within 'formal' trans-regional networks as well as developing 'informal' networks amongst SNAs based in Brussels. Thus the remit of the Brussels office post-1986 had become:- "providing a link between the various departments and the Chief Executive's Department with the Commission, the European Parliament, the CoR etc. The work ranges from looking for opportunities for smaller projects, to organising meetings for politicians or officers and generally providing an information service. Working with politicians on inter-regional associations or networks that we are part of and general lobbying work if that's required. And obviously, regular visits to Glasgow, to report back". (Case 13).

Whilst the evolving function of the representation in Brussels was partly due to the 'decentralisation' of the European funding regime and the impact of the 'Single European Act', which had resulted in the office taking on the role of a 'listening post' from which events within European Institutions could be relayed to the Council, the transformation also reflected the widespread mobilisation of SNAs across Europe. The period from 1986 to 1996 witnessed a widespread mobilisation of SNAs onto the supra-national arena either through the establishments of 'representative offices' in Brussels or through participation in networks. Jeffrey (1996) notes that 15 offices representing sub-national actors had opened in Brussels by 1988, with this figure having increased to 143 offices

by 1996 (Scottish Enterprise, 1996). As a result, the Strathclyde office became increasingly involved in developing contacts with these actors for a number of purposes. Firstly, to share information obtained from European actors as each representation would often have access to different 'informal' networks. For example, SRC would be likely to have better access to Scottish or UK officials within a particular DG than a German office. Secondly, some sources of funding required that a 'project' contain partners from a number of member-states, thus contacts with other offices would often lead to the offer of participation in projects such as Community Initiatives which would contain a financial benefit for the Region. In addition, with the creation of the Scotland Europa Centre in 1992, followed by SRC's participation within the Centre, the office increasingly became involved in co-operating with other Scottish actors through the sharing of information and workloads, thus adding a new dimension to the office's activities.⁶² Finally, SRC's increasing activity within the more formal channels of 'trans-regional networks', also required an increasing amount of liaison between the SRC office in Brussels and other SNA offices (see below).

In essence, the changing priorities of SRC's representative office, reflected the process of Europeanisation occurring within the Council. Whilst funding remained central to the Region's involvement with European Institutions, the process of obtaining funding was now mediated by an intermediate institution, the Strathclyde European Partnership. As a result, the requirement for direct lobbying of European Institutions was replaced by bargaining within the Committee structure of the SEP. The requirements of the Single European Act, shifted SRC's focus onto the requirements of remaining aware of the EU policy process and of issues which could influence the competences of the Council. Increasingly, the concern within the Council was to provide information between departments as to the impact of European developments, whilst also attempting to have some influence upon the policy process within the EU. One of the principal mechanisms with which SRC became involved, in order to articulate the Council's interests into the EU policy process, was through participation in 'trans-regional networks'.

⁶² The issues surrounding the role of the SRC office in Brussels, how lobbying was conducted, relations with other actors and institutions and of the nature of the Scotland Europa Centre, is discussed in Chapter Seven.

4.3.4 SRC and Trans-regional Networks.

Prior to 1986, Strathclyde had become involved with two 'trans-regional networks' to a limited extent, broadly due to the Council's widespread involvement with economic development issues. The period 1986 to 1996 is marked not only by the increasing number of networks of which SRC became a member, but also by the extent of SRC's involvement within a number of networks. The functions of these networks, of which SRC was a member ranged from trans-regional networks which addressed extremely broad and political issues such as, the role of regions within the EU to narrow and technical networks concerned with policy areas such as traffic systems in urban conurbations. Accordingly, the involvement of Strathclyde Regional Council within 'trans-regional networks', can be separated into two categories according to the form of activity which the network performed or set out to undertake. These are firstly, networks with a broad membership often following a directly political agenda regarding the role of SNAs within the EU policy process. Participation within these networks and the policy which SRC would pursue was the responsibility of the Chief Executive's Department of the Council. Secondly, networks dealing with issues of a more technical or 'practical' nature being devolved to departments relevant to the network.

Generalist Networks.

SRC was a member of three networks which come under this categorisation. These were the 'Assembly of European Regions' (AER); the 'Council of European Municipalities and Regions' (CEMR); and the network of 'Traditional Industrial Regions of Europe' (RETI). Of these three networks, SRC's involvement was most limited within CEMR, where the Council maintained an 'observer status' through sending a representative (usually an official) to meetings of the network⁶³. The limited involvement of SRC within this network, was due to CEMR tending to consist largely of municipalities or smaller SNAs. In contrast SRC considered itself to be a 'Region', due to factors such as the range of competences it commanded and the size of population contained within the authorities boundaries. As a consequence, SRC viewed AER and RETI as arenas where the Council should operate given its range of responsibilities, whilst the scale of SRC's involvement within AER and RETI was symptomatic of

⁶³ SRC did co-host CEMR's 17th Assembly, with Glasgow District Council, in June 1988.

the authorities extended European agenda. Thus, one senior Labour politician within SRC commented when discussing the relative values of AER and CEMR, that :-

" AER is much more important, because it is specifically regional, it's led by Pujol⁶⁴, most of the big German regions are there, including some from the East." (Case 3).

The 'Assembly of European Regions' (AER).

The 'Assembly of European Regions' was established in 1985 with a broad political remit concerning the role of regions within the EU policy process. These can be broadly summarised as:-

" to develop and organise co-operation between European regions, and to strengthen regional participation at European institutional level and regional participation in the construction of Europe" (SRC Minutes, April 1993).

SRC joined AER in 1986, as a direct result of membership of RETI, as members of RETI were automatically entitled to membership of AER. By 1992, the network contained 150 Western European regions as well as a further 20 Eastern European regions. The network was organised into six Committees which prepared reports on a number of issues relevant to regions, which would then be brought to the attention of the European Commission in future lobbying efforts (See Table 4.3).

⁶⁴ 'Pujol' refers to Jordi Pujol, the President of Catalonia.

Table 4.3 - AER's Committee Structure, 1995.

Committee Number.	Subject Area.
Committee One.	Institutional Questions, Relations with the Council of Europe, the European Union, the European Constitution, the Revision of the Maastricht Treaty.
Committee Two.	East - West Co-operation.
Committee Three.	North - South Co-operation and Relations with regions outwith the European area.
Committee Four.	Social Cohesion, Social Services, Public Health.
Committee Five.	Regional Policy, Planning, Infrastructure, Environment and Tourism.
Committee Six.	Culture, Education, Training and Youth.

Source:- SRC Minutes, March 1995.

In addition to these Committees, AER's overall strategy was determined by 'the Bureau', which consisted of a region from each EU member-state. SRC was a member of AER's Bureau from 1989-92, whilst the Council held membership of Committee One from 1993-96 and the Chairmanship of Committee Two for the same period. Whilst AER's remit was wide, essentially the aim of the network was to see the 'Consultative Council of Local Authorities and Regions' upgraded into a European Institution. Thus, the major success of the network was to achieve the creation of the 'Committee of the Regions' (CoR)⁶⁵. Whilst the largely political role of the network did alienate some SRC officials (See Table 4.4) as to the worth of the structure, nevertheless AER was viewed as a useful mechanism through which to access European Commission officials as to the views of SNAs. For instance, following the creation of the CoR, SRC minutes note that SRC had been approached by the AER Bureau, as a possible member of Committee One, and that the Council should seek membership of this Committee on the grounds that :-

" This Committee is potentially important for SRC's future participation in EC policy development.....Many of the key representatives in the AER, will become

⁶⁵Clearly, the creation of the CoR cannot be attributed solely to the activities of AER given the nature of the EU policy process and inter-governmental bargaining, nevertheless as the establishment of such an 'institution' (although not a formal European Institution) was the principal goal of the network, the creation of the CoR was viewed within AER as a success for the network.

key members of CoR and will have a central influence on the agenda of issues which it addresses. This is an area of work to which Committee One of AER will be turning. SRC involvement in this work, could have a long-term value in helping to place issues of significance for Strathclyde on CoR's agenda". (SRC Minutes, March 1993).

It is significant that given SRC's instrumentalist approach to European policy in the pre-1986 era, that it should seek to become actively involved in such an overtly 'political' network as AER post-'86. This shift reflects a recognition within SRC that European issues were becoming increasingly central to the working of the Council, whilst SRC itself was keen to place itself amongst the major 'regional' players operating at the European level in order to advance the Council's interest into the EU policy process. The extent of this shift is apparent when it is considered that in 1989, the "stronger SNA's" within AER organised a number of Conferences, upon the initiative of the 'stronger' German Lander (for example, Bavaria), dealing with the topic of a 'Europe of the Regions', and later formed a "special grouping with AER" (Bullman, 1996, p.4). It is a sign of SRC's extensive involvement with European issues by this time, that SRC was a member of this 'special grouping'. Table 4.4, provides the opinion of a senior SRC official within the Chief Executive's Department who was heavily involved with AER from 1986-94, as to his views upon the value of SRC's involvement within AER, and how these changed as the potential 'political' benefits of involvement within AER became apparent.

Table 4.4 – Official within the Chief Executives Department view of AER.
(Case 14).

" I personally took the view that RETI as a focused network of industrial regions, had more to offer Strathclyde than AER, which was a very large and amorphous and from an officials point of view, a frustratingly slow body. Now, it took me a while to appreciate AER, because I have to say from a practical perspective, they didn't get involved with anything to do with finance. Instead, they were playing a long-term political game, but that meant from an officials point of view going along to these meetings, it drove you mad. They waffled on endlessly about federalism and the role of the regions and they all said the same thing in different words and at great length. So, it was not a very satisfactory organisation to be involved in from an officials level. It was also a bit of an insider's club.

Strathclyde became an insider, but from the outside. When you first joined as ordinary members, it just seemed a lot of people meeting in nice places, seeming to have quite a nice time and not doing very much. You're asking for my opinion of AER, and it was in my opinion, a bit of a waste of time. I suppose my perspective has changed because I now look at it from a historical perspective and they were trying to play the long game of arguing the case for regions, and the necessity, the symbolism of getting together once a year for a jamboree, irrespective of what was said. I mean we could have played tiddlywinks for two days. I'm exaggerating to make the point, but not entirely.

Basically, there were not a series a short-term objectives. They were all talking a long-term political game about the importance of regions. So that was the nature of the organisation, and until you were on the Bureau, it was then that we became aware that they were actually a quite serious organisation with serious objectives. So in my opinion, the organisation was very badly at fault for not involving all its members in its thinking and objectives, and I have to say that the Secretary General at the time, was not effective in my opinion, in involving the broad network. He looked after his little Bureau, and the rest of the members could go to hang as far as he was concerned. Once we were on the Bureau, we had a greater understanding of what the political moves were, and they were still very long-term and they were still very slow and bureaucratic.

So, I was very critical of aspects of the organisation, but looking at it from a longer-term perspective, I realise that they had that long-term political objective and they weren't interested in getting involved in dirty games like Objective One versus Objective Two".

The 'Traditional Industrial Regions of Europe' (RETI).

RETI differed from AER in that as well as pursuing a political agenda, in terms of lobbying the European Commission, in particular DGXVI, over issues pertaining to 'regions', the network also fulfilled a more 'practical' function. AER dealt primarily with economic development issues relating to the impact of de-industrialisation upon regions and the varying policy responses being pursued by SNAs as a consequence. The network was formed in 1984, largely at the instigation of Nord-Pas de Calais, although RETI also had the backing of the European Commission who appeared intent that a trans-national structure representing industrial regions should be established (McAleavey and Mitchell, 1994).⁶⁶ SRC joined RETI in 1986, as the network offered the potential of being able to:-

"lobby the European Commission on behalf of industrial regions, whilst the organisation also undertakes inter-regional joint programmes and offers a good means of exchanging experience in the fields of economic development, training and planning" (SRC Minutes, July 1993).

RETI certainly fulfilled the last two functions, but was somewhat lacking in terms of lobbying the European Commission, in the period up to 1992. In part, this was due to a failure on the part of RETI to recruit members from across the whole of the EC, which led to the network being viewed as unrepresentative by DGXVI. Additionally, RETI often appeared unwilling to become involved with issues upon which DGXVI would expect it to be a natural ally. This problem came to a head in the lead up to a decision being made concerning the renegotiation of the Structural Funds budget in 1992. At the time, it appeared to be a distinct possibility that Objective Two funding (which deals with 'declining industrial areas'), would have its budget reduced or that the fund may entirely disappear. The reluctance of RETI to 'take a stand' on this issue led to a separate 'Objective Two Lobby' being formed, which brought together the vast majority of Objective Two regions, and was led by SRC.⁶⁷ This lobby effectively ousted the incumbent leadership of RETI at the network annual general meeting in April

⁶⁶ McAleavey and Mitchell (1994), provide an interesting account of some of the tensions which existed within RETI (which are referred to in this section), and somewhat limited the influence of the network. In particular, for a variety of reasons, RETI was unable to attract members from the Netherlands, Denmark and Germany, which as a result, somewhat diminished the effectiveness of the network, in the view of the European Commission, and in particular DGXVI.

⁶⁷ The issues surrounding SRC's role with the Objective Two Lobby, are considered in detail in Chapter Seven.

1992, electing Cllr. Charles Gray, as Leader of SRC, to be President of RETI, whilst at the same changing the name of the network to the more dynamic and forward sounding:- 'Association of European Regions of Industrial Technology' (RETI).

With the Presidency of RETI under the control of SRC, the network became actively involved in lobbying for the retention of Objective Two funding, with representations being made directly to the Commissioner for Regional Policy, Bruce Millan, and the President of the Commission, Jacques Delors. The network also organised a conference on the role of Objective Two funding in conjunction with the Objective Two lobby in Edinburgh, shortly before the EU member-states met in the city to decide upon the fate of the Structural Funds. Within SRC, it was felt that holding the Presidency of RETI enabled the Council to gain direct access to the European Commission, to the extent that :- "if the President of RETI goes to the Commission, speaking for RETI, I think he would have a fair bit of influence". (Case, 13).

Membership of RETI enabled improved access to the Commission, not only through SRC holding the Presidency but also through the use of other 'regions' national contacts, for instance the President of Nord-Pas de Calais "knew Delors personally, and he knew a lot of the French connections. He used me or the Millan thing and he also used any French people that were there" (Case Three). In addition to the directly political benefits of involvement with RETI, participation within the network also produced 'spin-offs' in terms of exchange of information between regions and "access to a reasonably intimate grouping of a number of regions, in RETI's case, so that if you're planning other projects, such as, a Leonardo project or whatever kind of other project, you know that within that network, you have regions that have similar interests or similar problems to your own" (Case Thirteen).

The role of networks in providing an entry mechanism into projects with SNAs that have similar priorities to SRC, was a common feature of SRC's involvement with networks, often through the use of Community Initiatives (CIs). Despite RETI's more active lobbying role from 1992 onwards, the network still failed to attract members from across the whole spectrum of EU member-states, thus perhaps blunting RETI's effectiveness in terms of lobbying the European

Commission. Nevertheless the scale of SRC's involvement with RETI, to the extent that the Council was able to garner the support of enough SNAs to form a separate Objective Two lobby (see Chapter Seven), and mount a virtual coup de etat within RETI in 1992, signified the extent to which SRC had become a 'serious player' amongst SNAs active in European policy and the degree to which the priorities of SRC in terms of European policy had shifted from the pre-1986 era.

Issue - Based Networks.

By 1992, SRC had become a participant in nine networks which can be termed as dealing specifically with issues which lay under the competences of the Regional Council. Table Five outlines the functions of these networks, and the department of SRC which was involved with each organisation. The principal benefits for departments of the Council participating within issue-specific networks, tended to be two-fold. Firstly, contact with other SNAs operating within similar policy-fields enabled the Council to assess the approaches followed in other member-states, whilst also allowing the possibility for collaboration with other SNAs. Secondly, membership of networks enabled Council departments to obtain funding for projects related to the network, through obtaining the backing of the 'network' for funding applications being proposed to the European Commission such as Community Initiatives (CIs)⁶⁸, or as a senior SRC politician commented:-

"the thing about being involved within a network with a group of other regions, is that the Commission is always more willing to listen if they're coming with a point together. There's a very good example in 'Les Esturiales' where they're putting

⁶⁸ Over the period 1994-96, CIs accounted for 9% of the EU's Structural Fund budget, with funding designed to "support the development of trans-national, cross-border and inter-regional co-operation" (European Commission, 'Guide to the Community Initiatives', 1994, p.7). SRC obtained Community Initiative funding from six CIs. These were :-

- Employment and Human Resource Initiatives (NOW, HORIZON, YOUTHSTART) :- The 'NOW' programme aims to improve employment opportunities for women; 'HORIZON' is intended to improve the integration of 'excluded' groups (such as, the handicapped, homeless etc.) into the labour market; 'YOUTHSTART' is targeted at improving the employment opportunities of those aged under 20.
- RECHAR - provides assistance to areas affected by unemployment due to the decline of the coal-mining industry.
- RESIDER - provides assistance to areas affected by unemployment due to the decline of the steel-making industry.
- URBAN - a programme aimed at funding schemes targeted at urban localities experiencing severe socio-economic problems.

together a 'LIFE'⁶⁹ project under the 'LIFE' programme. If Strathclyde was to put that forward with say a couple of other regions they wouldn't have nearly so much of a chance of getting the money, as they have when its going under the umbrella of 'Les Esturiales', which is a body recognised by the European Commission" (Case One).

Table 4.5 - SRC participation within issue-based networks.

Name of Network.	Function of Network	SRC Department represented upon the Network.
Les Esturiales	A network for research and discussion amongst SNAs situated next to 'estuaries'. Concerned with issues such as maritime trade and the relationship between development and environmental concerns within estuaries.	Department of Physical Planning.
Atlantic Arc	Network of SNAs with a coastline bordering the Atlantic Ocean. Acts as a lobby for interests common to these SNAs, such as sea transport links.	Department of Physical Planning.
ISOCARP (International Society of City and Regional Planners)	Network of SNAs concerned with planning issues at both the urban and regional scales.	Department of Physical Planning.
POLIS (Promoting Operational Links with Operational Services)	Network of SNAs concerned with traffic systems in urban environments, and with obtaining EU grants for research and development work in this field. The network is closely aligned to DGXIII.	Department of Roads.
Eurocities	A network of SNAs concerned with traffic and transportation problems within urban areas.	Department of Roads.
Villes et Ports	A network of SNAs dealing with the integration of urban policies with port development strategies.	Department of Physical Planning.

⁶⁹ The LIFE programme is funded under Article 10 of the ERDF, which provides funding for inter-regional co-operation schemes and projects which foster exchange of experience between SNAs.

The 'Alliance of Maritime Regions in Europe' (AMRE).	A network of SNAs with coastal and / or maritime interests, to enable the articulation of common interests to EC Institutions. AMRE also aimed to promote research and exchange of experience within this field.	Department of Physical Planning.
Quartier en Crise	A network of SNAs concerned with development strategies in 'seriously deprived neighbourhoods' and to develop an 'integrated approach to urban regeneration'.	Chief Executive's Department.

Source :- SRC Minutes, 1994-95.

The participation of departments outwith the Chief Executive's Department of the Council within 'trans-regional networks' is symptomatic of the extent to which European policy increasingly 'widened-out' across the Council between 1986 to 1996. However the 'commanding heights' of European policy continued to be dominated by the Chief Executive's Department and a small group of senior politicians. This emphasis upon collective action in concert with other SNAs, signifies the increasingly complex nature of EU structures and the depth of SRC's engagement with European policies. In addition, the extensive mobilisation of SNAs from across the EU and the European Commission's emphasis upon encouraging trans-regional co-operation, ensured that SRC could no longer expect to operate as a single actor, as the Council had occasionally done pre-1986, for example, through initiating the process which resulted in the creation of the NCPI for the City of Glasgow.

4.3.5 - SRC's response to the economic effects of European integration.

The peripherality of SRC within the European economy, as well as its legacy of de-industrialisation in large areas of the Council, leads to the expectancy that SRC would have formulated a response to these issues within the European context. As noted above, SRC's initial engagement with European funds were a response to these problems. The Council continued to address these issues through involvement within the 'Strathclyde European Partnership'⁷⁰ and through accessing smaller European funds targeted at particular issues through

⁷⁰ The Strathclyde European Partnership (SEP), which came into existence in 1994, is the successor organisation within the West of Scotland to the NPCI and Strathclyde IDO.

participation within 'trans-regional networks'. The Regional Council noted the importance of European funding and of the European level when outlining the 'Economic Strategy' of the authority for the 1990s, with SRC perceiving its role as being to:-

"act as a 'broker' between the local communities of Strathclyde, with their specific needs and opportunities, and the policy makers at national and European levels" (SRC, 1994, p.1).

The 'Economic Strategy' of the Council placed a significant emphasis upon the role of European finance as a means of obtaining additional funding for the Council:-

"The European Community's Structural Funds, particularly the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF), provide an important means of increasing the resources available for implementing the Strategy. Most of the £500m of European funds attracted to the region to date has been in support of economic development objectives. To continue to maximise this source of additional resources the Council will :-

- with partner regions, continue to lobby the Community on the particular needs of declining industrial regions;
 - take a substantial role in the development of a robust successor to the Strathclyde Integrated Development Operation and maintain a close interest in ensuring its success;
 - monitor all EC documentation to identify new funding sources;
 - and, maintain a presence in Brussels through a European Liaison Officer.
- (SRC, 1994, p.26-27).

In this sense, the development of European policy outlined above, was viewed within the Council as central to sustaining the economic policies of the Council. The centrality of European funding to the Council's 'Economic Strategy' was nowhere more apparent than in the economic development arm of SRC, 'Strathclyde Business Development', which "took 35-40% of our budget (i.e. Strathclyde Business Development's budget) every year through European funding" (Case Sixteen).

Thus, the expansion of the EU Structural Funds post-1988 also acted to ensure that SRC continued to depend upon EU funding, in order to pursue SRC's policy priorities. The Council's engagement within a widening range of European structures also has to be viewed in this context, despite the increasing importance of European regulations and the overtly political nature of some of

SRCs activities within European structures, finance continued to underpin SRC's European policy.

Summary.

The impact of the Single European Act and latterly, the Maastricht Treaty, resulted in a widening of the scope and scale of SRC's European policy in two key respects. Firstly, the range of departments within the Council which had an involvement with European policy extended to varying degrees, from purely submitting applications for European funding to remaining aware of European regulations and 'proposals' and participating with 'trans-regional networks'. Whilst overall strategic European policies, such as the role of the Council within AER, continued to be dealt with by the Chief Executive's Department, other departments began to develop a more autonomous European policy through issue-specific networks and exchange of experience programmes. In part this was due to the second major change in SRC's European policy as the Council found that European policy was no longer purely concerned with leveraging money from European funds, but was increasingly taking on a 'advocacy' function. This was reflected in the changing role of the SRC representative office in Brussels towards liaison with other SNAs and European Institutions, as well as providing an information service to Council departments. SRC's involvement within 'trans-regional networks' (particularly AER and RETI) signified that SRC had come to view itself as a 'major player' amongst European SNAs. Nevertheless, the financial benefits to the Council through accessing European funds remained central to SRC's policy. However the period from 1986 to 1997 added a new dimension to this policy as an overtly 'political' role for the authority emerged.

The debates which took place within SRC as the extent of the Council's involvement developed and the tensions which resulted between Councillors and individual departments are the subject of the following section.

4.4 -The Management of European Policy within SRC.

European policy within SRC (as has been noted above) tended to be dominated in bureaucratic terms, by the Chief Executive's Department, and in political terms, by senior politicians. Alliances between senior politicians and officials is

not uncommon within local government, with such a situation being termed as a 'joint-elite'. Stoker (1991) suggests that a 'joint-elite'⁷¹ consists of:-
"a small group of leading councillors and officers. The composition of this leading group will vary from authority to authority but is likely to be drawn from committee chairs and vice-chairs together with chief officers and their deputies" (Stoker, 1991, p.92).

The control which this 'joint-elite' exercised over European policy within SRC was a constant feature of the Council's European policy, which was evident even during the initial emergence of a European policy within the Council. The early recognition by SRC of the possibilities for the Council within the European arena was unusual in UK local government terms. Additionally, the Labour party campaigned during the 1983 Election on the basis that a future Labour government would withdraw from the EEC, whilst the mid 1980s were characterised by an ambivalent attitude within the Labour party towards the EEC. The emergence of a European policy within SRC's Labour group which viewed 'Brussels' as an ally, was met with surprisingly little debate, as a senior Labour Councillor at the time commented:-

" at no time did we go to the Labour group and say 'Let's vote pro-Europe'. What we did was, agree that what we were doing was right at the time....We became pro-European in an almost tacit way, the Labour group on the Council became pro-Europe and in fairness the Chief Executive and Assistant Chief Executive in a sense helped with that, because they were putting 'feelers' out to other departments, saying look there's an interest in this for you.....So, without ever formally taking a pro-European vote in Council, or in the Labour group, we became probably the leading pro-European local authority in the whole of the United Kingdom." (Case Three)⁷².

In part, this 'tacit' drift towards a pro-European policy stance within SRC was also attributable to factors other than purely the manoeuvrings of a 'joint elite'

⁷¹ For a discussion and critique of the joint elite model of power relationships within local government, see Wilson, D and Game, C (1994). It is worth noting that the 'joint elite' perspective of local government decision-making has been critiqued for lacking a recognition of a hierarchy of actors within an elite and, for failing to recognise the role of organisations external to the local authority. Given this chapter, deals solely with internal decision-making within SRC the role of external organisations are not considered here. Equally, given the relatively small number of individuals viewed as forming a joint-elite in Strathclyde with regard to European policy it would prove somewhat problematic to attempt to develop a hierarchy with regard to this elite.

⁷² Indeed so widespread had 'pro-Europeanism' become within the SRC Labour group, that one Senior Labour Councillor (Case One) refused to accept that the Labour party had ever held a policy position which was anti-European during the 1983 election, or at any time prior to or following this.

consisting of senior figures within the Council, such as the need within the Council to obtain finance to pursue its policy priorities. Nevertheless, the prominence of an elite group of politicians and officials directing the development of policy, was a constant feature throughout SRC's involvement with European affairs. Indeed, it was noticeable when interviewing members of SRC's 'European and International Affairs Committee', who were not within this 'elite' grouping, that their knowledge of SRC's involvement with European affairs was extremely limited. For instance, several Councillors interviewed⁷³ had either never heard of, or had no knowledge as to the role of, the 'Strathclyde European Partnership'. This is despite the vast majority of Committee meetings either containing items relating to applications for ERDF or ESF funding, and frequently dealing with agenda items concerning the changing structure of the SEP. However, these members on the 'outside' would tend to justify virtually every aspect of SRC's European policy in terms of the finance generated, even where certain policies were not concerned primarily with finance generation, or where 'additionality' considerations limited the financial benefits. There was a recognition amongst some Labour Councillors that claims of millions of pounds were being obtained from the EU, without considering the implications of issues such as additionality, merely amounted to "a legitimisation exercise for the overall policy" (Case Eight).

This is not to imply that SRC's European policy was misguided. However, the unquestioning assumption that finance generation was the sole rationale behind all aspects of European policy enabled a 'policy elite' of senior Councillors and officials to develop European policy in a relatively autonomous manner due to the lack of scrutiny at Committee level. It was noticeable how frequently respondents outside of this policy elite would consider European affairs as being essentially "non-political or apolitical, in that the present administration see it as a valuable source of funding" (Case Four). The extent of this acceptance of the financial benefits and apolitical nature of European policy, led to an almost complacent acceptance of all policy decisions, as the following comments from a Labour Councillor exemplify :-

" I think most of European and International Affairs is really just a reporting back thing, because the policies will take place in the European organisations we're involved in. So, that's where policies are debated and made. Obviously, the

⁷³ These were Cases Two, Four, Five and Six.

Chair [of the European and International Affairs Committee] will sit down with his officers from time to time, but there's never a lot of debate in the European and International Affairs Committee, because things are usually agreed by then. But debating policies, usually takes place in the Labour group meetings." (Case Two).

The lack of a vote concerning the Labour group's attitude towards the EEC and the general paucity of knowledge amongst 'outsider' members, makes it extremely questionable as to how much debate took place within Labour group meetings concerning European policies. However, debate did take place within the 'joint-elite' concerning the extent to which SRC should become involved within certain structures and as to the overall direction of European policy. Conflict also occurred within SRC over the control of European policy. This is hardly surprising, as European policy as a function of local government is clearly a recent development, and as such required that both officials and councillors adjusted to operating within a new policy environment. In addition, the European function is qualitatively different from other functions of local government in that it contained significant attractions for both officials and politicians. To officials, European policy offered the opportunity to be involved in a policy environment:- "that was really exciting, and therefore lots of people wanted to get a stake in it, because it was interesting and new and there was money coming from it, when there wasn't money coming from anywhere else." (Case Forty-Three).

For politicians, European affairs also offered the opportunity to be 'seen' to be attracting finance to the region, as well as the possibility of foreign travel and to be associated with new projects being opened as a consequence of European finance. As a result, of the attractiveness of involvement with European affairs, conflict over the control of policy tended to occur along two axes, firstly, between departments of the Council, and secondly, between rival factions or individual Councillors within SRC's Labour group.

Inter-departmental conflict within SRC.

The principal area of conflict between departments within SRC, in terms of the management of European policy, lay between the Chief Executive's Department and the other departments with an involvement in European affairs. Due to the pivotal role of the 'European Unit' within the Chief Executives Department, in terms of access to information, the processing of funding applications, and

directing policy, resulted in tensions arising between the Chief Executive's and other departments, which felt isolated from European policy. The centralisation of the European function within CE's was recognised by officials from within the European Unit, who were also aware of the resentments this could create, for instance, one official commented:-

"You had a situation where the Chief Exec's had a responsibility for European policy, and it was centralised and corporate in that sense, and the region had a strong sense of identity, so much so that there wasn't really any parallel to it. And that certainly existed and there was at the same time a desire from other sections or departments to do things....What tended to happen was that the sort of big money, the Objective Two and ESF, was handled centrally, and there was liaison with individual departments as to who was getting money eventually. But I think that was a good thing, because there's a central intelligence side to things, where you need to know what the Commission thinks about things, what's going to get money, what isn't.....generally those relationships were alright because we were successful in getting money through during the '80s, so that everyone won. What tended to happen was that over time, other departments got involved in initiatives, in other Article 10 sort of programmes. There was a mushrooming of programmes during the '80s, and they tended to be handled by particular departments, so Social Work did a thing about Aids for the European Commission, that kind of thing. Which was fine for them to handle that, because it was more kind of specialist. I think that's OK. But there certainly were jealousies for the Chief Exec's, as in who's going to have overall responsibility for Europe, because it's so attractive really, that certainly existed but overall I think it worked alright" (Case Forty Three).

Jealousies certainly did exist between the Chief Executive's and other departments, which frequently complained of being 'press-ganged' into applying for funding, despite the fund not perhaps being adequately suited to a department's overall policy line. As a result, departments had an impression of being, at best patronised by Chief Executives and at worst, dominated by the Department's demands. These tensions did lessen post-1986, as the increasing workload of the European Unit within the Chief Executive's department ensured that some decentralisation of responsibilities occurred, whilst individual departments also developed their own programmes and became involved within arenas, such as trans-regional networks. An example of the form these tensions took, arises from the relations between the Chief Executive's and Strathclyde

Business Development (SBD)⁷⁴. The relationship between CE's and SBD was summed up by one SBD official as follows:-

"In the early days, there was a tendency for the 'thinkers' [referring to CE's] to devise the schemes and to look at the European regulations and say if you follow this construction, you will get European funding. And there was a tendency for them to conceptually create the parcel and then say here over to you, you run it. That wasn't very satisfactory, and there was a tendency for them to come up with programmes which they hadn't even discussed with us. And then say to us, this meets European requirements, and off you go. Now two things resulted in a change of our understanding. One was the fundamental principle, that if you are going to devise a scheme, you should involve the people who are going to run it. The other was that as time went on, the Economic Strategy people [within CE's] became more and more involved in the bureaucratic dimension to Europe and they didn't have time devising schemes and so a lot of the schemes that have been developed since those very early days, have been developed and run 'in house' (i.e. within SBD)". (Case Fifteen).

The perception that European policy was 'managed' within Chief Executives and that the department was protective of its European role, was not a perception confined only within SRC, for instance an official from an institution outwith the Council commented :-

"The economic development staff and the Chief Executives staff were a bit protective, we've got all the knowledge of Europe. And knowledge was power in the early days and still is to some extent, because Europe is complicated, people think, if you have the wrong approach about knowledge of Europe, and say I'm the only person who knows about how to speak to the Commissioner about Europe, I can't tell you to go". (Case Forty Two).

Nevertheless, conflicts between departments of SRC remained limited to 'turf wars' over the control of aspects of European policy, and resentment at what could be viewed as 'interference' from CE's in the internal workings of other departments. In contrast, tensions within the ruling Labour group of the Council could be far more acrimonious, and indeed personal, and it is to these that I now intend to turn.

⁷⁴ Strathclyde Business Development was the economic development arm (department) of Strathclyde Regional Council.

Political Conflict within SRC over the control of European policy.

Given that any conflict amongst Councillors over the control of European policy within SRC could only take place within the Labour group rather than between party groupings, such conflict tended to revolve around what could be loosely termed 'factions'. These factions were frequently based upon 'personal' political struggles between individual Councillors within SRC. The key event which highlighted the jealousies and rivalries which the introduction of a European function for local government could produce amongst Councillors, was the removal of Cllr. Charles Gray⁷⁵ as Leader of the Council in 1992. Cllr. Gray's extensive involvement with European affairs had resulted in an impression that there was a certain degree of 'junketing' taking place, or as an interviewee outwith SRC observed:-

"that was part of what was the downfall of Charlie Gray, he didn't bring in enough people. Now, he was seen as being going off to Brussels and off to Europe too often and he didn't spread that amongst people (i.e. other councillors)" (Case Forty Two).

The rival political faction which ultimately gained control of the Council, certainly benefited from such impressions amongst Councillors, and upon taking office established the 'European and International Affairs Committee', apparently to establish clear lines of democratic accountability over the expanding European function. Alternatively, some Councillors considered that the establishment of a European Committee was a mechanism to "pull Charlie into line, so that the powers that be in Strathclyde, got to know what he was getting up to" (Case Six). The concern that the attraction of the European function of local government, may lead to some 'dubious' practices amongst Councillors was a frequent concern amongst Councillors and officials within SRC. Whatever the reality of the situation, the control of European policy amongst a small elite group of politicians and officials had clearly facilitated political infighting and created jealousies within SRC.

Summary.

The dominance of a 'joint-elite' of Councillors and officials over the development of European policy, certainly aroused conflict within SRC. In part this was

⁷⁵ Cllr. Gray held positions within AER and RETI, and would subsequently become Leader of the UK delegation to the Committee of the Regions.

inevitable, as the incorporation of a new function into an institution would lead to disputes over divisions of responsibility and control for the policy field. This situation is further exacerbated when, as with European policy, the competence is of a corporate nature. The extent of control exercised by this elite over European policy certainly accounts, to some extent, for the 'success' which SRC achieved within the European arena, whether this is measured in terms of attracting European funding or obtaining influential positions within European structures. Clearly, this elite had a clear vision as to the role which European policy could fulfil for SRC, in terms of the Council's economic and social priorities, whilst the presence of key figures within SRC on all the major European structures with which SRC was involved certainly made the Council 'recognisable' upon the broader European scene. However, the rivalries resulting as a consequence of having so much control of European policy vested within a small elite, perhaps reinforces the need to decentralise (wherever possible) aspects of European policy between departments, whilst also ensuring that clear lines of democratic accountability exist at the political level.

4.5 - Concluding Remarks.

The development of European policy within SRC has been viewed as having taken place within two distinct time periods. The initial establishment of a European policy between 1975 to 1985, was based upon the need to obtain finance from European Institutions, in order to supplement funding for the Council's policy priorities. As awareness within the Council increased as to the potential financial benefits available to SRC from European sources, decisions were taken at a senior level to entrench the emergent European function through two institutional developments. These were the creation of a section within the Chief Executives Department which dealt solely with European issues and the establishment of a representative office in Brussels. These were major initiatives for any SNA within Europe to undertake, and thus reflected the extent that SRC was refocusing upon the EEC as a potential ally in its attempts to pursue regeneration policies. As a consequence of these developments, European policy was centralised bureaucratically within the Chief Executives Department, with key decisions being taken by senior officials and politicians. The management of European policy by a 'joint-elite' within SRC would remain a significant feature of the Council's European policy until the abolition of SRC in April 1996.

Whilst the early engagement of SRC with European Institutions was marked by a desire to maximise funding and to a limited extent draw upon the development policies of other European SNAs, the period from 1986-96 witnessed a more complex process of Europeanisation, as the Council's European policy expanded and diversified. Whilst obtaining finance remained central to SRC's involvement within European structures, there was also a recognition that the Council would have to engage with European political 'debates' (primarily through participation within trans-regional networks), in order to ensure not only continuing funding, but also to influence the form of European regulations which could impact upon the SRC's policy competences. In addition, the increasing scale of European policy, required that some aspects of European affairs be devolved to other departments within SRC, although the 'commanding heights' of European policy remained centralised within CE's and under the control of senior politicians, resulting in various tensions within SRC at political and bureaucratic levels.

The extension of SRC's European policy post-1986, can in part be viewed as a natural response to the Europeanising influences of the Single European Act, however the extent of SRC's involvement within trans-regional networks with a broad, political agenda, demonstrated the desire of key actors within the Council that SRC should be able to compete with the other major 'regional' players from across Europe. The following chapters deal with SRC's expanding involvement with European policy, principally during the period from 1986-96, in terms of the Council's involvement within the newly created 'institutional arenas' of the 'Strathclyde European Partnership' and the 'Ouverture' programme. In addition, the role of SRC within 'formal' and 'informal' networks is also considered in order to assess the extent to which SRC was able to engage with a new process of governance which stretched across tiers of government and between public and private actors.

Chapter Five :- The Implementation of 'Partnership' in Strathclyde, 1985-96.

"Partnership conceives the relationship between levels of government as being one of interaction rather than autonomy. Instead of giving independence to sub-national governments within a defined framework of powers and duties in which certain issues are deemed to be exclusively handled at the sub-national level, partnership involves governments at local, regional, national and supra-national levels in complex patterns of mutual influence" (Marks, 1993, p.406).

"The 1989 reforms of the structural funds took away their administration from Brussels and placed them mainly in the hands of nation-states. Ironically, Marks seizes on this institutional reform as heralding greater influence of the Commission on local policy-making. He shows the Commission has been active in promoting partnerships by direct contacts with sub-national bodies. Though the new administrative arrangements were designed to show partnership, particularly through the involvement of public bodies in the preparation of Community Support Frameworks and in the evaluation of programmes, UK civil servants dominate the monitoring committees by appointing the participants, chairing the meetings and setting the agendas. The committees meet infrequently, usually once every six months, which indicates partnership is largely superficial.....Central government draws up and submits the single programming documents, often vetoing the sub-national view. Though Marks makes much of direct contact with Commission officials, the latter are observers rather than shapers of policy. Because of the financial and legal power of central government, programmes are as centrally run as before" (John, 1996, p.137-8).

5.1 - Introduction.

The Reform of the Structural Funds in 1988⁷⁶, not only doubled the size of the fund to a total budget of 60.4bn ECU (Dinan, 1994, p.409), but also established four principles which would govern the implementation of the Funds. These principles were :- additionality, concentration, partnership and programming. 'Additionality' refers to the 'principle' that European funds should be additional to existing central government (or sub-national authorities) funding, as opposed to merely replacing funding already committed at the national (or sub-national) level. 'Concentration' concerns the role of the Structural Funds as a mechanism designed to concentrate resources in the favour of the most disadvantaged

⁷⁶The Reforms of the Structural Funds did not come into force until the 1st January 1989.

regions or groups within the EU, as determined through the creation of five 'Objectives'. Programming refers to the replacement of the previous project-by-project approach to funding with a programmatic structure, intended to provide a coherent strategy, in terms of the development of the region concerned. Finally, partnership deals with the process through which this local development 'strategy' is to be developed. The process of partnership arises as the European Commission, member-states and regional / local bodies negotiate over the plan which will determine the manner in which the funds will be spent within the region. Or as the European Commission terms it, partnership requires :-

"the close involvement of regional and local bodies with the Commission and national authorities in planning and implementing development measures in their areas. On the basis of the CSF, all the parties in the partnership will develop programmes and projects which will turn the priorities identified in the CSF into actions on the ground" (European Commission, 1991, p.6).

It is with the implementation of the 'partnership' principle⁷⁷ within Strathclyde Region⁷⁸, that this chapter is concerned. The inclusion of partnership as a key principle informing the Reform of the Structural Funds in 1989 and its subsequent implementation was the principle development which subsequently informed conceptualisations of multi-level governance (Marks, 1993). This chapter considers the form in which partnership developed within Strathclyde in order to not only understand the impact of this process upon SRC but also to evaluate the various partnership structures which developed in Western Scotland within the context of multi-level governance. As the opening quotes to this chapter

⁷⁷ This chapter deals with four different institutional structures which implemented 'partnership' arrangements in Strathclyde. These are : the 'National Programme of Community Interest' (NPCI) 1985-87; the 'Strathclyde Integrated Development Operation' (IDO) 1988-92; the 'West of Scotland Operational Programme' (WSOP) 1993; and, the 'Strathclyde European Partnership' (SEP) 1994-99, although this chapter only considers the SEP until April 1996 while Chapter Eight deals with the role of the new unitary authorities within SEP until May 1997.

⁷⁸ When referring to Strathclyde Region in this chapter, I am not referring to the area covered by the SRC boundaries, but only to the areas covered by the Strathclyde Integrated Development Operation and latterly, the Strathclyde European Partnership. Thus, I am not referring to the areas that came under Highlands and Islands Objective 5b status from 1990-93, or Highlands and Islands Objective 1 status from 1994-9, namely Argyll and Bute, Arran and the Cumbrae Islands. Whilst SRC was a partner in the Highlands and Islands partnership, in local government terms, Highland Council was the primary representative of local government on the Partnership, due to the scale of the funding it was receiving.

illustrate, the development of partnership arrangements around the Structural Funds has led to a considerable debate as to whether such institutions represent a development where the role of central government is diminished and the Commission is able to influence local policy agendas and policy-making while local organisations (including local government) can form alliances with each other and with the European Commission which would enable the by-passing of central government policy. The extent to which central government authority has been eroded by the implementation of partnership is widely contested and the purpose of this chapter is to ascertain the extent to which central government exercised authority over the partnership arrangements that developed in Strathclyde.

The development of partnership institutions, principally at the local level, has been a noticeable development since the early 1980's. A number of theoretical perspectives provide varying perspectives for the considerable expansion of partnership arrangements⁷⁹. Within the United Kingdom, the development of partnerships is frequently viewed as deriving from Conservative Government policy post-1979 which emphasised the role of the private sector and a market ethos to delivering public services combined with budgetary cut-backs resulting in local authorities collaborating with other external agencies in order to be able to provide services or meet new policy aims (Harding, 1998). However, the influences upon establishment of partnerships vary considerably. Harding (1998) terms Structural Fund partnerships as being 'shotgun partnerships'. Harding suggests that partnerships are the result of one institutions dominance over a policy agenda with such an outcome being a result of a "superordinate authority taking the view that a partnership solution to the issue or problem at hand is preferable to a non-partnership and perhaps more traditional one" (Harding, 1998, p.74). In this case, the European Commission would represent a 'superordinate authority'. More generally, the role of the European Commission

⁷⁹ See Stoker, G (1998) for an outline of a number of theoretical perspectives on the growth of partnerships institutions.

in encouraging the development of partnerships is widely recognised, for instance Stoker comments that:

“The role of the European Union in promoting partnership should not be underestimated as it has sought to forge new coalitions with local and regional governments and voluntary organisations” (Stoker, 1998, p.40).

The West of Scotland was distinctive in its approach to implementing the Structural Funds, as it had obtained experience in the practice of ‘partnership’ prior to the 1988 Reforms, through the ‘National Programme of Community Interest’ (NCPI) from 1985-87, whilst the establishment of the Integrated Development Operation (IDO) in 1988⁸⁰ ensured that a partnership was in place a year or two in advance of the vast majority of other EU regions. As a consequence of this comparatively lengthy period of programming in the West of Scotland, this chapter deals firstly with the evolution of the ‘partnership’ principle in the region via a consideration of the changing institutional structures applied to implement the Structural Funds. Allied to this is a preoccupation with the influence of Strathclyde Regional Council within these structures, as measured in terms of the proportion of funding obtained and via the perceptions of local actors. Following on from this exploration of the development of programming in Strathclyde, the chapter will turn to analyse the ‘benefits’ of programming to the major institutions within the partnership. Finally, I intend to consider the experience of the region with regard to the extent to which ‘partnership’ represents an emergent system of ‘multi-level governance’ within the policy environment of the Structural Funds, in the case of Western Scotland.

5.2 The National Programme of Community Interest, 1985-87.

The previous chapter referred to a pilot study commissioned by DGXVI, to assess the possibility of an ‘Integrated Development Operation’ being set up in Strathclyde. Although DGXVI ultimately decided to proceed with a ‘National Programme of Community Interest’ (NPCI) covering roughly the boundaries of

⁸⁰The Integrated Development Operation was approved in December 1988, a matter of days before the Structural Funds Reforms came into force.

Glasgow District Council and limited to ERDF funding alone⁸¹, the preparatory study is of significance in terms of the structure it recommended for the implementation of European funds in the West of Scotland. The report recommended that the IDO should consist of three main components. Firstly, an 'IDO Servicing Group' consisting of two officials based with SRC, to oversee the administration of the fund. Secondly, an 'IDO Working Group' with the role of ensuring that the programme was co-ordinated and met its objectives. This body would consist of representatives from the European Commission, the Scottish Office, the Scottish Development Agency (SDA), Glasgow District Council, the Manpower Services Commission and other agencies could attend on an 'ad hoc' basis. The Working Group would be chaired by SRC. Lastly, the IDO would be governed by a 'Directing Committee' containing representatives, including political representatives, from each of the institutions that were members of the IDO Working Group⁸². Once again, SRC was to chair the meetings of this Committee. The role of this Committee, would be to :-

"set general guidelines for the future development of the IDO; to draw together budgets; to monitor progress of IDO projects; to sort out conflicts of interest between parties involved in joint working; and to make reports to the EC of major emerging trends that need to be included in the programme, and major difficulties that are arising from the priorities of the EEC or interpretation of its guidelines" (Roger Tyms, 1984, In, MacAleavey, P, 1995, p.272).

The NPCI covered a more limited geographical area than envisaged by the preparatory study and consisted of ERDF funding only (i.e. did not include ESF finance). As result the institution had a more limited number of constituent members and consequently a simpler structure than envisaged in the preparatory study. The NPCI consisted of one body, the 'Co-ordinating Committee' which brought together (non-political) representatives from SRC, the European Commission (DGXVI), Glasgow District Council, SDA, the South of Scotland Electricity Board, Scottish Gas, British Railways and the Strathclyde Passenger Transport Executive. The Committee was chaired by the Scottish Office

⁸¹As opposed to an IDO covering the whole of Strathclyde and containing ERDF and ESF funding.

(Industry Department). The role of this body which met twice a year was essentially to oversee the running of the NCPI, with administration being carried out by the Scottish Office. However, the management role of the 'Co-ordinating committee' was itself rather limited, for reasons which will be discussed below. Nevertheless, it is worth noting at this stage that the Scottish Office was clearly determined to have a dominant role upon the committee through holding the chair, whilst also being unwilling to countenance political representation upon the NCPI. This increasing activism on the part of the Scottish Office would become increasingly prominent in the negotiations surrounding the role and structure of the IDO and its subsequent implementation. The general Scottish Office view as to the possibility of political representation upon the NCPI, was summed up by a senior SRC politician as follows :-

"I think that he [a senior SRC official] had doubts that if I insisted on politicians on the Committee, the Scottish Office would veto it....The Scottish Office had made it clear to [a senior SRC official] that they did not want political involvement, but I think they required me to agree to that before they could get away with it, and I saw they had serious problems with political involvement" (Case 46).

The aims which were set out for the NCPI, were fairly wide-ranging and rather vague, these were to:-

"contribute to economic development : by adding to, or improving on, strategic city-wide infrastructure systems such as major regional roads and motorways linking with the trunk networks, suburban rail networks, the network of vocational training centres; and by adding to, or improving, infrastructure in particular localities, specifically industrial and commercial areas" (MacAleavey, 1995, p.236).

The NCPI for the City of Glasgow allocated £68.2m of ERDF support, with the 'partners' providing 50% of the expenditure for each scheme. Written into the NCPI agreement was a percentage breakdown of the expected funding which each partner could expect to receive, which went as follows :- SRC 53%; ScotRail 21%; Glasgow District Council 9%; South of Scotland Electricity Board 8%; SDA 7%; and British Gas 2% (MacAleavey, 1995, p.236). Thus the vagueness of the NCPI's aims, may reflect the fact that the programme merely

⁸²There would be no ad-hoc membership of the IDO Directing Committee.

ensured that a sum of money was available for the various partners, thus removing the uncertainty of applying on a project by project basis and enabling a degree of forward planning. Clearly Strathclyde was expected to obtain the majority of the funding from the programme, a result which can be attributed to two main factors. Firstly, the NPCI contained ERDF monies only, and as a consequence dealt only with applications for infrastructure. As the Regional Council was the main provider of infrastructure within Strathclyde, it would have been surprising had the Council not been expected to obtain a substantial tranche of the funds available. Secondly, a common feature of all the negotiations resulting in 'partnership' agreements, was that SRC was closely involved in the negotiations leading up to an agreement, to a far greater extent than the other participants, with the exception of the European Commission and the Scottish Office. This was particularly pertinent in the case of the NPCI, where (as outlined in the previous chapter) SRC had been lobbying the European Commission for an integrated funding package for the West of Scotland, and was heavily involved in the negotiations surrounding the form it should take. Thus, the NPCI was always going to reflect to a reasonable extent the spending priorities of SRC. As a SRC official commented with regard to the Strathclyde European Partnership (SEP) :-

"Not surprisingly, some of the people who wrote the Single Programming Document, came from the Regional Council and so their priorities weren't a hundred miles away from those of Economic Strategy, when we came to apply for funds" (Case 16).

There is no reason to suspect that SRC did not also exert a similar (if not greater) degree of influence over the aims of the NPCI (and subsequently IDO). In practice, SRC only applied for funding worth 38.1% of the NPCI's fund, although if funding levered from the fund by the Strathclyde Passenger Transport Executive (SPTE) is included in this total, then SRC's uptake of the £68.2m rises to 40.5%. In terms of the individual departments within SRC, the major beneficiary from the NPCI was the Department of Roads which took up 26.7 % of the programme's funds, due to ERDF monies being limited to infrastructure

projects. The dominance of the Department of Roads within SRC in terms of ERDF applications was apparent via individual project applications, as between 1975 and 1988 the department accounted for 56.4% of all ERDF funding SRC received (SRC, 1994, p.46). Thus, the extent to which the department benefited from the NPCI was not unexpected, given the aims of the programme and the departmental history of applying for ERDF grants. However with reference to comments in the previous chapter regarding the dominance of the Chief Executive's Department in dealing with European issues, it is worth noting that despite the extent to which the Roads Department could be expected to benefit, all the negotiations concerning the NPCI were carried out by officials from Chief Executive's, although they would liaise with other Council departments. Table 5.1 displays the funding SRC received between 1985 to 1987⁸³ through the NPCI, whilst also giving a breakdown by the individual departments of the Council.

The NPCI for the City of Glasgow was an experimental scheme for the European Commission, which had at the same time approved two other NPCI's within the UK⁸⁴. These schemes were among the first of their kind across Europe, although similar schemes had been approved previously for the Cities of Naples in 1979 and Belfast in 1981, which had initially drawn SRC into lobbying the European Commission for an integrated funding package. Given the innovative nature of the programmes, it was hardly surprising that the NPCIs did little more than bring together an aggregated sum of ERDF funding within a fixed time period, with the aims of the programme being vaguely sketched out. Thus contemporary analyses of the value of the NPCI reached largely negative conclusions as to the extent to which the programme represented a dramatic improvement upon the previous project-by-project approach. The initial preparatory study into the potential

⁸³It is worth reiterating that although the NPCI was in operation from 1985 to 1987, the European Commission allowed applications for funding dating back to mid-1984.

⁸⁴The other two NPCI's in the UK were both located in England, at Shildon / Newton-Aycliffe / Bishop Auckland, and the Mersey Basin respectively.

for an IDO in Glasgow had commented that the benefits of such a scheme lay in :-

“increasing the effectiveness of existing funds, in increased priority accorded to applications to existing funds and higher rates of grant, and in the unquantifiable gains following from a closer relationship to the Community” (Roger Tyms, 1984, In, Keating, M and Boyle, R, 1986, p.67).

Table 5.1 - Funding Received by SRC through the NPCI, 1985-87.

Applicant for NPCI funding. (Department of SRC).	Funding obtained (£m).	% of total NPCI fund (Figures are rounded up).
Roads.	18.2	26.7%
Sewerage.	3.6	5.3%
Water.	2.7	4%
Physical Planning.	0.4	0.6%
Other ⁸⁵ .	1.0	1.5%
SRC (minus SPTE).	26.0	38.1%
Strathclyde Passenger Transport Executive (SPTE).	1.6	2.3%
SRC (including SPTE).	27.6	40.5%

Source :- Strathclyde Regional Council, 1994, p.46.

However, the NPCI was criticised by outside observers, due to the lack of ‘additionality’⁸⁶ whilst the NPCI was considered as consisting of no more than “a shopping list of projects eligible for funding from EC sources” (Keating and Boyle, 1986, p. 68), given the manner in which funding shares between partners was largely predetermined. Thus Keating and Boyle took the view that :-

“There is a great deal less to the Glasgow IDO⁸⁷ than meets the eye. It may have a certain promotional significance both for the local authorities and for the Community, which is anxious to publicise the disbursement of its funds. The

⁸⁵‘Other’ refers to funding obtained jointly by the Education and the Estates Department.

⁸⁶The previous chapter outlined the position whereby funding local authorities received from the ERDF resulted only in a benefit to the authority in terms of loan savings, as the money would be taken out of the Council’s capital budget by central government which viewed the funds as a means of re-imbursement for the cost of EEC membership. This resulted in a situation whereby EEC funding was not genuinely additional to existing local government expenditure plans, thus resulting in the term ‘additionality’.

⁸⁷Keating and Boyle are referring here to the NPCI and not to the post-1988 IDO.

existence of the IDO may give the authorities some leverage in pursuing applications for funding for projects from the ESF and the quota and the non-quota sections of the ERDF, though this must be speculative. It does not, however amount to a development plan nor, indeed, to the sort of strategic intervention in selected projects which would have allowed the Community to target its resources on items central to its own policy objectives and to gain the maximum leverage over these. Instead, the funds will continue to be spread over a wide range of items as before, with local government seeking the maximum EC support for whatever projects it is pursuing and central government seeking to maximise the UK take from the various funds, without increasing overall public spending" (Keating and Boyle, 1986, p.68).

These criticisms of the NPCI are certainly valid, however with hindsight the NPCI is significant in that it was the first attempt at 'partnership' in Strathclyde, and as such did have a legacy upon the form of subsequent structures. Equally, the NPCI did bring a range of benefits to the principal partners in the NPCI (i.e. the European Commission, the Scottish Office and Strathclyde Regional Council). To SRC the NPCI was all that the Council required from programming, in that the NPCI enabled a degree of certainty to come into the funding process whilst also establishing a formal line of contact with DGXVI through the 'Co-ordinating Committee', although clearly SRC desired a Strathclyde-wide programme integrating ERDF and ESF monies.

Nevertheless, the form of the programme left the Council relatively free to pursue its own policy priorities with European finance. The main objective of SRC with regard to European funding was to obtain the maximum amount possible, in order to pursue the Council's economic and social strategies. Thus the rather minimalist nature of 'partnership' in the NPCI, was not a concern for SRC as it had no vested interest in pushing the concept.

In contrast, the European Commission did have an interest in extending the 'partnership' process, and for the Commission the NPCI was a 'pilot' scheme which offered the opportunity to gain further experience of the process of attempting to implement the concept of partnership, as well as obtaining closer contact with local institutions and their policies. In general terms the European

Commission desires contact with sub-national actors and interest groups, in order to attempt to minimise the Commission's dependence upon member-states for the information upon which the formation of policy and its implementation depends, or as Marks and McAdam (1996) put it :-

"regional governments and their representatives in Brussels provide a source of information to the Commission outside regular state executive channels. As a small organisation with vast responsibilities, the Commission has to rely on externally generated information, and it seeks as diverse an informational base as possible" (Marks and McAdam, 1996, p.267).

Thus contact with institutions from the West of Scotland, offered the opportunity to obtain information from non member-state organisations in order to improve the implementation of the funds and 'partnership'. Finally the Scottish Office did not experience any difficulty in supporting SRC's initial lobbies for an IDO and then in participating within the NPCI, as the NPCI approach was not inconsistent with UK government policy, given that two NCPI's were created in England at the same time as Glasgow's designation as an NPCI. Indeed the Scottish Office was keen to support SRC in its approaches to DGXVI, an attitude which a senior SRC politician summarised as follows :-

"There was a kind of comradely relationship with the Scottish Office, who were really quite pleased with what Strathclyde was doing, because it didn't appear to be of anti-government significance, it wasn't a Labour versus Tory thing, it was something that was bringing something to Scotland, and behind their hand they were agreeing that it was high time Scotland got its share of what the UK was putting in as a net provider" (Case 46).

This perception of a 'Scottish' interest and of an alliance between the Scottish Office and SRC would be a common theme in the development of 'partnership' within the West of Scotland. However as the NPCI exemplified, the Scottish Office even at this early stage were ensuring that they remained in a position to guide the implementation of partnership through chairing the 'Co-ordinating Committee' and excluding political representation. Symptomatic of this co-operation was that by the middle of 1986, SRC and the Scottish Office were negotiating with DGXVI regarding the possibility of an 'Integrated Development

Operation' in Strathclyde, and it is to these negotiations and the role of the IDO which I now intend to turn.

5.3.1- The Strathclyde 'Integrated Development Operation' (IDO), 1988-92.

As with the early negotiations concerning the NPCI for Glasgow, the initial contacts with DGXVI concerning an IDO were led by SRC. However during the creation of the NPCI, the Scottish Office had begun to display signs of increasing interest in the European funds, through vetoing political representation upon the NPCI's 'Co-ordinating Committee' and through chairing this committee. In the negotiations with the European Commission regarding the IDO, the Scottish Office became increasingly prominent in part because SRC required the support of the Scottish Office in these negotiations as a representative of the member-state. However SRC continued to have a prominent position in these discussions to the extent that :-

"The Regional Council took the lead in all of this, but once we got into the hard financial negotiation with the Commission, it became absolutely obvious that we needed the backing of the UK government, and the Scottish Office came in behind us very well, and the Assistant Secretary who was in charge of European Affairs ..came alongside me in the detailed technical negotiations. The political discussions at a Commissioner level were with Cllr. Gray, but obviously the technicalities of what was eligible and what wasn't...had to be sorted out at official level, and [names a Scottish Office official] and myself led the negotiations for the Strathclyde IDO" (Case 14).

The co-operation between the Scottish Office and SRC in pursuing an IDO, certainly resulted in a deal which represented a significant advance upon the NPCI. The Strathclyde 'Integrated Development Operation' (IDO) covered a geographical area consisting of the vast majority of Strathclyde Regional Council's boundaries and small parts of Central Region and Dumfries and Galloway⁸⁸. The funding for the IDO totalled £377m of European finance

⁸⁸The boundaries of the Strathclyde IDO were based upon the nine travel-to-work areas (TTWAs) of Glasgow, Lanarkshire, Dunbartonshire, Greenock, Irvine, Ayr, Girvan, Kilmarnock, and Cumnock and Sanquhar. These boundaries remained the same for the WSOP and SEP.

between 1988⁸⁹ to 1992, split across four sources, as follows:- ERDF - £231m; ESF - £41m; European Investment Bank (EIB) loans - £80m; and European Coal and Steel Community loans - £24m.⁹⁰ This was perceived as a significant success within SRC, partly due to the scale of the funding involved and as the IDO represented the first scheme of its kind (which combined funding over a range of mechanisms across a fixed time-scale). Thus the IDO was viewed within SRC as a vindication of the policies, the Council had been pursuing with regard to 'Europe', as a senior SRC official commented :-

"We eventually got £380m which is less than we asked for, but it was still the largest IDO in the whole of the Obj.2 regions and gave more per capita to Strathclyde than any other Obj.2 region, so we were very pleased with that" (Case 14).

That SRC had gained an advantage as a consequence of the active nature of the European policies it had developed, certainly appeared to be a view that had some credence, as the views of a former Commissioner of DGXVI in Table 5.2 exemplify. Whilst the Strathclyde IDO was significant in terms of the scale of the funding it secured, perhaps the most important influence of this programme lay in the institutional structure, notably the establishment of an independent programme management executive adopted by the partnership, which would subsequently act as a blueprint for other Structural Fund partnerships in Scotland.

⁸⁹The IDO was agreed in December 1988, however funding was back-dated to include applications from January 1988 onwards.

⁹⁰All the figures have been rounded up.

Table 5.2 - The Views of a European Commissioner with regard to SRC's role in the designation of the Strathclyde IDO.

The importance of Strathclyde in all of this has to be emphasised because Strathclyde was probably the foremost region or local authority to develop European contacts. Strathclyde recognised the importance of Europe, much earlier than lots of other people, so that for example, they had a huge Integrated Development Operation which was agreed just before I got there, which they had been working on for sometime with Commission officials and so on. A number of local authorities had been trying the same thing a bit later, but theirs were not as well advanced as Strathclyde's, so their programmes fell under the new regimes starting in 1989. They didn't at that time do nearly so well as Strathclyde, so Strathclyde were in on the whole business of regional policy / Structural Funds at a point where it did make a difference to the amount of money you got, if you were active.

There was a background of Strathclyde interests in the Community, they were well known in Brussels among officials not just from DGXVI. They had a man there of course, it was a one man operation, that was at a time when other people had been very, very slow, now there are dozens of British offices of one sort or another. So that was very good, from their point of view. The thing about the IDO was that it involved a lot of money, much more than Strathclyde were really entitled to on an objective basis, and this gave me some problems because, when we were looking at the allocations for Objective 2 areas in the UK, for the first period from 1989 to 1991, the first three year period, the whole thing was completely skewed, because a number of authorities specifically Strathclyde had got in on the act, and obligations that had been taken onto them, had to be met. That was the first chunk of money and that meant that other Objective 2 areas were actually paying a bit for the Strathclyde IDO. When it came to the second period...the geographical areas weren't changed, but in calculating the financial allocations, some adjustments were made to try and get a better balance over the five-year period. So Strathclyde having been in on the thing earlier, undoubtedly benefited financially.

Source : Case Forty-Five.

5.3.2 - The Institutional Structure of the Strathclyde IDO, 1988-92.

The Strathclyde IDO was approved at the end of December 1988, a matter of days before the Reform of the Structural Funds came into force. Thus DGXVI would certainly have been keen to push for a more extensive form of 'partnership' than that of the NPCI. The 1989 Reforms described the 'principle of partnership' as involving :-

“close consultations between the Commission, the Member State concerned and the competent authorities designated by the latter at national, regional, local or other level, with each party acting as a partner in pursuit of a common goal. These consultations are hereinafter referred to as the “partnership”. The partnership shall cover the preparation, financing, monitoring and assessment of operations” (European Commission, 1988, In, Laffan, B, 1989, p.47).

The structure which was put in place to administer the IDO, certainly went further than ensuring ‘close consultation’ between the partners involved, as the IDO comprised three committees (the ‘Strathclyde IDO Co-ordinating Committee; the ‘ERDF Working Group; and , a ‘ESF Working Group’) to oversee the applications for funding, and a programme executive to administer the programme.

The ‘IDO Co-ordinating Committee’ fulfilled a similar role to the NPCI Committee of the same name in that, the Committee was expected to provide a strategic overview of the programme, and was responsible for

“monitoring and evaluation against targets, for considering revisions to the programme, and for future direction and policy” (Strathclyde European Partnership, 1996, p.6). The Co-ordinating Committee brought together representatives of 15 organisations. These were :-

- The Scottish Office Industry Department (chair);
- Strathclyde Regional Council;
- Dumfries and Galloway Regional Council;
- Glasgow, Inverclyde and Motherwell District Councils;
- Training Agency;
- Scottish Development Agency;
- Irvine Development Corporation;
- Department of Employment ESF Unit;
- Scottish Business in the Community;
- European Commission :- DGV (Employment and Social Affairs); DGXVI (Regional Policy) and DGXXII (Co-ordination),
- The Wise Group.

As with the NPCI 'Co-ordinating Committee', the Scottish Office held the chair whilst all the representatives were non-political. The Committee consisted of a greater number of 'partners' than the NPCI Committee due to the larger scale and scope of the programme. The Committee met four times a year between 1989 and 1992, with the exception of 1989, when it met three times. Whilst this is more frequent than the twice yearly number of meetings suggested, nevertheless this may be considered as a 'superficial' level of meetings with which to undertake the strategic management of the programme. However the programme was also supported by the ERDF and ESF Working groups, as well as the programme executive, leaving the committee to take largely 'strategic' decisions, for instance, concerning the 'virement' of funds between 'action programmes' (areas of policy into which funding was allocated). This therefore accounts for the relatively low number of IDO Co-ordinating committee meetings held. These structures were unique to Scotland, as other Scottish 'partnerships' in the period 1994-99 would be organised along similar lines, whereas all other partnerships in the UK would consist only of a 'Programme Management Committee' analogous to the IDO Co-ordinating Committee.

The ERDF and ESF 'Working Groups' dealt with assessing the eligibility of applications for funding and with ensuring that the projects met the required regulations. These committees would then recommend to the 'Co-ordinating Committee' whether the applications should receive funding. However, the 'Co-ordinating Committee' dealt exclusively with applications worth more than £2m and £7m in the case of transport projects. The 'ERDF Working Group' contained members from every organisation eligible for ERDF funding and thus by 1992, as new partners became eligible for funding the Working Group had expanded to consist of 45 members, therefore resulting in a rather large and unwieldy committee⁹¹. In comparison, the 'ESF Working Group' divided partners into

⁹¹The ERDF Working Group in 1992, contained members from :- Scottish Office Industry Department; DGXVI; SRC; Dumfries and Galloway Regional Council; Scottish Enterprise; 5 LEC's; 18 District Councils; 3 New Town Development Corporations; Scotrail; British Waterways

constituencies of interest⁹², such as local government, the voluntary sector and so on, thus resulting in a membership of 12 in order that the Committee could be “more cohesive since members could play a much more active part in the deliberations of the Group” (Strathclyde European Partnership, 1996, p.7). This approach would later be adopted in the post-1994 ‘Strathclyde European Partnership’, and emphasises the extent to which the partnership was an experiment with the various partners attempting to ‘make policy in the dark’ as there was no model elsewhere to look to. As a consequence ‘partnership’ in the West of Scotland was different in that as a Scottish Office official commented, “the Executive [reference to the Strathclyde European Partnership] here almost came about by a process of osmosis, it evolved” (Case 42).

Once again, the Scottish Office chaired the Working Groups, however, the ‘Programme Executive’ had attempted to foster a situation whereby decisions would be reached via a process of discussion and consensus, as opposed to taking a formal vote. All the interviewee respondents who had participated in Committee meetings during the IDO or SEP, stated that this was the normal procedure and were unable to recall any instances where a vote had been taken in the committees⁹³. The ERDF Working Group met on three occasions in 1989 and 1990, four times in 1991 and on 5 occasions in 1992. The meetings of the ESF Working Group over the four year period were as follows :- 1989 - 4; 1990 - 7; 1991 - 5; 1992 - 4. SRC had representatives on all these committees, with these officials being drawn solely from the Chief Executive’s Department of the Council. The Working Groups certainly had a significant role within the IDO in terms of vetting the applications for funding, as the ERDF rejected 32.8% of applications for funding whilst the ESF group rejected 21.4% of applications.

Board; Clyde Port Authority; Central Scotland Water Development Board; Civil Aviation Authority; Voluntary Sector Bodies; Local Economic Development Bodies.

⁹²The ESF Working Group drew its membership from :- DGV; Scottish Office Industry Department; Department of Employment; SRC; Inverclyde Training Trust; University of Strathclyde; The Wise Group; Scottish Enterprise National; 1 Local Enterprise Council; Dumfries and Galloway RC; and, 2 Enterprise Trusts.

⁹³The negotiations that took place within the Committees of the SEP will be considered later in this chapter.

Tables 5.3 and 5.4 illustrate the rate of applications and projects approvals for ERDF and ESF funding over the period 1988-92. Table Three also displays the increasing number of applicants for ERDF funding over the period, once again emphasising that once the IDO deal was secured the IDO continued to evolve. The impact of the increasing number of partners, will be considered at length with regard to the 'Strathclyde European Partnership'.

Table 5.3 - Project submissions, approvals and number of applicants for Strathclyde IDO, ERDF funding, 1988-92.

YEAR	1988/89	1990	1991	1992
Number of applications.	87	112	128	219
Number of approvals.	56	73	77	161
% of projects approved.	64.9	65.1	60.1	73.5
Number of applicants.	33	36	44	55

Source :- Strathclyde IDO , 1994, p.7.

Table 5.4 - Project submissions and approvals for Strathclyde IDO, ESF funding, 1989-92.

YEAR	1989	1990	1991	1992
Number of applications.	85	124	148	189
Number of approvals.	85	91	110	143
% of projects approved.	100	73.4	74.3	75.7

Source :- Strathclyde IDO, 1994, p.30.

The final component of the IDO was the 'Programme Executive', which acted as a secretariat to the aforementioned committees, whilst also administering the application process and monitoring the performance of projects (both in terms of financial probity and the economic development outcomes from the project) once funding had been secured. In addition, the Programme Executive increasingly became a source of information and informal advice to agencies intending to apply for funding. Officials from within SRC would regularly contact the IDO to

discuss the suitability of project applications they were putting together, as an official from Strathclyde Business Development commented :-

“A lot of these things come down to personal relationships, I mean I know most of the people on the Executive of the SEP, and at my level it tends to be the individual officers who you phone up and say, can you give us some clarification on this or information on this....My first port of call would be the SEP” (Case 16).

The close relationship between SRC and IDO (and subsequently SEP) officials, was in part due to the close proximity of the IDO office's to SRC. In addition, SRC was covering the costs of establishing the IDO and remunerating its staff, as a consequence of which SRC obtained the title 'lead partner'. Finally, the majority of the staff within the IDO were originally SRC officials. The Programme Executive initially consisted of two officials, the Programme Director who was seconded by SRC and a 'Financial Controller', who was seconded from the Industry Department of the Scottish Office on a part-time basis. By the time the IDO ended in 1992, the Programme Executive consisted of five full-time members of staff. The four additions were two Programme Managers, dealing with the ERDF and ESF programmes, an Administrative Officer and a Clerical Assistant. These four additional members of the Executive were all seconded to the IDO from SRC. This increase in staffing was attributed to :-

“the increasing number of partners, the increasing numbers of applications made for ERDF and ESF support, and the increasing appraisal and monitoring requirements. It also reflected the additional guidance partners required before submitting applications. This applied to both inexperienced partners and to partners seeking to develop new types of projects” (Strathclyde European Partnership, 1996, p.8).

The final major difference between the NPCI and the IDO, was that the application for the IDO had undertaken a socio-economic evaluation of the region and had subsequently become much more focused in terms of outlining the aims and objectives of the programme. This reflected the much more integrated nature of the programme as opposed to the NPCI, but also the fact that as outlined earlier, the European Commission was keen to obtain as much information as possible about the designated area, in order to improve the

effectiveness of its funds. The IDO had the overall aim of “building a sound base for long-term self-sustaining growth” (Strathclyde European Partnership, 1996, p.4). However these general statements were backed up by a series of more specific objectives which the IDO aimed to address. These were to :-

- focus development programmes and initiatives on growth industries;
- encourage the development of local enterprise, especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs);
- assist the adoption of new technology by local industry;
- attract inward investment;
- expand tourism, especially in rural areas;
- improve external communications;
- create a modern metropolitan heart in Glasgow;
- and, enhance the region's external image.

(Source:- Strathclyde European Partnership, 1996, p.4)

In order to achieve these objectives, applications for funding had to fall into one of seven designated ‘action programmes’. The action programmes dealt with :- Enterprise, Innovation and Investment; Industrial Sites and Premises; Tourism; Transport and Communications; Underground Services and Waste Disposal, Environmental Improvement, and Employment and Vocational Training.

Thus the Strathclyde IDO was a significant progression in terms of the ‘partnership principle’ from the NPCI, due to the integration of the funding process via the creation of an independent programme executive and a committee structure which evaluated applications for funding according to their eligibility to the IDOs stated objectives and removed pre-arranged funding splits between partners. For the European Commission the Strathclyde IDO was a significant development in terms of partnership, given that the scheme “was the largest economic development programme in Europe” (Strathclyde European Partnership, 1996, p.9) at that time. SRC had been a prime mover behind the IDO, through its initial lobbying for an integrated package of funds, participating

in the debates over the form the IDO should take, and subsequently through financing the staffing and facilities for the IDO. However the Council's motivation for doing so, was in order to obtain an increased amount of funding. The aims of the IDO "were to be met primarily by significantly improving the region's infrastructure, in order to create the conditions within which a more modern economy could develop. Although the emphasis was very much on large capital projects, resources were also made available for a wide range of business development and training measures" (Strathclyde European Partnership, 1996, p.5). The IDO's emphasis upon large-scale infrastructure projects was largely because ERDF was aimed at schemes of this kind. Therefore as with the NPCI, SRC could be expected to obtain a large share of the funds available due to being the main provider of infrastructure in Strathclyde, as well as through having had a significant role in the negotiations surrounding the establishment of the IDO, and therefore having had SRC officials aiming the scheme towards project areas from which the Council would be able to lever funds. Table 5.5 displays the funding received across each 'Action Programme' from the IDO by SRC whilst Table 5.6 displays the ERDF and ESF funding obtained by individual SRC departments from the IDO.

Table 5.5 clearly demonstrates that the major sums of money coming to SRC through the IDO, were from the Action Programmes dealing with infrastructure, namely the 'Transport and Communications' and 'Underground Services and Waste Disposal' programmes, which brought over a £100m of funding to SRC. The Council also took a significant proportion of the funding available for 'Employment and Vocational Training', which is reflected in Table 5.6, in terms of the funding levered by Strathclyde Business Development and the Education Department, as this action programme was less geared towards infrastructure than any other and was financed primarily through the ESF. The dominance of infrastructure based projects is again reflected in the large sums of money obtained by departments with significant responsibilities in terms of infrastructure

namely, the Departments of Roads, Sewerage, Water and the Strathclyde Passenger Transport Executive.

Table 5.5 - ERDF funding obtained by SRC through the IDO, by 'action programme'.

ACTION PROGRAMME.	TOTAL FUNDING SRC RECEIVED.	SRC'S % OF THE TOTAL ACTION PROGRAMME BUDGET.	NUMBER OF PROJECTS INVOLVED.
Environmental Improvements.	£1,355,000	9.5%	5
Enterprise, Innovation and Investment.	1,457,000	8.7%	16
Industrial Sites and Premises.	£831,000	3.7%	10
Employment and Vocational Training.	£3,347,000	79.7%	3
Transport and Communications.	£58,949,000	64.1%	32
Tourism Development.	£1,156,000	4.7%	8
Underground Services and Waste Disposal.	£54,267,000	91.8%	26

Source:- Strathclyde IDO 1994.

Table 5.6 - ERDF and ESF Funding from the IDO by SRC Department, 1988-92 (£ millions).

SRC DEPARTMENT	ERDF FINANCE OBTAINED.	ESF FINANCE OBTAINED	TOTAL FINANCE OBTAINED.
Roads	59.1	0	59.1
Sewerage	37.9	0	37.9
Water	16.3	0	16.3
Physical Planning	1.1	0	1.1
Strathclyde Business Development.	2.2	9.0	11.2
Chief Executive's		0.4	0.4
Education	0	14.9	14.9
Other ⁹⁴	4.4	0	4.4
Strathclyde Passenger Transport Executive	11.8	0	11.8
Total	132.8	24.3	157.1

Source:- Strathclyde Regional Council, 1994, p.46.

In retrospect it can be argued that the establishment of the IDO came to represent SRC's most successful period of engagement with European funding, due to the prominent role of the Council in lobbying for and negotiating the IDO package. As has been mentioned above, the implementation of the rather vague principle of 'partnership' was a new experience to all the 'partners' involved, with the structures put in place continually evolving⁹⁵ as 'new partners' became involved in the programmes and as existing 'partners' attempted to channel their changing policy priorities into the 'plan' of the IDO. The increase in the number of partners eligible to access European funding established in the West of

⁹⁴'Other' refers to projects undertaken jointly by the Education and Estates Departments, and to funding secured to support the '1990 City of Culture' initiative.

⁹⁵As well as the IDO evolving in terms of changing policy priorities and an increasing number of partners, the IDO also increased the range of funds it was responsible for, through administering two Community Initiatives (CI's)(see Chapter 4, for a discussion of CI's and the aims of the RECHAR and RENAVAL CI's). SRC obtained funding from both these initiatives. Through RECHAR, the Council funded five projects resulting in funding worth £149,070 or 5% of RECHAR's budget and via RENAVAL, SRC funded 15 projects totalling £1,214,000 of European money or 7.4% of the RENAVAL budget. (Source :- Strathclyde IDO, 1994).

Scotland was a constant feature of the IDO and its successors (Table 5.3 displays the increase in the number of applicants for funding during the life-time of the IDO). The increase in the number of partners eligible for funding through the IDO and subsequently during the West of Scotland Operational Programme (WSOP) and then the Strathclyde European Partnership (SEP), was due to organisations which were not previously eligible being accepted by the European Commission as 'partners', most notably in the case of Scottish Enterprise and the Local Enterprise Companies network (LECs)⁹⁶. By 1994 and the establishment of the SEP, the partnership would contain around 180 organisations of various descriptions, as a senior SEP official commented :-

"I started this job seven years ago to manage the IDO, at that time I think there was about 30 to 35 partners and it was quite tight about who should be eligible, and it always had to be mainstream public sector agencies. And over time, we've opened the door to a whole range of other people from voluntary agencies, local economic initiatives, LEC's, Govan Initiative, companies limited by guarantee, area tourist boards, the 20 colleges in the region that have come out of Strathclyde's control and are now independent and so on" (Case 43).

Thus SRC would increasingly be competing against a wider range of organisations than before for European money. Additionally the type of project which SRC benefited most from i.e. large-scale infrastructure projects, were not favoured by DGXVI. This was reflected in the IDO where "there was a change of emphasis in terms of size and type of projects approved. At the beginning of the IDO, the focus was on large physical projects aimed at improving strategic infrastructure such as transport, water and sewerage....By the end of the programme period the emphasis had changed to infrastructure with more direct and identifiable benefits, and to a wider range of tourism and business development projects" (Strathclyde European Partnership, 1996, p.8). This shift in emphasis from 'hardware' schemes to 'software' schemes was pushed by DGXVI which was keen to pursue such measures, as the 1989 Reforms of the Structural Funds had attempted to address the problem of ERDF giving "too much aid for infrastructure projects and not enough to productive industrial

⁹⁶Scottish Enterprise and the LECs were accepted by DGXVI as being eligible for European

projects" (Armstrong, 1995, p.46). This pressure would increase during the WSOP and SEP, and as a consequence SRC would experience a decline in funding.

The evolution of the IDO not only marked a decline in European funding for SRC, but also a decline in the Region's influence within the partnership. SRC now had to compete with other organisations, in particular the Scottish Enterprise / LEC network which had a significant degree of experience and information regarding economic development, as MacAleavey (1995) comments :-

"The eligibility of the Network has been the single most significant change in the composition and nature of the partnership since the introduction of programming in 1985. LECs attract an increasing share of ERDF resources in Scotland for environmental improvement projects and training measures as well as business support schemes....LECs also play a greater role in the institutional structures through which the programmes are delivered. To this extent, the asset specificity of the resources brought to the programming relationship (and in particular the local authorities) is reduced. The enhanced ability of the European Commission to turn to other qualified partners for local expertise, economic data, programme preparation and most importantly for the supply of eligible projects which the Commission can co-finance, reduces its dependence on traditional partners" (MacAleavey, 1995, p.247).

In addition to the extension of the IDO to organisations which were previously excluded, SRC had also noticed an increasing activism on the part of the Scottish Office with regard to the Structural Funds. As noted above, the first signs of this trend were apparent during the negotiations with the European Commission over the IDO, whilst the creation of the IDO appeared to coincide with an increasingly pro-active stance towards this policy field, most notably through the creation of "a European Funds Division (EFD) [which] came into existence in 1988 as a separate division having formerly been part of the same division dealing with urban funding. The EFD has responsibility for the Scottish Office's side regarding the European Development Fund (ERDF)" (Mazey and Mitchell, 1993, p.110).

funding in January of 1992.

In part such a reorganisation and corresponding increase in staffing dealing with European funding, was a response to the increasing workload associated with the policy field. However this can only partly account for the 'Europeanisation' of the Scottish Office taking place at this time, as the IDO incorporated a separate programme executive to deal with the administration of the funds in Strathclyde. These changes also appear to be part of a recognition on the part of the Scottish Office to engage with European policy developments (See Chapter Two).

This engagement on the part of the Scottish Office was certainly noted by SRC officials and politicians, with a senior SRC politician commenting on the impact of this changing approach in the following manner:-

"When we were talking to them from 1981 to 1985 to 86, we got the impression we were talking to a man, a boy and a girl. Certainly before the late '80s, there was a significant increase in staffing and a creation if you like of a European section in the Scottish Office. On occasions such as around 1986-87, when there was a poverty action programme, that we recommended as it was only going to be worth a couple of million pounds, that we should go in for a million of this, and we put in a case for this, and the Secretary of State at the time, said it was not worth our time, forget it. He actually interfered then, and that was when we began to feel that there was clear political interference at the top, and that therefore these guys in Edinburgh were going to have to sort themselves out in handling us, given that they were now aware that the Secretary of State and / or his ministers were interested in what we were doing" (Case 46).

The perception that the Scottish Office became increasingly attuned to European policy developments and in particular the Structural Funds during the late 1980s was also widespread amongst Scottish MEPs, with a Labour MEP commenting :-

"Strathclyde did come over here, they didn't need the Scottish Office's permission to come over here, and they still don't to do some things. But there's no doubt at all, that once you got into the IDO proper, because of the amount of money involved, then the Scottish Office began to say 'hang on a minute here, you can't do this without us'" (Case 18).

By 1994 and the establishment of the Strathclyde European Partnership, the Scottish Office had spread the practice of 'partnership' as developed in Strathclyde to three other areas :- the Highlands and Islands (Objective 1), Eastern Scotland (Objective 2) and Dumfries and Galloway (Objective 5b). The

'partnership' process as a consequence, existed in a distinctly different form from that in England, leaving the Scottish Office as the primary actor not only holding the ring between the partners, but also between the various partnerships in Scotland, as well as exerting influence in ensuring that the 'partnership' process remains more participative than that in England.⁹⁷ This shift is recognised within the Scottish Office, as a senior civil servant observed :-

"I would have to acknowledge the role that Strathclyde [RC] played in the '80s, increasingly as the '90s progressed the Scottish Office are seen to be in the lead, the lead player of a complex of partnerships in Scotland. In the '80s it was very Western dominated by Strathclyde [RC]...certainly at an official level there is a growing recognition, that the Scottish Office mainly because we have separate programme areas plus Objective Three, that we are the pivot around which all the rest goes. I wouldn't say we that we are driving the agenda, but I would say equally that we are not being led anymore" (Case 42).

Summary.

The ability of SRC to 'lead' the Scottish Office in the development of partnership arrangements in the 1980s, was a consequence of the early contacts between SRC and primarily DGXVI, ranging back to policy developments such as, the Employment Grant Scheme (see Chapter Four) and subsequently the NPCI and IDO. The high priority that SRC attached to European policy at this time was in marked contrast to the rather low-key approach of the Scottish Office.

Nevertheless, by the 1990s, as a result of policy developments at the European level, primarily the shift away from hardware to software schemes and the extension of 'partnerships' to an increasing array of organisations (in particular the LEC's which also benefit substantially from software schemes), the influence of SRC had diminished. In addition, the Scottish Office had reacted to the increasing importance of the Structural Funds and due to the central position of the member-state representative within the partnership process was in a position whereby it could significantly influence the development of the process within Scotland. It is to the two partnerships structures following on from the IDO, the

⁹⁷The variation in the implementation of the partnership principle between Scotland and England will be discussed later in this chapter.

West of Scotland Operational Programme (WSOP) and the Strathclyde European Partnership (SEP), which I now intend to turn.

5.4.1. - The West of Scotland Operational Programme (WSOP), 1993.

The West of Scotland Operational Programme (WSOP) was a one year programme intended to bring the partnership process in Strathclyde into line with the rest of Europe, where new programmes were due to commence at the beginning of 1994. Funding from the ESF was already secured for 1993, as £55.5m of ESF support was available for the programme between 1989-93. Thus the WSOP consisted of an extension of ERDF support for 1993 amounting to £58.7m. The WSOP was significant on two counts. Firstly, the programme continued the shift desired by the European Commission away from 'hardware' infrastructure oriented and capital account funded projects, towards 'software' business development and revenue account funded schemes. Secondly, the WSOP introduced a new feature into the institutional structure of partnership⁹⁸ in Strathclyde termed 'advisory groups'.

Whilst the IDO had eight 'action programmes', the WSOP transformed these into six 'priorities', via which funding applications would be assessed. The six priorities of the WSOP were :-

- The Development of Productive Activities - this priority focused upon the creation of industrial sites (23% of WSOP budget).
- Transport and Communications (20.7% of WSOP budget).
- Environmental Improvements (24.9% of WSOP budget).
- Business Development (14.1% of WSOP budget).
- Tourism Development (13.5% of WSOP budget).
- Research and Development / Vocational Training (3.9% of WSOP budget).

Source :- Strathclyde IDO, 1994, p.3.

⁹⁸The WSOP witnessed the creation of some institutional developments with regard to the merger of the ERDF and ESF Working Groups into the 'Operational Programme Monitoring Committee' which then took on a more strategic role. The impact of these changes will be discussed further with regard to the Strathclyde European Partnership.

The first three of these priorities can be viewed as dealing with primarily hardware schemes. However, the remaining three signify the growing role of software schemes within the partnership with the last priority being an entirely new function for the partnership. Clearly this was in line with DGXVI's policy priorities, and they would have pushed for such an outcome in negotiating the WSOP package⁹⁹. The second development within the WSOP was the creation of 'advisory groups' which were intended as a mechanism to cope with the increasing membership of the partnership. Five advisory groups were created to reflect the priorities outlined above. These were :- Tourism, Business Development, Vocational Training Facilities, Research and Development; and Physical Infrastructure. These groups would comprise specialists from the various constituent grouping within the partnership, which had an interest in the priority areas, and can be viewed as a development from the practice of ESF Working Group, once again emphasising the extent to which the partnership was evolving via a process of 'trial and error'. The function of these groups was to assess applications for funding and to make recommendations as to whether a project should be accepted. SRC had a representative on each advisory group. It is worth noting that SRC's representative's upon advisory groups would not necessarily be drawn from the Chief Executive's Department, as specialist knowledge was a requirement for membership of an advisory group. As a consequence a variety of departments from SRC were represented upon advisory groups.

The advisory groups were chaired by the Programme Executive with the Scottish Office having a representative on each group. In addition, the procedure to agreeing to which institutions should participate in each group was done in consultation with all the partnership members through the Programme Executive, although the Scottish Office had to agree to the membership proposed by the

⁹⁹The new priority area, 'R and D / Vocational Training' would also be to the benefit of new entrants into the partnership, such as the LEC's and the colleges which had come out from the control of SRC.

Executive. As before in the Scottish Office pursuit of a 'chairman's role', the Scottish Office was keen to ensure it was able to oversee the whole process despite ceding an element of control over the selection of projects in order to cope with the administrative problems resulting from the expansion of the partnership. Nevertheless the creation of advisory groups, gave a considerable degree of autonomy to organisations with a specialism in the WSOP's priority areas. Despite the trend away from infrastructure projects, SRC continued to obtain a considerable degree of funding via the WSOP, although the Council obtained no ERDF funding from the 'Tourism Development' and 'R and D / Vocational Training' project streams. Nevertheless SRC had a representative on each advisory group, perhaps reflecting the Council's role as a 'lead player' with regard to the Structural Funds amongst organisations at the local level. Table 5.7 displays SRC's share of funding across the priority areas of the WSOP, with SRC once more obtaining the majority of its funding from the infrastructure dominated priorities. Table 5.8 gives a breakdown of the funding received by individual departments within SRC, and illustrates the impact of the drift towards 'software' schemes more clearly. Despite the Roads department obtaining the largest degree of finance, SBD and Education obtain the second and third highest amounts of funding from the WSOP, with the majority of the funding for these two Departments coming from the ESF, thus reflecting the drift of funds away from large-scale infrastructure projects and correspondingly departments such as Roads, Sewerage, Water and the SPTE (see Table 5.6 for comparison).

Table 5.7 - SRC's ERDF Funding by WSOP priority area, 1993.

WSOP PRIORITY AREA	SRC'S SHARE OF FUNDING (£'S).	SRC'S SHARE OF THE WSOP PRIORITY AREA BUDGET (%).
Development of Productive Activities.	2,417,133	18%
Transport and Communications.	5,968,925	49.3%
Environmental Improvements.	2,912,548	20%
Tourism Development.	0	0%
Business Development.	1,919,892	23.3%
R and D / Vocational Training.	0	0%

Source :- Strathclyde IDO, 1994.

Table 5.8 - SRC Departments and Funding from the WSOP, 1993.

SRC DEPARTMENT	ERDF FUNDING OBTAINED. (£M).	ESF FUNDING OBTAINED. (£M).	TOTAL FUNDING OBTAINED. (£M).
Roads	7.1	0	7.1
Sewerage	0.3	0	0.3
Physical Planning	1.4	0	1.4
SBD	1.5	2.9	4.4
Chief Executive's	0	0.1	0.1
Education	0	4.1	4.1
SPTE	2.6	0	2.6
Other	2.2	0	2.2
Total	15.1	7.1	22.2

Source:- SRC, 1994, p.46.

5.5 - Strathclyde European Partnership (SEP), 1994-96.

The creation of the Strathclyde European Partnership (SEP) brought programming in Western Scotland into line with the rest of Europe, in terms of time-scale. In addition to the establishment of SEP, three other partnerships were created in Scotland during 1994 (Highlands and Islands - Obj.1; Eastern Scotland - Obj.2; Dumfries and Galloway - Obj.5b). The three 'new' partnerships were organised along the same lines as the SEP, thus providing evidence that the European Commission and the Scottish Office were satisfied with the implementation of the 'partnership principle' in Strathclyde and wished to export the model elsewhere¹⁰⁰. The SEP consisted of £233.5m of European funding

¹⁰⁰Scottish Office and European Commission views of the 'partnership' in Strathclyde will be discussed later in this chapter.

between 1994 to 1996¹⁰¹, with £174.2m coming from the ERDF and £49.3m from the ESF¹⁰². As with previous programmes, the SEP produced a plan for the region (the Single Programming Document - SPD), which again was considerably more detailed than previous 'plans' in particular, as the SPD assessed the impact of previous rounds of European Funding within Strathclyde, information which would no doubt be greatly desired by DG's V and XVI. The SPD set out two 'strategic objectives' for the partnership, which were :-

- To enhance the competitiveness of the Western Scotland economy in order to improve economic growth, job prospects and the quality of the regional population.
- To improve economic and social cohesion within the region in order to increase economic development opportunities for individuals and communities faced with growing social and economic exclusion.

Source :- Strathclyde European Partnership, 1995, p.21.

These objectives as with previous programmes, were then translated into a series of 'development priorities' around which applications for funding would be assessed. The SPD outlined four priority areas which again underline the extent to which software schemes had replaced the infrastructural bias of previous programmes.

The four priorities were :-

- Business development (33% of the SEP budget);
- Business environment (39% of the SEP budget);

¹⁰¹Western Scotland was designated as an Objective 2 Region from 1994-99, however unlike Objective 1 programmes which last for six years, Objective 2 can be renegotiated after three years. Thus this chapter will only deal with the SEP in its first three years, although the post-1996 SEP will be considered with regard to the re-organisation of local government in Chapter Eight.

¹⁰²The IDO had responsibility for the management of two Community Initiatives, between 1991 to 1993. In addition to RECHAR, the SEP was also responsible for three other Community Initiatives :- RESIDER which dealt with the decline of communities centred on the steel industry, and was therefore focused upon the former Lanarkshire steel communities; KONVER which was targeted at areas previously dependent upon the defence industry; and lastly, URBAN, which was focused upon areas with high unemployment in Paisley and North Glasgow. SRC applied for funding under all of these CI's.

- Tourism (13% of the budget);
- Economic and Social Cohesion (14% of the SEP budget).

Source :- Russell, L, 1995, p.5-6.

The SEP also witnessed a shift away from purely public sector schemes being eligible for funding, as the SPD aimed “to maximise private sector investment in projects” (SEP, 1995, p.23), thus once more increasing the competition for funds within the partnership. SRC retained the title ‘lead partner’ as SRC managed the financial arrangements surrounding the staffing, premises and other requirements of the SEP. However from 1994, the SEP was funded through what was termed ‘technical assistance’, whereby the SEP could spend up to 1% of its Structural Fund allocation to meet the ‘Programme Executive’s’ requirements, with this European money being match funded through a standard rate fee being charged to each partner and via 0.4% of each project approved being allocated to meet the Executive’s costs. Thus SRC no longer bore the burden of maintaining the partnership as its share of funding reduced, reflecting the declining influence of SRC within the partnership.

In addition to the introduction of advisory groups within the WSOP, the 1993 programme was also notable for institutional changes it introduced which were continued and developed during the SEP. As before, the changes were introduced in order to cope with the increasing number of partners. During the period 1994-96, the SEP consisted of four main components :- the Programme Monitoring Committee; the Programme Management Committee; Advisory groups; and the Programme Executive.

The ‘Programme Monitoring Committee’ broadly fulfilled the function of the IDO ‘Co-ordinating Committee’ in that it was responsible for ensuring that the partnership fulfilled the requirements of the Structural Fund regulations and the plan set out by the Single Programming Document. Unlike the IDO ‘Co-ordinating Committee’ which ensured a seat for every partner, the Monitoring Committee contained representatives of ‘constituencies’ of interest in the same

manner as advisory groups. Thus although the SEP now contained more than 180 'partners', the Monitoring Committee consisted of only 20 members "drawn from appropriate European Commission DG's, The Scottish Office Industry Department...Local Authorities, Scottish Enterprise Network, Voluntary Organisations, Local Economic Initiatives and Higher and Further Education" (Russell, 1995, p.7). SRC had a representative upon the Committee which the Scottish Office chaired and under EU regulations had to meet at least twice a year. This Committee also contained a sub-committee, termed the 'Joint Management Board' which oversaw the work of the Programme Executive and in particular, its management of the budget. The 'board' consists of the Scottish Office as the 'implementing authority'; SRC as the employers of the Executive and representatives from Scottish Enterprise and the District Councils. MacAleavey (1995) suggests that behind the creation of the 'Joint Management Board' "lay the intention of the Scottish Office to increase its own supervisory role over the Executive" (MacAleavey, 1995, p.298). While this appears to be a reasonable suspicion given the past history of the Scottish Office in terms of desiring to maintain a key position within the partnership, interview sources did not confirm this perspective.

The 'Programme Management Committee' represents a combination of the IDO's ERDF and ESF Working Groups, with the Committee making decisions upon applications for funding based upon initial, but not binding recommendations from advisory groups. The Committee "had up to 30 representatives of the partnership. The partnership representatives include at least one member from each advisory group and reflect the various constituencies of partners" (Russell, L, 1995, p.7). Once again SRC had one representative upon this committee, which was chaired by the 'independent' Programme Executive, and met three to four times a year. However the SEP contained six advisory groups, as compared to five under the WSOP, with two new groups being created dealing with 'business infrastructure' and 'business development' whilst the 'physical infrastructure' group was scrapped in line with the changing emphasis of the

programme. Finally the Programme Executive fulfilled broadly the same functions as under the IDO, although two of the objectives of the Programme Executive which were written into the SPD, are of interest here. These were :-

“To publicise and market the Programme, Partnership, and use of the Structural Funds in the region....To undertake research aimed at improving the quality and impact of the Programme’s policy and practice” (SEP, 1995, p.61).

The need for information has already been noted as a prime concern for the Commission, and despite the detailed SPD it probably desired more. The SEP did increase its staffing during the period 1994-96 and post-1996, in order to undertake research. Publicity is also a key concern of the Commission, as the comments of a DGXVI ‘desk-officer’ illustrate :-

“We are also interested in promoting these programmes. Maybe this is one of the weak points, publicity. I am not so sure that in Strathclyde, people are aware of these programmes. And each time we can, we promote ourselves, with the European programmes, with money....We are putting the focus now mainly on deprived areas in Strathclyde. It would be interesting to know if people living in deprived areas...are aware that it is Europe that is doing this. They are not. We consider it also part of our work to promote the European Union” (Case 31).

Figures were not available for the funding which SRC obtained from the SEP between 1994 to 1996. However due to the developments outlined above (i.e. the increasing size of the partnership and the ongoing shift from funding from hardware to software schemes), departments such as SBD and Education which benefited most from these changing priorities would continue to increase their share of the funding that SRC obtained, whilst the overall level of European funding SRC received would continue to decline. Certainly this was the perception amongst officials and politicians within SRC and within SEP, where a senior official commented upon SRC’s declining European funding in the following manner:-

“Strathclyde over the period 1989 to 1995, which was it’s last full year, probably saw it’s share of the programme go down from 60-65% to about 15%. Partly because what was eligible for the Structural Funds, was moving away from large infrastructure funds to a whole range of other things. So their influence in that sense as a beneficiary was decreasing” (Case 43).

The period from 1994 to 1996 will also have seen a decline in SRC's funding due to the impending reorganisation of local government, which took effect from April 1st 1996. For the final year of SRC's existence (April 1995 to April 1996), SRC applied for funding on behalf of its 'successor councils'¹⁰³ in order to attempt to ensure some degree of coherence in terms of European policy during the period of reorganisation. However given the general disarray within local government at this time, it is likely that overall funding for local government declined. Certainly SRC's influence had waned in terms of the negotiations over the SPD which established the priorities of the partnership prior to 1994, as compared to the negotiations for the IDO, with officials and politicians within SRC well aware of the more active engagement on the part of the Scottish Office with regard to the Structural Funds. A senior official within the Chief Executive's Department summed up the changed status of SRC in the SEP negotiations as follows :-

"The second time round, when we came to the SEP document, then the Scottish Office got more heavily involved. And Strathclyde was still a very powerful voice but the Scottish Office came to have a much more significant role because they clearly recognised...I mean put it like this, when we negotiated the IDO, I believe it is correct to say the Scottish Office had a staff of six dealing with European affairs. So Strathclyde was a formidable contributor, whereas now they have about fifty odd. OK, that tells you everything. I mean we got away with setting it

¹⁰³The 12 unitary authorities which succeeded SRC, existed as 'shadow councils' for the period from April 1st 1995 to April 1st 1996. Elections had been held to these shadow councils, whilst bureaucratic posts were being filled throughout this period. As a consequence, SRC entered into negotiations with all its shadow councils, and where agreement was made SRC would apply for funding, the commitments of which would then be 'taken on' by the unitary authorities. Thus whilst SRC applied for the funding, the project would ultimately not be responsible to SRC. This resulted in situations where officials were both responsible for European funding in SRC and in a successor council for April 1995 to April 1996, and therefore agreement over such project applications were presumably easier to make ! However, as Chapter Eight (which deals with the impact of local government reorganisation upon European policy in the West of Scotland) will show, this was the exception rather than the rule, and SRC had to attempt to reach agreement with councils which in some cases had not appointed a European officer or indeed decided whether to have a 'European function' within the new Council, presumably resulting in a slippage of European funding during the reorganisation. Nevertheless individual departments of SRC with a reliance upon European funding such as SBD attempted to ensure some degree of coherence, in the following manner :-

"Back in August 1995, we called together the heads of economic development of the new authorities, most of whom had been appointed by that time. And we got agreement from them to submit applications for them, on their behalf to try and retain that continuity....So the new councils, basically had approvals waiting for them as long as they continued to carry out the projects on the same lines as before, as set out in the application forms" (Case 16 - SBD official).

up, by being first and by being smart, but they wised up and they pushed resources in to make sure that controls were kept” (Case 14).

These developments all point to a reduced role for SRC within the partnership. Nevertheless, the Council remained an important protagonist within SEP, however it could no longer claim to exert the influence which it previously had. The principle of partnership had changed dramatically since its early beginnings with the NPCI, and I now intend to address a number of issues which this progression in the nature of partnership culminating in SEP raise. Firstly, why the implementation of partnership in Scotland varied from that in the rest of the UK ? Secondly, the extent to which the ‘model’ developed in Scotland enabled local actors, principally SRC, to have a policy input ? What does the implementation of partnership in the West of Scotland tell us about the model of ‘multi-level governance’ ?

5.6 - The ‘Scottish’ Dimension to Partnership.

The early beginning to partnership in Strathclyde from 1985 onwards, as opposed to the rest of the UK where the process did not start until 1989/90, enabled an institutional structure to develop in the Region without any model available for imitation. Thus, Scottish practice did not just follow the lead set in the rest of the UK, and in particular by the DTI and DoE. The European Commission wanted to ensure ‘local’ involvement in order to reduce its reliance upon member-states, and whilst the NPCI and IDO were innovative measures involving large sums of money, they were certainly in a position to insist that both structures were not dominated by central government. Equally important however, was the role of SRC in pushing for an integrated package of funds, and correspondingly the extensive role the Council held in the early partnership arrangements in Strathclyde, where an input into the partnership’s objectives was desired in order to fund the Council’s economic and social strategies. Thus by 1989, Strathclyde had a partnership structure in place, which had proved largely satisfactory to the main participants and which was drafted onto the other

Scottish partnerships which arose out of the 1989 Reforms of the Structural Funds.

The regulations regarding the implementation of the Structural Funds require only that a 'Monitoring Committee' is established to implement the Single Programming Documents, and a permanent programme executive to administer the funds. In England and Wales, these instructions were followed to the letter, and this is all that the partnership arrangements amount to, with the programme executive being staffed by central government officials. The Programme Monitoring Committee's (PMC's) established in England and Wales, were criticised for being too large or when PMC's were reduced in size along the lines of the SEP, they were still viewed as being dominated by central government. For instance, Garmise (1996) found in the case of Wales, "a consistent attempt by the Welsh Office to retain centralised control over economic development, actively resisting the partnership principle inherent in European programmes. In fact, the Welsh Office's concern with control has led it to place the Secretariat in charge of Structural Funds in the Welsh Office itself" (Garmise, 1996, p.10).

The experience of partnership in Strathclyde (and subsequently Scotland) does not resemble the scenario sketched out for England and Wales, a situation of which the European Commission was aware of, for instance a former European Commissioner commented :-

"I could never get the DTI to accept it (the SEP model) in England, we tried very hard to get them to accept it for Merseyside, which they didn't. I would say that from my point of view, it was easier to deal with the Scottish Office than either the Welsh Office or the DTI...Merseyside send letters all the time, and its only just started and I believe it continues now. They say we don't know what is going on, there is a lack of information, there is no accessibility and its all being run in a bureaucratic way" (Case 45).

English and Welsh local authorities lobbied DGXVI on the possibilities of obtaining a similar structure in their regions, as a former member of Bruce Millan's 'Cabinet' noted :-

“authorities in England and Wales lobbied to have that sort of operation. There were certainly strong efforts, particularly the South Wales RECHAR authorities with Wyn Davies MEP, arguing that they should do the same in South Wales....We felt it worked well. It was a good operation, I think the Scottish Office accepted that. We would like to encourage it. It certainly had a lot of resistance when we worked with the DTI and we can't insist on it, it has to be a partnership” (Case 32).

Anderson (1990) states that “clusters of interorganisational relationships at the domestic level reflect the underlying distribution of resources among actors, and endow them with different capabilities and vulnerabilities as they seek to cope with changes administered to their policy environment by the EC” (Anderson, 1990, p.417). However, Anderson goes on to depict UK SNAs as ‘resource weak’ and thus dominated by central government within the policy arena of the Structural Funds. However, the Scottish Office were dealing with a sub-national authority during the 1980's which was certainly as ‘resource rich’, in terms of experience with dealing with the Commission regarding ERDF and ESF funding as the Scottish Office and was thus able to shape the policy environment in terms of partnership, whilst the Scottish Office fulfilled a ‘gatekeeping’ role. As these ‘resource dependencies’ changed over time, for the reasons outlined above, the Scottish Office remained committed to the form partnership had taken in Scotland, through maintaining this ‘gatekeeping role’. Keating and Jones (1995) viewed the European policy environment, as an arena where “in the past, the Scottish and to a lesser extent the Welsh Office were able discreetly to bend UK policy initiatives or modify their implementation in areas of low political salience” (Keating and Jones, 1995, p. 101). The implementation of partnership in Scotland can certainly be viewed as one such instance of this occurring.

The divergent approaches taken to implement partnership in Scotland and the rest of the UK, was widely commented upon by interview respondents, and frequently used as an example of the close and co-operative relations which existed between local institutions and the Scottish Office. As discussed above, decisions were taken on the basis of consensus whilst respondents were unable

to recall any examples of the Scottish Office (or the European Commission) vetoing project applications. From the perspective of the Scottish Office, the partnership model in Scotland whilst being participative, inclusive and offloading the administrative costs onto an outside structure, still enabled the Scottish Office to oversee the process.

Whilst the decision-making process within the partnership was characterised by a consensual approach, this is not to imply that there was not a hierarchy between 'partners' within the SEP. As outlined above, the European Commission was clearly able to influence the development strategy of the partnership, whilst the Scottish Office performed a 'gatekeeping role' as it is the authority with the final legal responsibility for the management of the funds and it occupied the key positions within the SEP through holding the chairmanship of the main committee's (the Programme Monitoring and Management Committee's) . In addition, SRC held a key role through its designation as a 'lead partner', and due to the extensive role of the Council in the negotiations for the NPCI and IDO, as well as initially being the main beneficiary from the funds. With the entrance of the LECs into the partnership and the shift away from infrastructure schemes, the enterprise companies have become an increasingly influential set of partners within the SEP. Thus the influence of an organisation within the partnership, is reliant upon the extent of engagement with European funding, the level of expertise which the organisation brings allied to its importance within the local policy environment. SRC was particularly important in the NPCI and IDO, as it was the principal development actor within Strathclyde which was represented in the partnership. In short, influence within SEP depends upon the resources which the organisation brings to the partnership whether these be in terms of information, expertise, finance, policy-making or legal. An official from the Chief Executive's Department described the practice of partnership within the SEP's committees, in the following manner:-

“Certainly some partners are more equal than others. I’ve felt that the Regional Council is more equal than others given that we’ve been one of the major beneficiaries of the programme at least in financial terms, we are also the agency that’s covering the whole programme area. There are 180 agencies involved, but a lot of these are only one single project specific, but there are only a limited number that have a real strategic interest in the economic development across the whole spectrum of activities that entails. So we would include obviously, the local authorities and since 1992, the LEC’s. Only in one or two exceptional circumstances, would you say that the Scottish Office were in any sense dictating the operation....There’s obviously one or two things which do happen, for example, central government schemes were able to short circuit the normal appraisal process and get approved” (Case 12).

Once partnership structures were in place in Strathclyde prior to 1989, it may have been politically sensitive for the Scottish Office to attempt to reduce the input from local actors, in order to come into line with wider UK practice, as a senior SEP official commented :-

“The Scottish Office know that if they were to try and reverse this trend, they’re not taking me on or us in here [the Programme Executive], who they could sweep aside quite easily, they’re taking on something like 150 agencies in Strathclyde including people like Scottish Enterprise and the LEC’s, they would not like the fact that things were going back into central control or the local authorities or anybody else. So, I think the momentum has got such that the Scottish Office would find it very difficult to reverse the trend” (Case 43).

However it seems unlikely that the Scottish Office would want to reverse the form that partnership had taken in Scotland. In part, this is due to the fact that the Scottish Office continued to have a substantial degree of control over the process through the positions it holds within the SEP, thus ensuring that SEP policy does not contradict government policy. The Scottish Office was also aware that relations between central and local government had been largely amicable, as both levels of government had a shared interest in ensuring that the maximum amount of funding came to Strathclyde. Even where conflicts of interests did arise, such as over additionality, SRC tended to pursue these in a non-confrontational manner relying upon expressing the Council’s view behind closed doors rather than in the public spotlight. In the view of a Scottish Office official, the relationship between SRC and the Scottish Office was one where “we knew

how to fall out. We were always looking for the common ground" (Case 43).

This official then went on to compare the approach of SRC to that of English local authorities, which in his view "were trying to do a Strathclyde thing, but without Strathclyde's subtlety or diplomacy" (Case 43).

The trust which developed within the SEP due to the close relations between actors within the Scottish policy community, certainly seems to have been an element of its success. In addition, SRC (and the rest of Scottish local government) were only too aware of the situation in England, and would not want to be seen to be endangering the distinctive nature of the partnership process in Scotland. Finally, the Scottish Office had also been keen since the late 1980's to develop relations with the Commission and to distance the Scottish Office from the Commission's view of Whitehall, in order to develop what Mazey and Mitchell term the 'Euro-profile' of the Scottish Office. A senior Scottish Office official took the view that "the Scottish Office get on better with the Commission than any Whitehall department, because we in the Scottish Office have always been treated, not necessarily regarded as such, but always treated as an intermediate arm of government, and we are entirely comfortable dealing with European Commission officials, because they are not significantly different in terms of the power relationship with a Whitehall department" (Case 43). The stance of the Scottish Office cannot be solely attributed to its role as a territorial ministry, as the Welsh Office acted in a completely different manner¹⁰⁴. However the desire of the Scottish Office to accentuate the distinct status of Scotland within the UK, appears to have been part of a concerted effort by the Scottish Office, as the aforementioned official went on to comment:-

"The one thing we all now know, is that Scotland is different, that's about all we've managed after six or seven years of banging the drum and bashing heads. The problem with the Commission is, that they keep changing desk officers, and that makes our job that bit harder. But that said, I think the European Commission collectively, to the extent that it thinks collectively has a fairly good

¹⁰⁴Garnise (1997), provides an interesting account of Welsh Office efforts to limit the extent of local input into the Structural Fund partnerships in Wales, where "turf battles and parochial infighting still remain a conspicuous feature of the Welsh landscape" (Garnise, 1997, p.14).

impression of Scotland, and recognises certainly in terms of the Structural Funds that we are not different, but that we do things differently. In whatever terms they are thinking, they prefer our approach, to what they see south of the border” (Case 43).

In this sense, the Scottish Office approach to partnership post-1989, can also be partly viewed as part of a broader effort on the part of the Scottish Office to appear ‘Euro-friendly’ vis-a-vis the European Commission.

5.7 - Conclusions.

The extent to which the Strathclyde European Partnership, provides evidence supportive to proponents of multi-level governance is somewhat mixed. The SEP certainly provides an example of an institution which has brought together a wide range of actors from all tiers of government and governance, with these actors interacting within ‘complex patterns of mutual influence’, within an institution in which no single institution is sovereign or even overly dominant. The extent to which European funding can be considered to have engendered a process of ‘region-building’ is rather more problematic, given the close knit horizontal networks which already exist between local development actors in Strathclyde and the ‘territorial’ basis to relations between local actors and the Scottish Office. Instead it would seem more likely that the development of partnership in Strathclyde is at least in part attributable to the strong ties which bound together institutions within the region through a wider Scottish ‘policy community’. The existence of a central government department which was willing to identify common goals with local actors, and allow areas of confrontation to be by-passed enabled the variety of institutions within the SEP to co-operate.

The development of partnership in Strathclyde occurred not purely as a consequence of a top-down bargain between the European Commission and the member-state onto the region, but also due to the activism of SRC in lobbying the European Commission for an integrated package of funds, and then through

taking a role on a par with the Scottish Office, in both the negotiations for the NPCI and IDO. Thus the early development of partnership in Strathclyde is attributable as much to bottom-up pressures as to top-down stimuli and therefore the initial partnerships in Strathclyde cannot be viewed as analogous to Harding's 'shotgun partnership'. Indeed, it could be argued that the Reforms of the Structural Funds in 1989 perhaps limited the scope for further innovation with partnership in Strathclyde as the partnership process became more formalised and widespread. Finally, the view that partnership can be viewed as a process of 'decisional reallocation' upwards to the Commission and downwards to the region is a somewhat simplistic version of partnership in Strathclyde. Whilst the process has certainly enabled the European Commission to pursue its policy priorities within Strathclyde, most notably the shift from hardware to software projects, and enabled local actors to have an input into the SPD, the member-state remains central to the process. In the SEP, the Scottish Office pursued a 'gatekeeping' role, in terms of chairing the main committees of SEP and on the advisory groups which it did not chair, through retaining the right to veto membership to advisory groups. Nevertheless, the Partnership was significant in that the Scottish Office did not use this formal position of power to any great extent, instead allowing the process to go ahead as far as possible via consensus, whilst SRC certainly relied heavily upon Scottish Office support for its policies during the NPCI and IDO negotiations.

The role SRC played in obtaining the NPCI and the IDO can certainly be regarded as one of the most significant outcomes from SRC's 'pioneer' policies towards Europe in the early to mid-1980's. However, this role at the forefront of partnership did not last long for a variety of reasons. Firstly, a recognition of the growing importance of European funding and its impact at the local level within the Scottish Office and a corresponding mobilisation in terms of staff, resources and policy on the part of the Scottish Office in response. Secondly, the Reform of the Structural Funds in 1989 ensured that there would be little chance of an SNA being able to negotiate a deal similar to the IDO, given the increasingly

formalised nature of the relationship. Thirdly, the extension of the partnership within Strathclyde in line with Commission policy, ensured that there was increasing competition for funding and correspondingly SRC's share of funding fell. Equally, new actors within the partnership, in particular the LECs, were able to bring 'resources' to the SEP such as knowledge of the economic development measures pursued in the Region, which previously SRC had dominance over. Finally, the shift from hardware to software projects, reduced SRC's share of funding and also took funding away from departments which traditionally had benefited from infrastructure projects under the NPCI and IDO such as Roads, to the advantage of departments such as Strathclyde Business Development. Once again, this was a Commission policy which reduced the influence of SRC within the partnership. In this sense, multi-level governance must be viewed as a set of power relationships which constantly transform themselves, and in which Commission decisions can not only empower SNAs but also reduce their influence.

Nevertheless, SRC's success in obtaining European funding through the NPCI and IDO, certainly legitimised the European policies of the Council, and enabled other initiatives to be taken which did not have quite such transparent motives as SRC's interest in an integrated approach to European funding. The most significant example of such a policy was the Ecos-Ouverture programme, which is the subject of Chapter Six.

Chapter Six - The Ouverture Programme and Strathclyde Regional Council, 1990 - 97.

6.1 - Introduction.

The Reform of the Structural Funds in 1989 was notable for the increase in the scale of funding and the attempt to co-ordinate the priorities of EC financial instruments. However, the 1989 Reforms had another major impact upon the European policies of SRC external to those involving the Strathclyde European Partnership. The Reforms also allowed for 10% of the EC Structural Fund budget to be allocated in the form of 'Community Initiatives' (CIs). As the name of these programmes implies, CIs are EC-wide measures which aim to tackle particular issues or sectors. The setting aside of 10% of funding in the form of CIs was widely viewed as a significant strengthening of the autonomy of the Commission within the sphere of regional policy, as George (1996) exemplifies :-

"Even more favourable to the autonomy of the Commission were the Community Initiatives (CIs) to tackle the problems of particular industries. Ten per cent of the funds were aside for CIs, for which the Commission did not even have to work with a Management Committee. The CIs provided the Commission with an even more powerful tool for pursuing an independent and genuinely Community regional policy. Focusing on particular industries that were in decline, such as steel or coal industries, the CI's were agreed between consortia of regional and local authorities and the Commission without necessarily involving national governments at all" (George, 1996, p.239).

Within the budget line for the CIs however, 326m ECU¹⁰⁵ was earmarked for what were termed 'Article 10' projects. Schemes developed through Article 10 finance were required to be small-scale pilot projects or studies which were innovative in terms of the approach taken with regard to regional policy, and through encouraging co-operation between sub-national authorities (SNAs). The European Commission (or more accurately DGXVI) contended that :-

"the innovative nature of these actions lies not just in their objectives but also in the types of partnerships that they foster through bringing together Local and Regional Authorities as well as a wide variety of economic and social

¹⁰⁵ The Funding for Article 10 projects of 326m ECU was spread over a four year period, from 1989-93.

actors.....The underlying philosophy of Article 10 of the ERDF Regulation stems from the need to encourage innovatory development based on the exchange and co-operation in the traditional regional policies, both at national and Community level. This process shall speed progress towards economic and social cohesion within the context of an internationalisation of the economy" (European Commission, 1995, p.8).

The pilot period for Article 10 from 1989 to 1993, witnessed projects being developed within four main policy areas:- spatial planning; cross-border co-operation, co-operation networks between towns and regions; and urban problems. This chapter deals with one Article 10 project, the Overture programme "which was the largest Article 10 programme between 1989 to 1993 in terms of funding, with a budget of £6m" (SRC Minutes, September 1992).

Overture¹⁰⁶ was an external regional co-operation measure which aimed at encouraging co-operation between regions in Eastern and Western Europe. The network was managed by SRC with co-operation from three partner-regions in Western Europe and the European Commission (DGXVI), with no member-state involvement.

The previous chapter considered the evolution of partnership in Strathclyde within a context which brought together European, national and local interests together within varying institutional settings and evaluated the extent to which the interests of these actors were able to shape the development of partnership in Strathclyde. This chapter deals with the same questions as those considered with regard to partnership with the exception that central government had no formal role within Overture. Instead, Overture provides an opportunity to evaluate the evolution of an institution which brought together SNAs and the European Commission within an institutional setting. Therefore, this chapter focuses upon avenues of enquiry developed in Chapter Two :

¹⁰⁶ The Overture programme merged with a similar project in 1995 named ECOS, thus becoming the 'ECOS-Overture' programme. This process will be considered later in this chapter however, the pre-1995 programme shall be termed Overture, and the post-1995 programme as 'ECOS-Overture' in this chapter.

- Where sub-national actors enter into institutional relationships with outside actors, how do relationships between these actors evolve over time?
- Which actors dominate these relationships?
- How extensive is the influence of SNAs within such relationships?

Analyses of multi-level governance tend to focus upon whether power has been eroded from member-state control, in either an upwards direction to European Institutions or downwards to SNAs. The Overture programme provides a case-study of Commission - SNA relations over a seven year period across three main axes which arise from the questions outlined above. Firstly, the manner in which the policies of DGXVI (and the European Commission) evolved with regard to Overture, Article 10 projects and, the role of SNAs. Secondly, the objectives of SRC with regard to developing 'concrete' policies with the European Commission, and the consequences of the Overture experience upon these priorities. Finally, the Overture programme also entailed co-operation between SNAs and therefore enables an analysis of the extent to which SNAs were able to collaborate and of the tensions that emerged within this relationship.

In order to consider these issues, this chapter is split into three main sections. Section 6.2 deals with the original structure, aims and objectives of the Overture programme, whilst also considering the motivations behind the Commission's and SRC's involvement in the scheme. Section 6.3 considers the process of continual change within Overture throughout its entire existence, but particularly between 1990 to 1994. In relation to this process of change the increasingly prominent role of the European Commission, in terms of shaping the direction in which Overture developed, is examined. Section 6.4 deals with the merger between Overture and ECOS, and the resultant structure of the new project, whilst also elaborating on the impact of these acrimonious negotiations upon the Commission. Moreover, the impact of wider developments within European Institutions with regard to Article 10 projects upon Overture is also discussed. However it is to the origins of the initial Overture programme and the

motivations of its principal actors (SRC and the Commission) that I now intend to turn.

In essence, the development of the Ouverture programme is considered from a multi-level governance perspective with, in particular the motivation for SRC's participation; the degree of influence which SNAs (primarily SRC) exerted over the development of the programme; and the means via which SRC exerted influence; with regard to the Ouverture programme being the principal focus of this chapter.

6.2 1 - The Origins and Structure of Ouverture.

The origins of the Ouverture were the result of a conversation in early 1990 between an SRC official from the Chief Executive's department and a DGXVI official at an AER¹⁰⁷ Conference in Vienna. The official from SRC suggested that the recent developments in Eastern Europe offered a potential role for RETI¹⁰⁸, due to the network's "experience of the traditional industrial regions, which had been through a process of rapid job loss and transition. Looking at industry in Eastern Europe, they're going to go through exactly the same process in spades, you've [referring to DGXVI] got an opportunity here to get RETI and the RETI regions to help regions in the East which are about to go through that sort of process" (Case 14). A couple of months later, DGXVI contacted the same official regarding, whether in place of RETI¹⁰⁹, SRC would be willing to "organise a network of all the Western European regions to link with the Eastern European regions" (Case 14).

¹⁰⁷ AER stands for the Association of European Regions. Chapters Four and Seven, outline the functions of this trans-regional network and the role of SRC within it.

¹⁰⁸ RETI stands for the 'Traditional Industrial Regions of Europe'. Once again, Chapters Four and Seven consider the function of this network and the role of SRC within it, in greater detail. However it is worth noting, that SRC may have been keener to advance the interests of RETI over those of AER, due to the reservations SRC held regarding AER and the increasingly prominent role of SRC within RETI, in the run-up to the renegotiation of the Structural Funds in 1992 (See Chapters Four and Seven for greater detail).

¹⁰⁹ Chapter Four mentioned some of the concerns DGXVI may have had with the effectiveness of RETI as an organisation, and this may have been partly responsible for vesting the lead role in this programme to SRC.

There appeared to be a general consensus amongst SRC officials that “by 1990, Strathclyde had quite a good name in Europe, and one of the reasons why we were successful in this programme and so on, was that people had an ability to deliver” (Case 44). The ‘good name’ which SRC had obtained, at least within DGXVI, can be attributed to the success the Council had had in lobbying for and then managing (through the secondment of its officials) the NPCI and IDO, which due to the scale of these schemes were bound to have made an impact upon the ‘collective consciousness’ of DGXVI. In addition, SRC had become increasingly active within a range of networks, notably RETI, whilst the appointment of Bruce Millan as the Commissioner for Regional Policy, is unlikely to have done SRC any harm. The structure for the programme that DGXVI had already devised for the network certainly appeared to consolidate the view that the Commission had faith in ‘the ability of SRC to deliver’. DGXVI outlined an organisational structure for the network that assigned the overall management of the programme to SRC, in co-operation with a number of ‘partner regions’, which SRC was free to approach and select. The European Commission approved the Overture programme in December 1990, for a pilot period running from July 1991 to December 1993, with an initial budget of £6m for this period.

6.2.2 - The Structure of the Overture Programme.

The Overture programme was innovative not only in the sense that it brought together regions in both Eastern and Western Europe under the auspices of an EC programme for the first time, but also through the decentralised organisational structure of the network. Upon being approached by the European Commission to manage the programme, SRC had contacted three other regions as to their willingness to become involved in the management of the programme. DGXVI had commented to an SRC official that the Commission would prefer if SRC did not involve the “mega-regions”(Case 14) such as Catalonia and Bavaria, and accordingly SRC approached ‘lower profile’ regions with whom the Council had already developed links, through participation within

RETI. These regions were :- Asturias (Spain), Piemonte (Italy) and, Saarland (Germany).

Ouverture was established with two broad objectives. These were “to encourage European Integration and support moves to democratic government and a market economy in Central and Eastern Europe” (Ouverture, 1994, p.1). This was to be achieved through “the creation of a network of multi-lateral partnerships between regions and local authorities in the EC and Central and Eastern Europe” (Ouverture, 1994, p.1). More specifically, Ouverture was to finance projects that encouraged co-operation between regions across the spheres of regional democracy, regional services, economic development and, the environment.

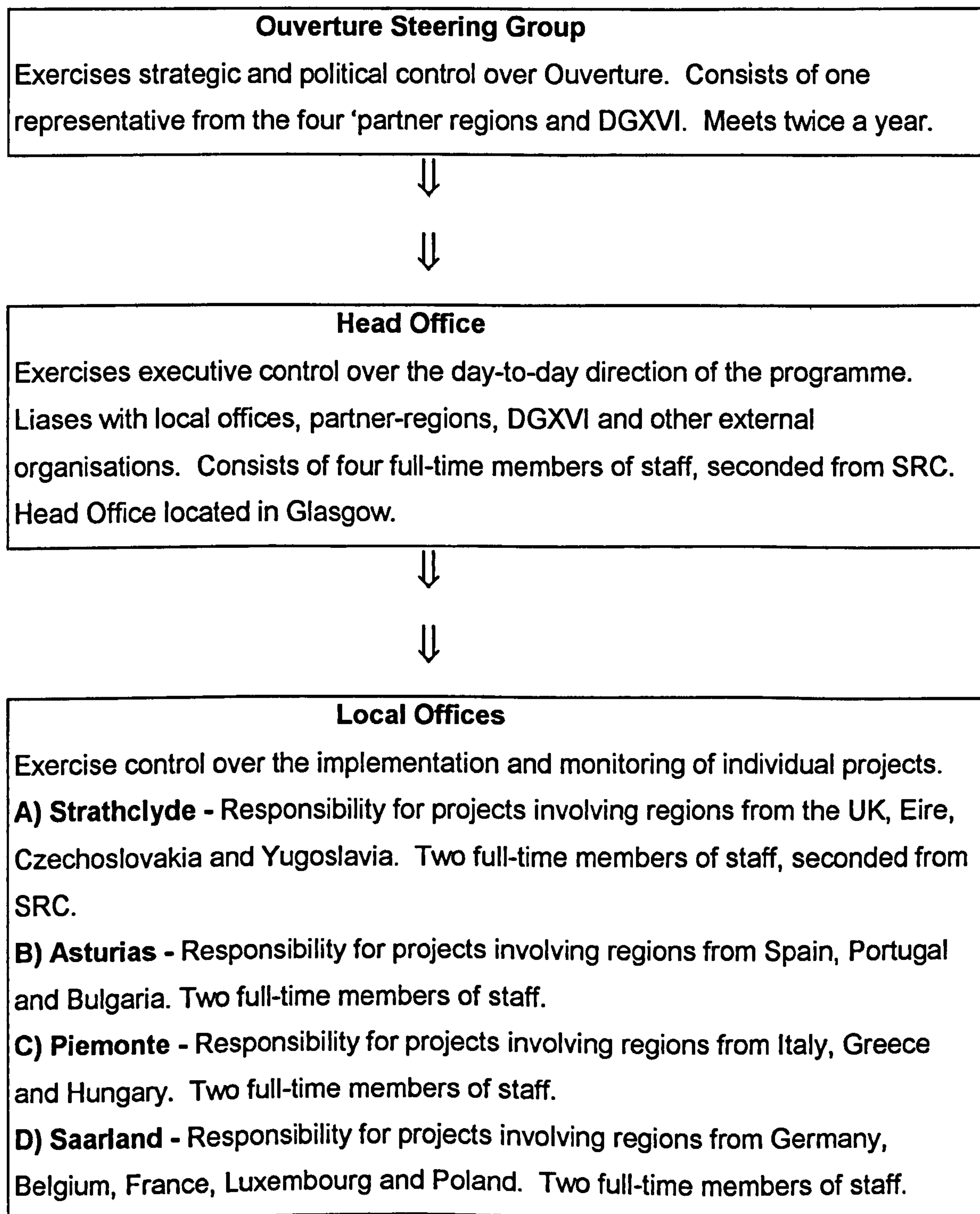
The Ouverture programme consisted of three main components, the ‘Head Office’, ‘Local Offices’ and, the ‘Steering Group’. The Ouverture ‘Steering Group’ provided overall direction for the network, in that it set the aims and objectives of the programme, and conducted negotiations regarding finance and relations with outside organisations. The committee consisted of representatives of the four partner-regions (i.e. SRC, Asturias, Piemonte and, Saarland) and an official from DGXVI, with SRC holding the Chairmanship of the Steering Group. The Head Office of the network was concerned with the administration of the programme on a day to day basis, in terms of monitoring the progress of projects and relations with ‘local offices’. The Head Office was located in Glasgow and consisted of four members of staff seconded from SRC. The ‘Local Offices’ managed the day-to-day organisation of individual projects, and formed the main contact point for regions in Eastern and Western Europe wishing to become involved in the Ouverture programme. Each ‘local office’ was given a particular geographical area to manage projects within, and thus would become the contact for regions within these locations, for instance, SRC managed projects involving regions from the UK, Eire, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. Figure 6.1, depicts the

organisational structure of Ouverture and the geographical competences and staff numbers of each office.

Clearly in terms of the organisational structure of the network, SRC held a pivotal role through holding the Chair of the Steering Group, provision of staffing and facilities for the Head Office and through operating a local office. Despite the extensive influence SRC held within the programme, DGXVI carried the financial burden for Ouverture. Each partner region contributed £131,000p.a. or 6.4% of the programmes running costs, resulting in the European Commission financing 74.5% of Ouverture's expenditure (SRC Minutes, September 1992).

The European Commission was willing to finance Ouverture and endow it with a decentralised structure as the programme represented not only an attempt to tackle economic and political change in Eastern and Central Europe at the sub-national level but also "on the Commission's side there was a desire to put subsidiarity into practice by giving regions a chance to run activities themselves, and to develop a concrete aspect to the 'Europe of the Regions' notion" (Watkins, S, 1994, p.1). SRC would also frequently allude to the federalist backdrop to the programme. For instance, SRC Council Minutes termed Ouverture "an innovative grass roots approach to European integration and regional development, which builds on the idea of the Europe of the Regions" (SRC Minutes, September 1992).

FIGURE 6.1 - The Institutional Structure of Ouverture.



Source :- SRC Minutes, September 1992.

Whilst SRC may have been prepared to lend support to the prospect of a 'Europe of the Regions, the authority had other more familiar motivations for involvement in the programme. In direct terms, whilst SRC contributed £131,000 per annum to the network, the Region received over £1m in spending under the management budget of the programme, through financing the head office and a 'local office' of Ouverture (SRC Minutes, September 1992). Thus, SRC obtained a direct financial gain. However the Regional Council also expected to obtain a range of less directly quantifiable (yet nevertheless significant) benefits through the Council's extensive involvement with Ouverture. These potential benefits ranged from the potential of enabling firms within Strathclyde to have improved access to Eastern and Central European markets, to the Regional Council expanding its expertise in obtaining finance from European sources through involvement in the network. In terms of SRC's European policy, managing the EU's largest Article 10 project would certainly do nothing to diminish the Council's reputation within trans-regional networks such as AER and RETI, and perhaps most importantly within DGXVI. Table 6.2 outlines the perceived benefits of involvement in Ouverture, as outlined in a paper by the Chief Executive's Department and presented to SRC Councillors at the second meeting of the European and International Affairs Committee in September 1992.

Table 6.2 - The Benefits to Strathclyde Regional Council of Involvement in Ouverture.

Strathclyde's central management role helps to maximise the benefits which Ouverture can bring to the region. These include :-

- 1) Business Links** - As the economic centre of the EC moves East, Strathclyde is becoming economically more peripheral. Ouverture is creating a centre of knowledge and expertise to assist Strathclyde firms in making business links with the countries of Eastern Europe....A European Business Group, chaired by the Chair of the 'Economic and Industrial Development Committee' has been set up to develop the opportunities provided by Ouverture, and help overcome these growing locational disadvantages. Businesses contacted through this group have accompanied Ouverture on visits to Eastern Europe and promising contacts have been made and are being pursued.
- 2) New Funding Opportunities** - The expertise and links developed by Ouverture increase opportunities for access to many new funding sources. These include the UK Government's 'Know - How Fund', the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development's 'Municipal Fund' and, the EC's PHARE, TEMPUS and ACE programmes.
- 3) Expertise** - Ouverture is able to provide advice and help to other regional services (departments of the Council) through its contacts, particularly with the EC and the partner regions.
- 4) Training** - Ouverture provides a wide range of opportunities for SRC staff and others in the local community to acquire European experience.
- 5) Profile** - Ouverture is the largest Article 10 ERDF project in Europe. It's successful development reflects well on the Council in the European sphere and beneficially affects the image of the authority in Brussels. Piemonte and Saarland have helped strengthen the Council's European alliances and increased its power to lobby on other issues¹¹⁰. Ouverture is also a demonstration to the local community and to the UK Government of what a region with the resources and expertise of Strathclyde can achieve on the international scene which would not be possible for smaller local government units.

Source :- SRC Committee Papers, September 1992.

SRC was certainly pro-active in attempting to realise these potential benefits, for instance, Strathclyde Business Development (SBD) ran trade missions to all of the Western European Ouverture partner regions and to a number of regions in Eastern Europe which the Council had contacts with through Ouverture. From the perspective of SRC officials within SBD, the Ouverture programme offered

development opportunities as long as “you are confident that you are doing them [SME’s in Strathclyde] a favour” (Case 15). A concern was expressed by an SBD official that the department was rather ‘bounced’ into organising trade missions with regions who had political relations with SRC, as “if you put two politicians in a room from different parts of the world..they will come out expressing undying fraternity” (Case 15). Nevertheless, the interviews amongst SRC official’s external to Ouverture exhibited a good knowledge of the network, and on a couple of occasions SRC staff had obtained practical assistance from Ouverture officials. For example, an official from the Education Department had received advice from Ouverture officials on obtaining EC finance from the Lingua programme.

The initial structure of the Ouverture programme as agreed between the European Commission and the ‘partner regions’ was modified considerably during the programme’s initial pilot period between 1991 and 1993/4, as a consequence of pressures both internal and external to the network. It is the process of ongoing change within the network during this time period, that I now intend to turn.

6.3.1. - Continuous Change :- Ouverture 1991-94¹¹¹

That the Ouverture programme should have experienced considerable change upon being implemented is not in itself particularly surprising, given that Article 10 projects were intended to be experimental in nature. However what is of interest here, is the nature of the process of change that took place, and for a programme that intended to operationalise, to some extent, the slogan of a ‘Europe of the Regions’ to what extent Ouverture’s ‘partner-regions’ (and specifically SRC) were active or passive agents in these processes. Between 1991 and 1993, three main issues significantly altered the structure of Ouverture

¹¹⁰ This is a reference to SRC’s close relations within RETI to the other ‘partner regions’, and the prominent role which SRC took with regard to lobbying for the retention of Objective Two Funding in 1992.

as outlined above. Firstly, the structure and geographical coverage of the network was constantly under review. Secondly, Overture began to obtain finance from sources other than Article 10, resulting in the introduction of new interests into the programme. Finally, the creation of a new network with a similar structure and function as Overture, resulted in new pressures upon the network.

6.3.2. - The Changing Structure and Geographical Coverage of Overture.

The Overture programme was reasonably successful in its first two years of being operational, in terms of the amount of projects it succeeded in establishing. By the end of 1992, Overture had approved 35 projects involving 90 SNA's from across the EC¹¹². In addition, the programme had a membership of 600 local and regional authorities of which 350 were located within the EC, the remainder coming from Central and Eastern Europe. However over 100 project applications had been made to Overture by the end of 1992, whilst the programme had spent virtually all of its 'project funding' with a year of the programme still to run, despite having transferred some monies from its 'management budget' to projects in 1992. As a consequence, SRC approached the Commission in November 1992, with a request for a further £1.39m for the project fund in 1993, and £2.23m of finance to enable a one year extension of the programme into 1994 (SRC, November 1992). Agreement was subsequently reached along these lines with the European Commission providing a further £3.7m of finance to cover the approval of projects in 1993, and an extension of the project into 1994. However linked to this extension of the programme and the increasing funding being allocated by DGXVI, was the proviso that the programme should expand into Albania, Romania and the Baltic States in 1994. As a result of this agreement, the financial contribution of each 'partner region' increased to £186,000 (at 1993 prices) from the previous £131,000 p.a. (at 1991 prices).

¹¹¹ The Overture programme was granted a one year extension to its pilot period in 1993, and accordingly this section will deal with some issues which occurred in 1994.

¹¹² Of these 90 SNA's, 34% were from regions designated as Objective One and 32% from regions designated as Objective Two (SRC, November 1992).

However given the larger than expected number of projects being financed and the extension of the programme, this contribution amounted to each 'partner region' contributing 4.2% (or cumulatively 16.8%) of the programme's costs (SRC, April 1993). As a result, the contribution of each partner region to the programme had fallen by 2.2%.

The use of finance as a lever via which the Commission could direct the development of Ouverture in terms of both geographical coverage and organisational structure would be a common motif between 1991 and 1997. In the two other major extensions to Ouverture's geographical coverage, other issues were directly linked to the expansion of the programme. In 1994 Ouverture expanded to include the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), with the expansion being linked by the Commission to closer consultation between Ouverture and a similar Article 10 project, ECOS. As a result programmes approved for the CIS were considered by a separate 'Steering Group' that consisted of both Ouverture and ECOS representatives. The Commission provided a considerable incentive to agreement, by providing the vast majority of the funding, with each 'partner region' and ECOS making only a 'symbolic contribution' of £4,000 p.a. (and the creation of four new posts in Glasgow¹¹³), whilst the Commission provided the remainder of the £2.5m of funding (SRC, November 1993). Finally, the expansion of ECOS-Ouverture to the Mediterranean 'Third' Countries¹¹⁴ in 1995, was tied to the successful outcome of merger negotiations between the two networks (SRC, May 1995).

Each extension was initiated by an informal approach by the Commission to SRC regarding the possibility of an extension to the programme¹¹⁵. Ouverture would

¹¹³ All ECOS-Ouverture projects were managed by the Ouverture head office, thus accounting for the extra posts being located in Glasgow.

¹¹⁴ The Mediterranean 'Third' Countries are :- Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Syria, Palestinian Territories, Tunisia and Turkey.

¹¹⁵ Not every informal approach made by the Commission was however taken up by the 'partner regions', for example when approached as to the possibility of extending the network into South-

then issue a formal submission for extra funding to cover the extension. For instance, with regard to the programmes extension into the CIS, SRC Committee Papers note :-

“In October, DGXVI of the European Commission made an informal approach to the Regional Council inviting it to consider an extension of its Ouverture activities to the Commonwealth of Independent States” (SRC, November 1993).

As an Ouverture official commented with regard to these extensions :-

“It’s part of their political agenda, and its driven by DGI really pushing DGXVI, to look at the overall picture of the external relations of the Commission. So that was very much pushed by the Commission” (Case 26).

In addition to a significant expansion in the scale of the programme, the network also underwent a number of changes in terms of its organisational structure between 1991 and 1994. The first change to Ouverture’s institutional structure occurred in October 1993, with the accession of Midi-Pyrenees to the Ouverture Steering Group and the creation of a new local office in the region with responsibility for projects emanating between France, Romania, Latvia and Estonia¹¹⁶. The introduction of a French region to the network’s management structure was intended to address the comparatively low number of French regions involved with the network, and accordingly “improve the balance of the partnership and make Ouverture’s operation more effective” (SRC, October 1993). An ‘effective operation’ in France would become increasingly important as the Commission increasingly stressed the importance of co-operation with ECOS¹¹⁷ from 1992 onwards. At the end of 1994 a Danish region, West Zealand, became the sixth ‘partner-region’, on this occasion to cope with the accession of Sweden and Finland to the EU. Accordingly, West Zealand dealt with projects involving regions from Denmark, Sweden and Finland. Both these

East Asia, the partner-regions declined, as “our partners felt that our interests didn’t lie there” (Case 44).

¹¹⁶ Projects involving Lithuanian regions were previously handled by the ‘local office’ in Saarland, whilst Projects involving Albanian regions were managed by the Piemonte office.

¹¹⁷ ECOS was managed by CEMR which was closely associated with French regions and municipalities. The headquarters of CEMR are located in Paris, whilst the President of CEMR throughout the merger negotiations with Ouverture was the Mayor of Strasbourg.

'partner-regions' contributed financially to Ouverture on the same basis as the original members. Accordingly, the Commission's burden of the overall cost of the programme had fallen by the end of 1994 to 74.8%. In addition to the introduction of new 'partner regions', 'local offices' were given a more prominent role in the administration of the network, reflected in an increase in their staffing levels (see Table 6.2). Lastly, SRC's Finance Department audited the network in 1993/4 following concerns regarding the financial propriety of other Article 10 projects.

The second change to Ouverture's institutional structure came as a consequence of concern amongst EU member-states over Article 10 funding. Concern amongst member-states centred upon the fraudulent use of Article 10 finance, whilst the Court of Auditors began investigating Article 10 projects in 1994, in order to address these concerns¹¹⁸. As a consequence, the Council of Ministers ruled that an expert panel should be established to vet the decisions made on Ouverture projects by the network. An official within the Chief Executive's Department who was closely involved in the negotiations surrounding the establishment of Ouverture, described the conditions which resulted in this decision, in the following manner :-

"The member states were not happy with the original basis, which was that the Ouverture partnership, were deciding upon projects, and they insisted upon the Commission setting up an expert panel who had to have the approval of the member states to oversee the decisions on individual projects. Now that we could not object to, because the problem was that we were simultaneously on occasions applicant and judge and jury, and that was not a tenable long-term solution" (Case 14).

The ability of the Council of Ministers to influence the structure of an Article 10 project clearly signals the extent to which the Commission was concerned with the implementation and accountability of Article 10 projects. A further symptom of concern on the part of the Commission is evident in that SRC had expressed the desire that Ouverture develop into a 'Community Initiative' thus removing the

experimental nature of the programme, and had communicated this view to Bruce Millan. However this option was never taken up by DGXVI (SRC, October 1993). Of equal significance, was the ability of member-states to exert influence upon structures that were formally outside their competence. Table 6.3 outlines the organisational structure of the Ouverture programme at the end of 1994.

¹¹⁸ The impact of the Court of Auditors report into Article 10 projects (published in 1996), will be discussed later in this chapter.

6.3.3. - The Impact of PHARE and TACIS funding upon Ouverture.

Whilst the Ouverture programme was intended to deal with the political and social transformations taking place in the former 'Soviet bloc', the finance which it received from the European Commission could only be spent within EU boundaries. As a consequence SNAs from non-EC countries were often unable to become involved in a project due to a lack of finance. This had been a particular problem for the network, for instance, SRC 'Committee Papers' noted with regard to an application for funding by Ouverture from TACIS, that :-

"The lack of available finance for Central European partners has been a source of regret for them within the Ouverture/ECOS Programmes, and one which sometimes restricts their ability to become involved. The inclusion of matching finance for CIS partners would allow project proposals to be properly balanced, and guarantee full and effective participation from the Eastern side" (SRC, November 1993).

Accordingly, the Ouverture programme began to access finance from two EU scheme's (PHARE and TACIS)¹¹⁹, which enabled money to be allocated outside EC boundaries. Initially, Ouverture entered into negotiations with the Commission regarding obtaining PHARE finance upon the suggestion of Bruce Millan, and with the subsequent expansion into the CIS, the programme took the same approach towards TACIS funding.

The introduction of these external sources of finance¹²⁰ into the Ouverture programme, resulted in the introduction of additional interests into the programme, principally in the form of DGI¹²¹ as both PHARE and TACIS are

¹¹⁹ PHARE (Pologne-Hongrie : Actions pour la Reconversion Economique) is an EC programme established in 1989, which allocates funding for economic development or 'reconversion' and policies aimed towards the 'democratisation' of Poland and Hungary. 'Phare' is also the French for lighthouse. TACIS shares the same objectives as 'PHARE', and is targeted at the CIS.

¹²⁰ The PHARE programme injected £2.25m of funding into the Ouverture programme between 1994 and 1996, whilst TACIS provided £1.5m of finance over the same period. The European Commission provided 60% match funding on the finance from both programmes (SRC, February 1994).

¹²¹ DGI deals with the external relations of the European Commission. It is split into two parts. DGIA deal with European and the new independent states, common foreign and security policy and external missions. DGIB deals with the Southern Mediterranean, Middle East, Latin America, South and South-East Asia and North-South Cooperation.

managed by DGI (See Table 6.3). As a consequence, Ouverture officials had to become attuned not only to the policy priorities of DGXVI, but also of DGI. The 'pillarised' (Bomberg, 1996) nature of the European Commission is well documented, for instance Lodge (1993) comments that "this bureaucracy is subdivided into directorates-general (DGs - each comprising around 250 people) that broadly mirror administrative responsibilities for given policy areas which are not entirely self-encapsulated and so sometimes give rise to contradictory or not quite compatible initiatives from different DGs working on aspects of the same policy area" (Lodge, 1993, p.6). An Ouverture official outlined the differing policy goals and bureaucratic environments of the two DGs in the following manner :-

"DGI is coming from the benefits to the Eastern partner projects, that is what they are interested in. They also believe in small-scale activity. Their bureaucratic mode is one where they have a lot of responsibility resting at desk-officer level. A big budget and a small staff. Desk officers have a lot of devolved responsibility. Whereas within DGXVI the culture is very much more hierarchical. So, at some times the two halves have had difficulty communicating with each other, because they are operating at different levels. DGXVI, they are coming from Regional Policy, their interest is to see benefits principally to Objective One areas. That always takes precedence. And they have believed that bigger is better, so they have tried to increase the scale of the projects, way beyond the level that DGI really want, and really beyond the level we would really like" (Case 44).

The impact of DGI policy priorities upon the network was certainly most evident through its promotion of the interests of non-EU regions, for instance, a sizeable proportion of PHARE finance was used to establish Ouverture offices in Poland and Hungary. In terms of Ouverture, the introduction of EU Institutional interests outside of DGXVI, increased the complexity of managing the network and assessing Commission plans for its future. Nevertheless, the impact of EU Institutions other than DGXVI upon Ouverture would become an increasingly prominent theme post-1994.

6.3.4. - The Emergence of ECOS.

In January 1992, the European Commission and CEMR¹²² (Council of European Municipalities and Regions) established a network which was based upon similar lines to Ouverture, termed the 'European City Co-operation Scheme' (ECOS) (Wenzel, 1993). The European Commission provided the Article 10 project with 3.4m ECU of funding to be targeted at co-operation between EU and Central and Eastern European cities across four policy areas :- local democracy, urban services, urban policies and, the environment. Clearly, the two networks had comparable objectives, whilst the distinction between regions and urban areas can often be rather arbitrary.

The similarity between the two networks had certainly not escaped the attention of DGXVI. In 1992, when Ouverture had approached DGXVI for extra funding for 1993 and the extension of the programme into 1994 (See Section 6.3.2), DGXVI had responded by agreeing to additional funding on the basis that there was increased co-operation between the two networks. Equally, the expansion of Ouverture into Albania, Romania and the Baltic States was a measure that brought Ouverture into line with ECOS which upon establishment had covered these countries. The extension of Ouverture into the CIS involved the creation of 'Joint Steering Group' with ECOS whilst expansion into the 'Third' Mediterranean was shadowed by ECOS and the two networks also started to obtain PHARE and TACIS finance at around the same time.

By 1994, there was a significant degree of co-operation between ECOS and Ouverture. For instance, the two networks produced joint promotional documentation and organised joint conferences for regions involved with projects in either network. Lobbying of the Commission for the continuation of both programmes was also conducted jointly during 1994 (SRC, November 1993). However, the European Commission informed both programmes that finance for

the period 1995 to 1999, was only available on the condition that the two networks merged. As with the geographical expansion of the Ouverture programme, despite the decentralised decision-making structure of the network, the Commission's control over the 'purse-strings' ultimately determined the destiny of Ouverture.

6.3.5 - Summary.

The period of Ouverture's existence from 1991 to 1994, consisted of a process of continuous change, driven almost entirely by the European Commission. This process of change consisted of the expansion of the networks geographical coverage and accordingly, financial resources; the introduction of policy interests other than those of DGXVI, through the involvement of DGI; and, a process of increasing co-operation with ECOS, resulting in the merger of the two networks in 1995. Nevertheless, Ouverture was an extremely successful Article 10 project, having created 118 co-operation project during these four years. The success of Ouverture during this period would become apparent in the outcome of the merger negotiations with ECOS, and in the fact that the European Commission wanted to continue with the 'pilot project' until 1999, with the administration of the network remaining with the same Institutions. However it is to the merger negotiations and the development of ECOS-Ouverture between 1995 and 1997 that I now intend to turn.

6.4.1 - The End of a 'Europe of the Regions' ? :- ECOS - Ouverture, 1995 - 97.

The merger negotiations between ECOS and Ouverture were extremely acrimonious, with a settlement not being reached until May 1995, five months after ECOS-Ouverture was due to become operational. At the outset, both ECOS and Ouverture had broadly set out to take overall control of the new structure for their respective organisations. As the discussions proceeded, it

¹²² CEMR brings together all the national associations of SNA's within each member-state, for instance, in the case of the UK, the LGIB (Local Government International Bureau) would represent UK SNA's within CEMR.

became clear that the Commission wanted to retain the involvement of both ECOS and Ouverture. As a consequence, the major differences between the two networks centred upon the location of the new networks headquarters and the division of responsibilities between the two structures. Ouverture focused its lobbying campaign upon emphasising the successful record of the network and the fact that Ouverture employed full-time staff dealing only with Ouverture. In contrast, ECOS was managed by CEMR, which was a political organisation intended to operate as a lobbying organisation, whilst SRC was keen to point to the problems CEMR had experienced with 'financial irregularities' (Case 26). An SRC official who had a prominent role in these negotiations summarised the arguments used as follows :-

"We had a much more developed management structure, and we had a headquarters office specifically for Ouverture. Also the programme itself started off as a regional programme, and the city programme [ECOS] came later. And there's a lot of rhetoric that comes from the Commission about democratic input into these kinds of programmes, in other words regional authorities being directly involved in managing the programmes. To have placed the headquarters with a huge political organisation like CEMR, would have taken away from that. Also, if the Commission was serious about having the programme managed from a peripheral region of the Community, then transferring the headquarters to Brussels or Paris wasn't going to achieve that" (Case 13).

From the ECOS / CEMR perspective, the arguments used by Ouverture/SRC were underhand, and on occasion false. The comments of an ECOS official employed as part of the merged ECOS/Ouverture, gave the following impression of the negotiations outcome, which highlights the bitterness between the two organisations :-

"The Commission bought, if you like the story from Glasgow, which was we are professional because we work full-time on this and nothing else, whereas CEMR they are a political body and one of their activities is this, but it is not their only activity, they are not fully committed to this programme. So they sold this story to the Commission which was not the real one, but they bought it, and even a further story, there was an emotional side to it, they argued that CEMR officials are getting a wage, but if Ouverture does not get the programme, we are on the street, we're unemployed, because we are employed for this programme. And this also had an impact, because it was in the arguments for many things" (Case 36).

Throughout the negotiations, the attitude of the European Commission had been to leave ECOS and Ouverture to hammer out an agreement, “with the Commission occasionally coming in to referee it...to come down on one side or the other” (Case 44). In part the distance, which the Commission put between itself and these negotiations, may have reflected an increasing sense of disillusionment with ECOS/Ouverture and Article 10 projects more generally. The only shared conclusion to emerge from these negotiations was that the whole experience had been “a long and painful process” (Case 44). Nevertheless agreement was reached resulting in the new network named, ECOS-Ouverture.

6.4.2. - The Structure and Objectives of ECOS-Ouverture.

Prior to the conclusion of the merger negotiations, DGXVI had already outlined its funding proposals for the period 1995-99. The Article 10 budget for the five-year period was set at 400m ECU (as opposed to 326m ECU between 1989-93), with Article 10 finance being targeted into four priority areas :- inter-regional, intra and extra community co-operation (180m ECU); innovation for local and regional development (90m ECU); spatial planning (45m ECU); and, urban policy (80m ECU) (European Commission, 1995, p.8). Ecos-Ouverture came under the heading of ‘inter-regional, intra and extra community co-operation’ and shared this categorisation and budget of 180m ECU, with two other projects :- PACTE and RECITE (European Commission, 1995, p.16). Within this budget stream, DGXVI allocated 30m ECU (£23.5m) to finance Ecos-Ouverture between 1995-99¹²³. Table 6.4 outlines the projected contributions of the various partners in Ecos-Ouverture between 1995 and 1999, whilst Table 6.5 compares the SRC and EC contributions between two time periods, 1991 to 1994 and 1995 to 1999.

Table 6.4, illustrates that the success of the Ouverture programme was reflected in the budget of Ecos-Ouverture for the period 1995 to 1999, with not only the

¹²³ Ouverture received a total of £11m in EC finance between 1991 and 1994 (SRC, October 1994).

overall level of Article 10 finance increasing, but also the expected contribution from the PHARE and TACIS schemes was projected to increase significantly, thus accounting for the increasing contribution under the 'others' column. In addition, Table 6.4 displays that whilst 'partner-region' contributions increased in absolute terms between 1995-99 (as illustrated by the example of SRC), the contribution of a partner-region as a proportion of Article 10 finance (i.e. not including PHARE and TACIS funding) declined from 8.1% to 5.3%. As a result, given the experience of Ouverture between 1991-94, it could be expected that the Commission would continue to direct Ecos-Ouverture in the policy direction, which it desired between 1995-99, given that it continued to provide the vast majority of finance for the programme.

Table 6.4 - Financial Contributions to ECOS-Ouverture, 1995-99 (£m).

	1995 (£M)	1996 (£M)	1997 (£M)	1998 (£M)	1999 (£M)	TOTAL 1995- 99(£M)	% CONTRIBUTION OF EACH 'PARTNER', 1995-99
E.C.	4.705	4.705	4.705	4.705	4.705	23.5	60.2%
Others. 124	2.35	2.86	2.8	3.1	3.34	14.27	36.5%
SRC.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	1.25	3.2%
TOTAL	7.305	7.635	7.755	8.055	8.295	39.045	100%

Source:- SRC, October 1994.

¹²⁴ 'Others' refers to the financial contributions from 'partner regions' (including CEMR), and expected funding from PHARE and TACIS. The increase in funding from 'others' over the five-year period, reflects the increase in funding expected from PHARE and TACIS over this period. 'Partner regions' would contribute at the same level as SRC, i.e. £250,000 p.a.

Table 6.5 - SRC Contributions as a percentage of Article 10 finance, 1991-99.

YEARS.	E.C. GRANT (£P.A.) (ARTICLE 10).	SRC CONTRIBUTION (£P.A.).	SRC CONTRIBUTION AS A % OF E.C. GRANT (ARTICLE 10).
1991-94.	2,100,000	170,000	8.1
1995-99.	4,700,000	250,000	5.3

Source:- SRC, October 1994.

The outcome of the merger certainly left no doubt that the Ouverture 'partners' had certainly gained the upper-hand in the negotiations, and correspondingly would benefit most from the expansion in Ecos-Ouverture's budget. The headquarters of Ecos-Ouverture would remain in Glasgow, whilst three former Ecos officials would be responsible for projects emanating from the 'Third' Mediterranean countries, obtaining finance from the PHARE initiative and managing publications and marketing. Ecos-Ouverture would be headed by a 'Steering Group' which meets twice a year (analogous to Ouverture's Steering Group'), which would consist of representatives of DGXVI, DGI, the six Ouverture 'partner-regions' and six CEMR 'city representatives' as well as a representative from AER and CEMR. As a result the 'Ecos-Ouverture Steering Group' was extremely large and in reality, amounted to nothing more than a "symbolic meeting" (Case 26) of the various organisations involved with the programme. Effective management was undertaken by the 'Ecos-Ouverture board' which consisted of two political representatives from Ouverture (a SRC politician¹²⁵ and a Piemonte politician) and CEMR (the President and a Vice-President of CEMR). The Chairmanship of the 'board' would rotate between the SRC

¹²⁵ Following the reorganisation of Scottish local government in April 1996, the SRC representative was replaced by a Glasgow City Council politician, who acted on behalf of the 'West of Scotland European Consortium' (WoSEC). The impact of reorganisation upon Ecos-Ouverture will be discussed in Chapter Eight.

representative and CEMR President every six months. The senior official of Ecos-Ouverture was the former head of the Ouverture programme.

Despite the success of Ouverture and principally SRC (as it was the main beneficiary) in the merger negotiations, the tensions which existed carried over onto the organisational structure of Ecos-Ouverture, for example, through the biannual rotation of the chairmanship of the Ecos-Ouverture board. These tensions continued when Ecos-Ouverture became operational, notably in terms of disputes over the roles of the headquarters in Glasgow and the office in Brussels (which is the CEMR office in Brussels), as a former Ecos-Ouverture official commented :-

“The battle is going on between the two headquarters, and CEMR with the sub-headquarters. The battle is going on there, there is no doubt about that” (Case 26).

The dominance of the European Commission over the direction in which Ecos-Ouverture developed, was again apparent in the changing objectives of the network post-1994. The objectives of Ecos-Ouverture for 1995-99 are :-

- 1) To reinforce economic and social cohesion by promoting the involvement of regions and cities from less favoured areas of the European Union in East-West and North-South co-operation.
- 2) To assist in the economic and political transition of Central and East European regions and cities.
- 3) To contribute to regional development and the modernisation of local and regional authorities in all the participating areas.
- 4) To foster public / private partnerships.

Source :- http://serve.com/homepages/is_ecos_ouverture/raisonde.html (1997).

The new aims of the programme reflected DGXVI's desire to move away from the overtly political role of the network (most notably through providing a practical edge to the term 'a Europe of the Regions') towards a greater emphasis on the

economic development role of the programme and an increase in the role of the private sector within Ecos-Ouverture. In part, this was due to the high demand for economic development projects where Ouverture had experienced during the period 1991-1993, that "one of the strongest patterns to emerge is within the spheres of co-operation that have been chosen by projects. Projects relating to economic development matters have been by far the most common, accounting for two-thirds of the total" (Watkins, 1994, p.4).

However the increased prominence of economic development as the prime rationale for the network, reflected DGXVI's policy priorities, for example, a senior DGXVI official at a conference reviewing the operation of Ecos-Ouverture stated that "our creed should be : local development, local development and more local development" (Leygues, J, 1994, p.100). In addition, this shift in the emphasis of Ecos-Ouverture reflected concerns within DGXVI regarding the conflation of technical and political functions within Article 10 funding. The power struggles amongst regional 'barons' from Ouverture and Ecos would merely have exacerbated these concerns. In addition, DGXVI was coming under pressure from the Court of Auditors and DGXX (Financial Control) over the accountability and financial procedures of Article 10 projects. It is these 'pressures' and the impact of them upon Ecos-Ouverture post-1995, that I now intend to address.

6.4.3. - DGXVI and the retreat from a 'Europe of the Regions' :- Ecos-Ouverture, 1995-97.

The distinction between technical and political functions within an Article 10 project was a theme which emerged within the merger negotiations, where Ouverture highlighted this distinction, arguing that Ecos should not be in control of an Article 10 project as the organisation was a political structure with no administrative capacities apart from the function of lobbying EU Institutions. An Ouverture official stated the position of Ouverture regarding the involvement of CEMR within an Article 10 project in the following manner:-

“CEMR should not be involved in running the programme, because they are a lobbying group and an information service, and they should not be involved in technical assistance. I know a few national associations, paying their subscription to them, who are absolutely against CEMR running any technical assistance scheme” (Case 26).

Whilst Ouverture’s line of argument may have been effective within the merger negotiations, it would also have served to highlight the tension between the function of Ouverture as the implementation of a technical assistance programme combined with the involvement of SNA politicians with no direct links to the European arena. Throughout the period from 1995 to 1997, Ouverture officials observed increasing impatience within the Commission at the role of SNA politicians within what was officially a technical operation. This tension was not confined to Ecos-Ouverture alone, as DGXVI removed the organisation of another Article 10 project named RECITE from the sub-national network ‘Eurocities’ in 1996. The network was put up to tender, with the contract ultimately being won by a French private consultancy. Ecos-Ouverture officials were certainly aware of a growing sense of disillusionment within DGXVI, concerning the involvement of sub-national politicians and institutions within Article 10 projects. An Ouverture official summarised the source of DGXVI’s disillusionment with Ecos-Ouverture in the following manner :-

“You have to feel the difference between what the Commission calls technical assistance, and the lobbying / political side of things, and the Commission don’t like those two, to be completely mixed. That’s what we are doing in Ecos-Ouverture. You influence them on the policy side by lobbying them, by having a dialogue, once they make a decision, you work with that decision. I think for small programmes, targeted programmes, like Ecos-Ouverture, there is a need for technical assistance to the regions and cities, for the sheer technical side of it. The Commission can’t process applications and monitor the project, they don’t have the staff. So I understand some of the Commission’s impatience with Ecos-Ouverture, because for them it is a technical assistance office” (Case 26).

In contrast representatives of SNAs within Ecos-Ouverture, whilst on occasion recognising the problems sub-national, political involvement posed for the European Commission, nevertheless considered that SNAs should have an overtly political role within Ecos-Ouverture in line with the network’s earlier

philosophy concerning a 'Europe of the Regions' and the role of regions within the EU policy process. For instance, a representative of Sachsen-Anhalt, which became a 'partner-region' in June 1996¹²⁶, took the following view of the political role of SNAs within Ecos-Ouverture :-

"Without a strong political body, the programme has no chance, because a political role, and the political dimension of the programme, which means the strong involvement of the regions in the programme, is a key element of its success or its weight" (Case 41).

Whilst the power struggles amongst the regional 'barons' of Ouverture and CEMR during the merger negotiations and the subsequent operation of Ecos-Ouverture would have drawn attention to the tension between the political and technical assistance functions of the programme, DGXVI's impatience with the network was also a product of pressures external to the workings of Ecos-Ouverture. These pressures stemmed from an ongoing investigation by the 'Court of Auditors' into the financial practices of Article 10 projects, and as a consequence DGXX (Financial Control) began to take an increasing interest in the degree of 'transparency' in Article 10 funding i.e. where and the uses to which Article 10 finance had been put ?

Ecos-Ouverture officials were well aware of the increasing tensions between DGXVI and DGXX, over the role of Article 10 finance¹²⁷. The underlying philosophy behind Article 10 projects was that power (financial and decision-making) could be devolved away from the Commission, however DGXX took the view that DGXVI had been "delegating powers to agencies, which they do not

¹²⁶ Sachsen-Anhalt replaced Saarland as the German 'partner-region', within Ecos-Ouverture in June 1996. Sachsen-Anhalt as a Länd within the former GDR, was therefore of relevance to the programme. Sachsen-Anhalt had also come into contact with SRC through membership of AER and RETI. The reason for Saarland leaving Ecos-Ouverture, appear partly to be due to a sense of disappointment in the development of the programme, however primarily due to internal political developments within Saarland, relating to budget cutbacks and a change of leadership within the Länd. Sachsen-Anhalt took over all of the Saarland's financial and administrative responsibilities (i.e. opened a 'local' office dealing with projects emanating from Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Lithuania and Poland) with regard to Ecos-Ouverture (Case 41).

¹²⁷ DGXX audited Ecos-Ouverture in 1996, and found no irregularities.

have the power to delegate” (Case 44). In addition, DGXX was concerned over the lack of financial controls put in place by DGXVI within Article 10 projects. In response, DGXVI began “drawing back functions. There’s a lot of codification going on....there is far less subsidiarity, it is far more about the administration of the programme, rather than developing the policies ourselves” (Case 44).

DGXVI also attempted to pre-empt the ‘Court of Auditors’ report into Article 10, by publishing a ‘policy protocol’¹²⁸ regarding Article 10, which set out three ‘key concerns’ with the current implementation of Article 10. These were that there was “a need for simplification; greater clarity in the policy followed by the Commission; and, more effective methods” (European Commission, 1995, p.20) in the implementation of Article 10. The ‘policy protocol’ made recommendations concerning the organisational structure of Article 10 projects in the future, via :-
“the establishment of a system able to operate in a subsidiary, complementary and co-ordinated way (that is, on three separate levels of responsibility) to ensure :-

- A) the growing involvement of the Member States;
- B) the active participation of local government and those working in the economy in preparing, implementing and assessing the programme;
- C) careful and rational project management and effective monitoring by professional bodies selected for their competence, with each pilot project directly managed by the regional and local authorities involved in it”.

(Source:- European Commission, 1995, p.25).

The policy protocol clearly considered Article 10 projects as being a purely technical function of the Commission, and while the report emphasised the principle of subsidiarity inherent within Article 10 projects, it also introduced a role for Member States. The report from the Court of Auditors was published in August 1996, and dealt with a series of Article 10 programmes run by the Commission in the Mediterranean. The ‘Court of Auditors’ report “was a totally damning indictment on the operation of those programmes” (Case 44), and whilst the report did not deal with any projects run by Ecos-Ouverture, the ramifications

¹²⁸ A ‘policy protocol’ is not a legally binding document, however it serves the purpose of setting out the European Commission’s priorities within an area of policy.

of the document were felt within all Article 10 projects. The Court of Auditors made five main criticisms of the Commission and the local management structure for the Mediterranean programme, known as the 'Agency for Trans-Mediterranean Networks' (ARTM). The criticisms of the 'Court of Auditors' were as follows :-

- A) the powers conferred upon ARTM constitute in effect a delegation of the powers of the Commission to a third party : apart from the fact that it is doubtful whether in this case there is a legal basis for such a delegation, a decision in principle to that effect is required, which can only be taken by the Commission itself. No such decision exists.
- B) excessive recourse was had to private treaty contracts, without proper tendering.
- C) the manner in which contracts were awarded, the involvement of the same consulting firms in the conception of the programmes, in the preparation of financing proposals, in the management of ARTM, and in the technical monitoring of the programmes led to a situation in which serious confusions of interest existed, prejudicial to the proper management of Community funds.
- D) the resources and procedures of the Commission for monitoring the implementation of the MED programmes and for controlling their decentralised administration were inadequate : when the serious confusions of interest referred to above were identified by the Commission, it was ineffective for a long time in bringing them to an end.
- E) serious shortcomings in the financial management of the programmes at the level of the Commission and the ARTM were identified.

(Source:- Official Journal of the European Communities, 1996, p.5-6).

The criticisms within the Court of Auditor's report of the Mediterranean programmes were "not directed at the concept of decentralised co-operation" (Official Journal of the European Communities, 1996, p.5), but rather at the implementation of the programmes. Nevertheless the Report and the attentions of DGXX towards Article 10, had a considerable impact upon the decentralised structure of Ecos-Ouverture. Officials within Ecos-Ouverture recognised that DGXVI was increasingly taking the view that the programme was merely an agency of the Commission. In part this reflected an increasing institutionalisation of relationships as the programme expanded. For instance, officials from Ecos-Ouverture began having regular monthly meetings with DGI and DGXVI officials in 1996. However, this also reflected a concern within DGXVI over the

implementation of Article 10 projects, and the view that bodies such as Ecos-Ouverture did not make decisions but rather implemented and administered Article 10 funds.

Changing attitudes within DGXVI were not the only outcome of criticism of Article 10 projects, as DGXVI began to 'draw back' functions previously carried out by Ecos-Ouverture to Brussels. An Ecos-Ouverture official described the rationale for this process as being a result of DGXVI "seeking to protect itself against charges that have been laid at its door by other parts of the Commission. So it is going through this process of drawing powers back and creating these much more rigid structures" (Case 44). The extent of DGXX's criticism of DGXVI's role in the handling of Article 10 projects, is evident from the fact that DGXX refused to allow any finance for Ecos-Ouverture from January 1996, "in order to force the issue" (Case 44) over Article 10 projects. As a consequence, the Steering Group of Ecos-Ouverture did not meet in either 1996 or 1997. The pressures over Article 10 projects, and the need to reassert the control of the Commission over them, resulted in Ecos-Ouverture being put up for 'open tender' at the beginning of 1997. The 'open tender' consisted of Ecos-Ouverture being split into three 'lots' :- Article 10 finance covering the programmes whole area minus the Baltic States and the CIS; PHARE finance for the Baltic States; and TACIS finance for the CIS. The motivations for this disaggregation of Ecos-Ouverture lay in the aforementioned conflict between DGI and DGXVI (See Section 6.3.3), concerning the manner in which Ecos-Ouverture should develop. An Ecos-Ouverture official described this process as follows :-

"DGI has made it clear informally that they would prefer the winners of the three Lots to be different. The reason for that is that there has been a lot of tension between DGI and DGXVI over the development of the programme to date. They are coming from different ends of the spectrum, they have different ways of working as well. And that sort of marriage, which we have tried to put together, has been a stormy one. If the finance for Lots two and three, is coming entirely from PHARE and TACIS, then their preference is to have a separate management organisation, as then there is no link back to DGXVI" (Case 44).

Clearly Ecos-Ouverture would not remain in its present form post-1999, whilst Ecos-Ouverture officials believed that the tenders were most likely to go to private consultancies, in order to allow the Commission to view the project as a purely technical function over which it could have direct control. As a former Ecos-Ouverture official commented :-

“The Commission was always aware that there was a political dimension to our organisation which you don’t have with a consultancy. Because we have a Steering Group made up of the locally elected members from the representative regions, and these guys are politicians. So they were always aware that there was a political level to it. Retrospectively, I’m not sure they will do that again because of that political element. I think they felt it was a bit of a constraint.....Because they [the Commission] can tell a consultancy exactly what to do and when to do it, but when local politicians are involved, whose regions are putting in hard cash, otherwise there would be no need for politicians, which makes sure the costs for the Commission were reduced. That element I am not sure they would do again” (Case 26).

6.4.4. - Summary.

The merger between Ecos and Ouverture not only highlighted the animosity between the two regional networks, as they attempted to gain control over the Article 10 project, but also the problems from the Commission’s perspective of political involvement in a technical assistance programme in terms of establishing clear lines of responsibility for decision-making (both administrative and financial). The early rhetoric of Ouverture regarding SNA involvement representing moves towards operationalising the concept of a ‘Europe of the Regions’ were gradually sidelined as DGXVI focused upon the technical function of the network. Nevertheless, DGXVI still appeared keen to have SNA involvement in Article 10 projects. However the tensions between the technical and political functions of Ecos-Ouverture were brought to a head, due to external pressures from DGXX and the Court of Auditors. Both DGXX and the Court desired clear lines of decision-making, with ultimate authority resting with the Commission, and as a consequence DGXVI started to codify practices and draw back functions to Brussels. Clearly this left SNAs questioning the value of becoming involved in an Article 10 project whilst DGXVI became ‘impatient’ with the attitudes of it’s regional partners. These pressures ultimately led to Ecos-

Ouverture being put up to tender, whilst disputes between DGI and DGXVI over the development of Ecos-Ouverture resulted in the network being split into three parts within the tender process.

6.5. - Conclusions.

At the outset of this chapter, I established three main axes across which the case study of (Ecos-) Ouverture could be analysed. These were firstly, to assess the evolution of policy within DGXVI and the European Commission with regard to the role of SNAs within Article 10 projects. Secondly, to relate the outcomes of this case-study to analyses of 'multi-level governance'. And lastly, to assess the extent to which SNAs were able to co-operate together within an Article 10 project. I now intend to discuss each of these themes in turn.

DGXVI clearly has a vested interest in promoting contact with and between SNAs, given that it has responsibility for regional policy, and therefore requires assistance from SNAs with the implementation of its policies. As a result DGXVI would be keen to promote the interests of SNAs within the EU policy process, and this may account for the DG's willingness to develop a programme with SNAs which was intended to give a 'concrete aspect' to the notion of a 'Europe of the Regions'. Nevertheless, over the course of the Ouverture experiment, DGXVI became increasingly disillusioned with the infighting amongst its SNA partners and impatient that the DG's policy priorities were being resisted by its partners despite DGXVI providing the bulk of the finance for the Ecos-Ouverture programme.

DGXVI had to re-evaluate the position of SNAs within Article 10 projects, as a result of criticism from the Court of Auditors and DGXX (and ultimately the withholding of Article 10 finance). Initially DGXVI attempted to deflect these criticisms through a reassertion of its control over Article 10 projects via the publication of a policy protocol and the drawing back of functions to Brussels. However, continued criticism upon the publication of the Court of Auditor's report,

resulted in DGXVI continuing the process of drawing functions back to Brussels, leaving the Ouverture partnership conducting a purely technical operation whilst the programme's Steering Group did not meet for two years. Finally, DGXVI put Ecos-Ouverture up for tender. Analyses of 'multi-level governance' tend to view DGXVI and the Commission as being synonymous (such as Marks, 1993), however the case-study of DGXVI clearly illustrates that whilst it was initially able to act unilaterally, the introduction of interests from other DG's (I and XX) resulted in a retraction of DGXVI's earlier position. Clearly analyses of multi-level governance fail to account for the 'pillarised' structure of the Commission's bureaucracy. In addition, the ruling of the Court of Auditors that there is no legal basis for the Commission to delegate powers to SNAs when the Commission cannot retain ultimate authority, may result in many SNAs reconsidering the value of involvement in such projects. The ruling of the Court of Auditors clearly puts a limit on the extent to which the Commission can devolve powers. In addition, the dominance of the Commission within Ecos-Ouverture, despite the network's decentralised decision-making structure, due to the Commission providing the majority of the programmes finances raise questions as to the extent to which SNAs can expect to influence policy when the Commission holds the 'purse-strings'.

Finally, the acrimony between Ecos and Ouverture clearly illustrates that whilst SNAs are able to unite behind broad themes, such as increases in funding, there is a significant degree of competition between SNAs for relatively small rewards. Such 'turf wars' between SNAs appear to reflect the relatively weak position of SNAs within the EU policy process. As a result of the declining influence of SNAs within Ecos-Ouverture, some SNA representatives are ambivalent over the continued value of SNA participation within technical assistance programmes concluding that SNAs should focus upon lobbying European Institutions in order to influence the EU policy process. The participation of SRC within formal and informal networks, as mechanisms via which to lobby European Institutions is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter Seven - Influencing the European Policy Process.

7.1 - Introduction.

Accounts of the EU frequently refer to the “complexity and fluidity” (Mazey and Richardson, 1993, p.38) of the European policy process, whilst the “EU’s institutional complexity and density make it unique as a system of governance” (Peterson, 1995, p.395). The signing of the ‘Single European Act’ (1986) greatly expanded the policy portfolio of European Institutions, whilst strengthening the ability of the European Commission to initiate policy across a range of fields such as, environmental policy. As a consequence, the SEA resulted in a vast increase in the range and diversity of organisations lobbying European Institutions (see Mazey and Ricardson, 1992). Sub-national authorities (SNA’s) were no less immune from this process. John (1994a) sub-divides SNA’s into three categories, according to the extent to which an authority has responded to European policy developments. These categorisations are:- the ‘Euro-minimal’ SNA; the ‘EU financially orientated’ SNA; and, the ‘fully Europeanised SNA’ (See Figure 7.1).

With reference to Chapter Four, SRC had clearly met the requirements of being a ‘fully Europeanised’ SNA by 1987-8, through attempting to influence EU policy via the Brussels office and through participation in trans-national networks. In addition, the Council would also act as a source of information on implementation issues across a variety of policy fields, most notably in terms of the implementation of the ‘partnership’ principle via the NPCI / IDO / SEP. Finally, SRC was attempting to ensure that via the Chief Executive’s ‘European Unit’, the various departments of the Council were fully aware of the impact of European legislation and of funding opportunities. Thus, the European Unit formed a Committee which brought together departmental heads in 1987, to address the impact of the ‘Single European Act’ upon SRC.

Figure 7.1 - A continuum of SNA involvement in Europe.

Forms of SNA engagement with the EU.	Scale of SNA Europeanisation.
Responding to EU directives and regulations.	Euro-Minimal SNA.
Managing EU information.	Euro-Minimal SNA.
Communicating to the private sector and public.	Euro-Minimal SNA.
Maximising EU grants.	EU Financially-orientated SNA.
Facilitating economic regeneration.	EU Financially-orientated SNA.
Linking with other local organisations participating in the EU.	EU Networking SNA.
Participating in EU international networks and co-operating in joint projects.	EU Networking SNA.
Advising the EU on implementation issues.	Fully Europeanised SNA.
Seeking to influence EU policy.	Fully Europeanised SNA.
Making the council's policies more 'European'.	Fully Europeanised SNA.

Source :- John (1994a), p.11.

The emergence of SNAs as actors attempting to influence the European policy process (primarily post-1986), has been most apparent in three main forms (Marks, 1996). Firstly, via the establishment of SNA offices in Brussels; secondly, the creation (and participation of SNAs within) trans-national SNA networks; and finally, through the creation of the 'Committee of the Regions', which was at least partly inspired through pressure by SNAs within trans-regional networks such as, AER and CEMR. Once again, SRC was active within all three channels (See Chapter Four), through opening a regional office in Brussels in 1984, membership of a range of trans-regional networks while two SRC

Councillors were members of the CoR (including the head of the UK delegation to the CoR)¹²⁹.

This chapter considers SRC's experience of these mechanisms, as a platform from which to influence European policy. The means via which SRC attempted to influence the European policy process through formal trans-regional networks, a European office and informal networks provides another avenue to assess the influence of Europeanisation upon SRC. Furthermore, this chapter also considers the approaches used to influence policy-making and how successful the various means of influence utilised by SRC were perceived to be? In Section 7.2, the involvement of SRC within trans-regional networks is evaluated, with regard to the motivations for SRC's involvement; the extent to which these networks were able to influence EU policy; the advantages which accrued to SRC through involvement; and the problems which SRC experienced within these networks. While SRC was involved in a range of networks, I intend to focus upon what Chapter Four termed 'generalist networks' or "peak networks" (Benington and Harvey, 1994, p.27), which tend to include a large number of SNAs and deal with the 'high politics' of SNA interest such as Structural Fund reform, as opposed to more specialised or technical networks. In particular I intend to focus upon SRC's involvement within the Association of European Regions (AER) and the 'Traditional Industrial Regions of Europe' (RETI).

Following on from SRC's involvement within formal, trans-regional networks, Section 7.3 considers the role and functions of SRC's 'Brussels' office, with particular regard to the evolution of the Office over time as SRC collaborated with other Scottish actors, through moving into the Scotland Europa offices. The lobbying techniques pursued by SRC's 'European Liaison Officers' will be discussed, alongside a consideration of the importance of 'informal' networks as

¹²⁹ While two SRC Councillors were members of CoR, they did not represent SRC on the CoR, as the five Scottish members of the CoR (and their alternates) represent Scottish local government as a whole, with the Scottish CoR members being selected by the Scottish Secretary (Stolz, 1994).

a means of influencing European policy. Informal networks are evaluated further in Section 7.4, with regard to the extent to which there were identifiable networks amongst local actors dealing with European policy within Strathclyde and Scotland, and the extent to which these networks were influential¹³⁰. In addition, the informal networks that SRC developed through its Brussels office are also considered. However, it is to SRC's involvement within trans-national networks that I now intend to turn.

7.2.1 - The Role of Trans-National Networks.

"In general terms, co-operation between regions belonging to different nation-states is motivated by the identification of common problems and / or interests and the conviction that joint action or at least a co-ordinated approach whether at national or European level - is required to address these problems and articulate the common interests" (Weyand, 1996, p.167).

Trans-national networks are a product of the desire on the part of the Commission, to obtain representations from constituencies which are representative of a large number of European interests affected by a particular issue. As a consequence, sub-national lobbyists are well aware of the value of trans-national networks as a means of access into the Commission. As a former SRC European Liaison officer commented with regard to the benefit of network membership : "the Commission will generally listen more readily to the voices of a number of regions together, whether it's in a geographical interest grouping or a priority interest grouping. And I think that's the major benefit you get" (Case 13).

In addition to providing access to the Commission and greater authority to SNA opinions, SRC respondents frequently stressed the opportunities that networks

¹³⁰ Assessments of the extent to which lobbying strategies pursued by SRC were successful, are based upon the perceptions of those interviewed concerning these strategies. This does not necessarily imply that lobbying undertaken by SRC had a determining effect upon eventual EU decisions, due to the complex and secretive nature of EU decision-making, particularly within the Council of Ministers. Instead, this chapter intends to assess the perceptions of the participants involved in such strategies, as to the value of the various mechanisms outlined in this chapter, in influencing the EU policy process (See Chapter Three, for a fuller discussion on this point).

provided in terms of funding opportunities that emerged through contacts with other SNAs that required 'partners' for funding programmes¹³¹, and as a forum for the 'exchange of ideas' between SNAs regarding policy.

7.2.2 - SRC, RETI and the 'Objective Two' lobby.

The most frequent example cited by SRC respondents, as to the influence which trans-national networks can bring to bear upon the EU policy process, was the case of the 'Objective Two Lobby'¹³² of 1991-92. The Review of the Structural Fund budget for the period 1994 to 1999, was due to be determined in 1992, and there was a growing realisation that the position of Objective Two funding would come under scrutiny in this review and possibly be scrapped for reasons which a former European Commissioner summarised as follows :-

"Objective One areas would be OK, and be provided for in the Council regulations, because everyone recognises that you have to have an Objective One status, because of the particular problems they have, and of course, the 1992 financial settlement, which specifically decided what money should be for Objective One. The representatives of what you might call the Objective Two areas, have always been a bit worried that it would lose out. Objective One would have its advocates, Objective 5b would be part of the lobby for agriculture which is very deeply entrenched in the Community and in the Commission....There would be more money for the Social Fund, because of the high unemployment, and Objective Two would be squeezed a bit" (Case 32).

¹³¹ SRC could also find partners for programmes, for which the Council had EU funding. For instance, SRC selected its 'partner-regions' for Ouverture on the basis that it had good relations with these SNAs within RETI (See Chapter Six).

¹³² The Structural Funds were divided into five priority objectives between 1994 and 1999. These were :-

- Objective 1 : promoting the development and structural adjustment of regions whose development is lagging behind.
- Objective 2 : converting the regions or parts of regions seriously affected by industrial decline.
- Objective 3 : combating long-term unemployment and facilitating the integration into working life of young people and of persons exposed to exclusion from the labour market, promotion of equal employment opportunities for men and women.
- Objective 4 : facilitating the adaptation of workers to industrial changes and changes in production systems.
- Objective 5 : promoting rural development by :
 - Objective 5a : speeding up the adjustment of agricultural structures in the framework of the common agricultural policy and promoting the modernisation and structural adjustment of the fisheries sector.
 - Objective 5b : facilitating the development and structural adjustment of rural areas.

Source : European Commission (1996), p.11.

DGXVI initially approached RETI regarding the situation facing Objective Two funding, at the forthcoming Review of the Structural Funds, and expressed its desire to organise a meeting of the Objective Two regions under the auspices of RETI. However, RETI did not take up this approach and DGXVI was left to organise the meeting itself in July 1991. Relations between RETI and DGXVI appear to have been strained prior to this point, a feature which McAleavey and Mitchell (1994) attribute to the network not being “fully representative of declining industrial regions in that it was numerically dominated by UK local authorities, ..[whilst] a number of Member States were not represented at all” (McAleavey and Mitchell, 1994, p.244). Despite this the ‘Objective Two lobby’, which subsequently emerged (although led by SRC), did include regions from virtually every member-state. In addition, MacAleavey and Mitchell claim that the perception existed within DGXVI that “the leadership and direction of RETI¹³³ were idiosyncratic” (McAleavey and Mitchell, 1994, p.244).

Whatever the situation, the outcome of the July 1991 meeting was that a number of regions including SRC agreed to hold a meeting in Tuscany to which all Objective Two regions would be invited and which would address the means by which Objective Two funding could be protected. At the meeting in Florence, thirty-six of the sixty regions eligible for Objective Two funding attended. However these regions obtained 90% of the Objective Two budget. The Florence meeting proposed that an ‘Objective Two lobby’ be formed, whilst “a position paper was adopted and a representative delegation¹³⁴ set up, with one representative from every member-state with an interest in Objective Two (eight member states). Strathclyde was chosen to lead the UK delegation and overall European delegation” (Case 12). The delegation of eight regions then conducted

¹³³ The leadership (and headquarters) of RETI were drawn from Nord Pas de Calais, and thus were not part of any UK domination of the network.

¹³⁴ The representative delegation comprised :- Strathclyde (Overall Lead Region and UK); Catalonia (Spain); Groningen-Denthe (Netherlands); North Jutland (Denmark); Nord Pas-de-Calais (France); North Rhine-Westphalia (Germany); Tuscany (Italy); and, Wallonia (Belgium).

a lobbying campaign throughout 1992, culminating in a meeting of the Objective Two lobby in Edinburgh for “tactical or symbolic reasons” (Case 12) prior to the Council of Ministers summit.

Regions from each member state pursued lobbies within their own member-state. SRC organised a meeting with Tim Sainsbury, who was the minister responsible at the DTI, whilst the Scottish Office was well aware of SRC’s activities within RETI and was keen to encourage them as far as possible, as a Scottish Office official commented :-

“The Scottish Office was involved in that, we were all part of that. But remember we can’t lobby, we’re part of the member state, so it was important for us to know what was going on. We exchanged information, so we could know what they were up to, and we were paddling the Scottish canoe as hard as we could” (Case 42).

Initially the lobbying campaign was organised from SRC’s Brussels office. However the RETI Brussels office also became involved after the Leader of SRC, Cllr. Charles Gray, was voted President of RETI, with the backing of the other ‘Objective Two’ lobby regions. Throughout 1992, the Objective Two lobby was extremely active in pursuing their case with meetings being held not only with representatives from member-states, but also European representatives including the President of the European Commission, Jacques Delors, the Commissioners for DGV (Social Policy) and DGXVI (Regional Policy), a variety of MEPs including the Chair of the EP ‘regional policy’ committee, and the Portuguese Minister for Regional Policy during the first half of 1992, when Portugal held the Chairmanship of the Council of Ministers, and Tim Sainsbury when the UK held the Chair of the Council. As mentioned above, the lobby culminated in a conference of the Objective Two ‘regions’ being held in Edinburgh prior to the Summit meeting, and a resolution of the regions position (which was drafted by an SRC official) being submitted to the Council.

The Edinburgh Council Summit in December 1992 maintained Objective Two funding as a proportion of the other objectives, with the exception of Objective

One which was increased. McAleavey and Mitchell (1994) note with regard to this outcome and the influence of the Objective Two lobby upon it, that "it is a feature of the closed nature of the decision-making process at the intergovernmental apex of the Community that the bargaining behind the compromise eventually reached at the Edinburgh Summit in December 1992 remains obscure" (McAleavey and Mitchell, 1994, p.246). Nevertheless, politicians and officials within SRC were convinced that the Objective Two lobby had a determining influence upon the decisions taken at the Council meeting, as the comments of an SRC official from the Chief Executive's Department who was closely involved in the lobbying campaign illustrate :-

"I think we made quite a big impact, I think it was seen as representative by the European Commission and others, it did involve all the big players at the European level, it was a transnational initiative. In terms of the outcome, I think it was successful in that, the decisions taken at Edinburgh were that outside Objective One the proportions of funding for the other Structural Funds should stay the same as in the previous funding period, which we thought was a fairly positive result". (Case 12).

Part of the explanation for the confidence within SRC that the Objective Two lobby had an impact upon the eventual decision taken was that the lobby was in very close contact with DGXVI throughout the campaign. As mentioned above, the origins of the Objective Two lobby lay in the promptings from DGXVI, which presumably had no interest in scrapping Objective Two funding, as it represented a key element of its policy portfolio both in terms of the DG's finance and profile. The support which DGXVI provided to the Objective Two lobby was described by an SRC official in the following terms :-

"There were some people within the Commission, who were very sympathetic towards what we were doing, although there are limits to which they can overtly be seen to be supporting a lobby. But yes, there were important people within DGXVI, in this case, who were very supportive of what we were doing but also there was a limited extent to which they could do that, apart from suggesting to the Commission that you should see this delegation". (Case 12).

Clearly the Objective Two lobby was assured of a degree of success, due to the degree of support the lobby had at its disposal within the Commission, up to the

level of European Commissioner. As Mazey and Richardson (1996) note, “in classic Downsian fashion, the Commission has proved adept at constructing supportive clientele groups” (Mazey and Richardson, 1996, p. 46). The Objective Two lobby can certainly be construed as an instance of DGXVI providing the impetus behind a lobby which initially did not have an organisational basis due to the reluctance of the RETI leadership to become involved. When the ‘lobby regions’ obtained control of RETI, this provided further legitimacy to the region’s demands, whilst DGXVI provided support in terms of information and access to the lobby throughout. In addition, the selection of SRC as the lead region of the lobby, can also be linked to Bruce Millan’s being a former Labour MP from Strathclyde, who was well known to SRC’s Labour leadership.

7.2.3 - Summary.

The Objective Two lobby provides an example of SNAs being able to influence the EU policy process, through having a common interest with a DG of the Commission. Given that SNAs lacked an institutional foothold within the EU policy process (prior to the creation of the Committee of the Regions), the support of a powerful benefactor, in this instance within the Commission, was a pre-requisite of the lobbying campaign success. When RETI was engaged as an active part of the campaign, this provided further weight to the region’s demands. In essence, RETI provided legitimacy to the demands of the regions, as a mechanism via which to influence EU Institutions. SRC fulfilled an active leadership role, through utilising contacts that the Council had in the European and national / regional arenas, whilst also utilising the resources SRC had in the form of the Brussels office and the ‘European Unit’ within the Chief Executive’s department, allied to the active promotion of the case by the SRC political leadership.

7.2.4 - SRC, AER and the Federalist agenda.

AER is one of the largest EU-related trans-national networks which brings together SNAs from the EU and Eastern Europe, including all the major (or

stronger) European regions. Given the scale of AER's membership it has tended to focus upon lobbying for an entrenchment and expansion of the role of SNAs within the EU policy process most notably with regard to supporting issues such as the establishment of a 'Committee of the Regions', the implementation of subsidiarity as a 'substantive' principle¹³⁵, the signing of the Council of Europe's 'Charter of Local Self Government' and, to obtain SNA access to the Council of Ministers. Despite this emphasis upon 'institutional' issues, the network does cover more specific policy areas through a series of commissions (See Table 4.3), which are established underneath the AER Bureau which determines the policy of the network¹³⁶. Nevertheless, AER's "primary objective has become the representation of regional interests vis-a-vis European institutions. Though membership goes well beyond the EU territory, the recognition of the 'fait regional' in European politics in general, but in particular in the institutional framework of the EU, has become the major political aim of the organisation" (Weyand, 1996, p.176).

When SRC joined RETI in 1986, the Council also automatically became a member of AER. Chapter Four (Section 4.3.4) noted the disillusionment amongst SRC officials regarding the lack of a practical edge to AER's activities. However, upon SRC becoming a member of AER's ruling 'Bureau'¹³⁷, an awareness developed of the 'long-term political game' which AER was pursuing with regard to establishing formal access to the EU policy process, primarily through the creation of a Committee of the Regions. SRC was active in this process, and attended the 'Conferences on a Europe of the Regions' organised

¹³⁵ Scott, Peterson and Millar (1994) discuss the differences between the substantive and procedural definitions of subsidiarity within the Treaty on European Union, agreed at Edinburgh, in December 1992. For more general discussions of subsidiarity, see Van Kersbergen and Verbeek (1994) and Hoffe (1996).

¹³⁶ Chapter Four, Section 4.3.4 provides a description of AER's organisational structure.

¹³⁷ SRC had two periods of membership upon AER's Bureau. Cllr. Charles Gray represented SRC on the Bureau from 1989 to 1992, and was thus a member of the Bureau during the period when the momentum behind the establishment of the CoR began to develop. Cllr. Gerald McGrath represented SRC on the Bureau from 1995 to 1996.

by the German Lander in 1990, and to which only the 'strong' regions within the EU were invited (See Weyand, 1996¹³⁸).

In addition to SRC membership of the AER Bureau, the Council also held positions within AER's Committee structure, which dealt with specific policy areas. Positions upon these committees provided access to Commission officials with responsibility for related policy areas, whilst SRC membership enabled the promotion of the Council's policy priorities within these committees. SRC was a member of Commission One, which dealt with the institutional affairs of the EU (See Table 4.3) which was perceived within SRC as a means of influencing the eventual structure of the CoR (See Chapter Four, Section 4.3.4). However of more direct relevance to SRC's immediate policy concerns, was the Council's membership of Committees Two and Five. Committee Two dealt with co-operation between Eastern and Western Europe, a subject of considerable importance to AER given that it had a significant degree of membership drawn from Eastern European regions out with the EU. The Committee acted as a platform for SRC to obtain wider political support for the operations of (Ecos) Ouverture, whilst also enabling access to Commission officials dealing with the programme. Cllr. McGrath held the Presidency of the East-West Committee from 1994-95 and vice-presidency in 1996. AER provided backing to SRC in the negotiations with ECOS, concerning the future structure of the programme in order to counteract CEMR's support for ECOS (See Chapter Six, Section 6.4.1). For instance at an AER Bureau meeting in January 1995, at the height of the merger negotiations with ECOS, Cllr. McGrath used his membership of the Bureau to highlight the interests of Ouverture and urge Bureau members to provide 'political' support presumably through lobbying the Commission. SRC Minutes (March 1995) outline Cllr. McGrath's contribution in the following manner :-

¹³⁸ Weyand (1996) provides an account of the role of the 'Conferences on a Europe of the Regions' organised by the German Lander, in particular Bavaria. This process produced the possibility of a split within AER, between the 'strong' and 'weak' regions similar to the conflict with the CoR between 'regions' and 'municipalities' (see Millan, 1997).

“Councillor McGrath outlined to the Bureau the situation in terms of negotiations for the future of the Ouverture programme. President Pujol pledged his personal support to the continuation of the programme and its importance to the regions of Europe in general and asked the Bureau also to support fully the programme on a political level. The members of the Bureau agreed to do this” (SRC Minutes, March 1995).

Membership of Commission Two was used as part of a larger lobbying campaign throughout the merger negotiations (See Section 7.4), whilst membership also provided a means to promote the work of Ouverture and attempt to attract new ‘partners’ from Eastern and Western Europe as a former Ouverture official commented :-

“We used AER as a marketing mechanism for a while, because they have an East-West Committee, which meets once or twice a year. So we would go along to that, because for us, it was a very good way of making contact with representatives of EU and Central Europe” (Case 44).

The extent of AER’s involvement extended to a place on Ecos-Ouverture’s ‘Steering Group’ following the merger, thus institutionalising the network’s relationship with Ecos-Ouverture. Committee Five dealt with ‘Regional Policy, Planning, Infrastructure, Environment and Tourism’. Clearly membership of this committee was of value to SRC, as another means of maintaining contact with DGXVI officials.

7.2.5 - Summary.

Both AER and RETI provided access to Commission officials and the opportunity to push SRC policy priorities. In addition, contact with other SNAs enabled SRC to make an input into debates concerning the role of SNAs within the EU policy process, whilst also acting as a means of obtaining partners for funding, such as Community Initiatives. However, both AER and RETI are ‘peak’ level networks, and engage in lobbying campaigns (such as lobbying for a ‘Committee of the Regions’) which are beyond the scope of more limited networks. Yet, SRC respondents active within less ‘glamorous’ networks, valued participation within them as a means of information exchange with SNAs and Commission officials,

as well as a potential conduit of funding. Whilst Benington and Harvey (1994) find evidence within trans-national networks of “overlapping and interlapping spheres of state, market and civil society” (Benington and Harvey, 1994, p.20), at best evidence of participation within networks beyond political involvement was limited to the rather more technical and issue-specific networks with which SRC engaged, such as ‘Les Esturiales’ which dealt with estuary management.

Participation within trans-national networks was limited to a small-elite of politicians and officials, with politicians tending to have multiple memberships of networks. This parallels the findings of Benington (1997) who comments :-

“it became clear from our research that only a relatively small proportion of local authorities, and only a very small number of councillors and officers within those authorities, are involved in transnational networking. Active involvement is limited to a small inter-locking ‘cosmopolitan elite’ of members and officers” (Benington, 1997, p.10).

The existence of this ‘cosmopolitan elite’ certainly caused resentment among other Labour politicians, with Cllr. Charles Gray being ousted as Leader of the Council in 1992, at least partly as a consequence of this resentment (See Chapter Four, Section 4.4). Members of SRC’s European and International Affairs Committee, also alleged that representation upon some of the ‘lesser’ trans-national networks could be used to reward ‘loyal’ Councillors. Given the subsequent allegations of ‘trips for votes’ on Glasgow City Council¹³⁹, such allegations raise concerns regarding the limiting of such activities to a small elite, and the lack of accountability over their activities.

As ‘peak’ networks, AER and RETI provided significant opportunities to influence the EU policy process. However in both the case of the ‘Objective Two’ lobby and lobbying on behalf of Ouverture, trans-national networks were only utilised as part of a larger lobbying strategy, with the network being used to add

¹³⁹ The ‘trips for votes’ allegations at Glasgow City Council (GCC) will be discussed in Chapter Eight, however it is worth noting at this juncture, that the Leader of GCC who made the allegations was also the Leader of SRC from 1992-96, whilst his deputy on GCC was Cllr. Gerald

legitimacy to SNA policy aims. In the case of the Objective Two lobby, success depended upon the active co-operation of DGXVI and member-state bureaucracies. Whilst AER and RETI provided an institutional legitimacy to both lobbying campaigns, in terms of approaching the Commission and member-states, SRC (and other SNAs) relied heavily upon informal networks developed through the Brussels office and the SNAs "territorial community" (Rhodes, 1988, p.78) such as SRC's access to Millan during the Objective Two lobby. It is to the role of 'informal networks' as a means of influencing the EU policy process, firstly via a Brussels office, and secondly through the use of a 'territorial community' that I now intend to turn.

7.3.1 - SRC's use of a Brussels office as a means of influence.

The functions of sub-national offices in Brussels tend to fulfil a wide range of functions that broadly fall into four main categories (Jeffrey, 1996; John; 1994; Marks and McAdam, 1996). Firstly, a Brussels office provides a base from which to monitor EU policy development and track the progress of legislation through EU institutions. Secondly, sub-national offices enable European officers to lobby Commission officials and MEPs, and more generally establish long-term relationships with officials and MEPs thus ensuring that access can be easily obtained to policy-makers within areas that are of relevance to the SNA office. Thirdly, with the expansion in the number of sub-national offices since the late 1980s, an increasing proportion of an SNA's office workload is spent cultivating contacts with other regional offices, in order to enhance information flow, obtain partners for funding programmes, and generally establish links with regions which have (or are perceived to have) similar interests to the host region. In addition to informal networking between SNA representatives maintaining contacts can also take on a more formal structure. For instance SNA offices frequently hold seminars which promote their region or deal with issues of concern in order to assess opinion amongst other SNAs, and as a consequence

McGrath, who was also his deputy on SRC (1992-96) and Chair of SRC's European and International Affairs Committee.

result in the formation of lobbying alliances upon particular issues¹⁴⁰. Finally, a Brussels office acts as a two way conduit of information, via informing the Council 'back home' of European policy development and funding opportunities whilst also providing the Commission with information concerning local policy and implementation procedures.

Chapter Four outlined the changing role of SRC's Brussels office over time. Initially the office was established primarily to inform the Council of funding opportunities and cultivate relationships with DGV and DGXVI officials in order to improve the Council's access to European funds. However, the creation of the IDO (Integrated Development Operation) in 1988, substantially reduced this area of the office's work due to funding being allocated in a lump sum for a fixed time period, resulting in decisions regarding European funding being taken within the IDO / SEP (Strathclyde European Partnership). Liaison and lobbying of Commission officials with regard to European funding became limited to obtaining funding from smaller-scale funds, such as Community Initiatives or to lobbying when the Structural Fund budget was being re-negotiated, as in the case of the Objective Two lobby, where the Brussels office was heavily involved in organising the lobbying of European Institutions. As a result, the function of the Brussels office had shifted by 1988, from being a mechanism with which to improve the flow of European finance to that of providing an advocacy and liaison service via which SRC could develop links with other SNAs and act as a base from which to lobby the European Commission, European Parliament and latterly, the Committee of the Regions.

Mazey and Richardson (1996) comment that in order to successfully lobby EU Institutions, "the key resource for any group is a reputation for expertise and reliability" (p.42). SRC was the second SNA to formally open an office in

¹⁴⁰ When an SNA office opens in Brussels, it will tend to organise a function in order to make contact with Commission officials, MEPs and other SNAs, in order to put the SNA 'on the map'. An example of this trend was 'Scottish Week at the European Parliament' which was organised

Brussels, and as a consequence was easily able to obtain publicity for the office and gain access to the Commission, in particular DGV and DGXVI officials, due to the novelty and symbolic nature of the venture. In addition, as one of the first SNAs to formally¹⁴¹ adopt the Brussels base approach to lobbying, SRC was not trying to 'make its case' amongst a cacophony of SNA 'voices' also attempting to lobby European Institutions. As a consequence, SRC was able to develop extremely good contacts within DGV and DGXVI, as other SNA lobbyists in Brussels who arrived later were well aware. For example a Scottish lobbyist who was resident in Brussels during the 1980s in a different capacity commented that SRC's representative in Brussels "patrolled the corridors of DGXVI and DGV" (Case, 24), whilst an English lobbyist was also well aware of the contacts SRC had built-up within the Commission by observing that "he (the SRC lobbyist) put Strathclyde on the map, I know a lot of Commission officials who knew about Strathclyde, but didn't know anything else about UK regional activity" (Case 40). Certainly during the 1980's SRC was able to project itself as being generally representative of Scottish SNA opinion. For instance, a Welsh lobbyist observed that "I think that people thought that Strathclyde was more or less Scotland....And of course, at 42 or 43% of the Scottish population¹⁴² it virtually was" (Case 37).

by Scottish Enterprise, shortly after the opening of the Scotland Europa offices in 1992, in order to raise awareness of the office's existence and to establish contacts with a wide range of actors.

¹⁴¹ Birmingham City Council opened its office a couple of months prior to SRC (See Chapter Four; Jeffrey, 1996, p.183) however SRC's European Liaison officer was already providing information on an informal basis to the Council prior to 1984 whilst on secondment from the Highlands and Islands Development Board to DGV. Thus SRC, could not formally open its office until this period of secondment ended, and the official was free to join SRC and lobby openly on its behalf.

¹⁴² SRC tended to account for a slightly higher proportion of the Scottish population than 42 or 43%, with the figure generally to between 45-50% between 1975 and 1996. SRC's population fell from 2.47 million to 2.3 million between 1977 and 1991, a fall of 6.9% (SRC, 1995, p.25), whilst SRC's population was projected to increase by 0.2% between 1992 and 1998 (SRC, 1995, p.37). The Scottish population in 1981, was 5.18 million, therefore SRC (using the 1977 figure) would have accounted for around 48.4 % of the Scottish population, whilst in 1991 the Scottish population had declined slightly to 5.107 million, thus SRC's population share had declined to 45% of the Scottish population (Scottish Office, 1996, p.3). The Scottish population was projected to increase by 0.5% in the period up to 2001 (Scottish Office, 1996, p.3), slightly above the SRC rate of 0.2%.

Thus, SRC's European Liaison Officer was able to develop extensive contacts within the Commission, particularly within DGV and DGXVI due to SRC's policy priorities (See Chapter Four). However with the creation of the IDO in 1988, the opportunity for direct contact between SRC's European Liaison Officer and Commission officials resulting in new funding for the Council was much diminished. With the 1988 Reform of the Structural Funds (See Chapter Five), this situation was true for all SNAs and accordingly the nature of European SNA liaison and of the Brussels office changed as SNAs became more focused upon "adopting a longer-term, more proactive strategy to exert influence over the manner in which EU policies were shaped to ensure access to future programmes attuned to their particular needs" (Goldsmith, 1998, p.218). Accordingly, SRC became increasingly 'engaged' with trans-regional networks, developing informal contacts and networks with a range of Institutions beyond the Commission, including MEPs and latterly the CoR, as well as other SNAs.

In addition, the increasing engagement of SNAs with the EU post-1986, and in particular the rapid increase in the number of SNA representations (Jeffrey, 1996) allied to the scale of some regional offices, such as the German Lander that tend "have a bigger operation which allows specialisation and depth across a range of policy fields" (Jeffrey, 1996, p.192) ensured that SRC faced a significant degree of competition in attempting to obtain access to Commission officials. UK local authorities were at the forefront of this process, as there are more UK SNA representations than from any other member state (John, 1994b). The extent of this trend led the Audit Commission to comment that "an 'embassy' in Brussels is the latest thing in Euro-chic" (Audit Commission, 1991, p.35), although the large number of UK offices can largely be accounted for as an outcome of the extremely fragmented nature of sub-national governance in the UK.

Due to the large number of SNA representations, a number of UK sub-national institutions established collaborative offices (such as the Yorkshire and Humberside regional office) or formed a company to represent institutions within

a region (such as the Lancashire Enterprise Ltd office) (John, 1994b). These representations brought together a number of institutions from within a region, enabling a pooling of resources and a number of staff to be employed focusing on specific policy areas, rather than an individual officer covering the whole raft of policies. In addition, these offices not only represented local government, but also a range of local institutions such as Training and Enterprise Councils and local development agencies, thus paralleling the structures of governance within UK regions. A smaller minority would also incorporate private industry and would rent out office space to SNAs from any member-state in order to finance the operation. Scottish sub-national representation followed this trend of collaboration between various actors across 'regions' through the establishment of the Scotland Europa centre in Brussels, and it is to the structure of this organisation and the role of SRC within it, that I now intend to turn.

7.3.2 - The establishment and functions of Scotland Europa.

Scotland Europa was established in May 1992, to "promote Scotland's interests with the institutions of the European Union" (Scotland Europa, 1996, p.1).

However the process of creating Scotland Europa had been dogged by considerable controversy due to the leaking of a Scottish Office memoranda concerning the composition of a Scottish 'Brussels' office, known as the 'Weeple'¹⁴³ papers'. The Weeple papers set out the benefits and potential pitfalls of establishing a Scottish representation in Brussels. Broadly, the disadvantages of an office in Brussels were perceived to be that such a representation may contradict UK government policy as set out by UKREP in Brussels, and that the organisation could raise opposition within a number of

¹⁴³ 'Weeple' refers to the Under Secretary, Edward Weeple within the Industry Department of the Scottish Office, who was responsible for EC affairs within the Department and wrote the leaked memoranda. A Scotland Europa officer dismissed the accuracy of the Weeple papers, contending that there was no opposition from Whitehall, whilst Northern Ireland had already opened an office and Wales was preparing one. Scotland Europa considered the Weeple papers, as the views of Lord Strathclyde (Weeple's boss) alone, and commented "there was a flurry in the press at the time. That was the only real evidence of resistance at the time, but it wasn't based on the realities of the situation in Brussels, where many regional offices were opening up, including other British offices" (Case 24).

government departments, especially the Treasury and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. However of more direct concern to Scottish local government was that Weeple also considered which Scottish interests / organisations would be considered suitable for the organisation as “a danger existed of allowing interests to be represented which would articulate an alternative or indeed critical view of the Scottish Office’s interpretation of Scotland’s interests” (Mitchell, 1994, p.12). Scottish local government was identified as a potential ‘trouble-maker’.

Weeple recommended that a Scottish representation in Brussels, should take the form of a private company, with the majority shareholding being split between Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, as opposed to any formal Scottish Office involvement as the Secretary of State, Ian Lang, was believed to favour (Mitchell, 1994). This structure would distance the Scottish Office from the project, whilst also enabling it to retain a degree of control and limit the influence of outside interests within the structure. Scotland Europa was ultimately created broadly along the lines proposed by Weeple, with the organisation established as a subsidiary of Scottish Enterprise, whilst having “the full support of the Scottish Office” (Scotland Europa, 1996, p.1).

Scotland Europa provides a wide range of services to its subscribing members, including providing information and intelligence concerning EU policy developments via monthly and ‘flash’ reports to members; arranging briefings to members in Brussels and Scotland on policy areas; enabling members to access EU funding; and, organising members lobbying campaigns in Brussels and “helping members identify and speak to the right people in Brussels about specific issues” (Scotland Europa, 1996, p.1). In terms of promoting a Scottish profile more generally, Scotland Europa attempts to develop contacts with other SNA’s in Brussels, provide a “focal point for Scotland’s interests” within the Scotland Europa centre, and take “initiatives to promote Scotland more generally, [and] bring together Scotland’s representative’s in Europe” (Scotland Europa,

1996, p.2). Resident members (Appendix three provides a list of the 'resident' and 'subscription' members of Scotland Europa, as of July 1996) are free to opt-in to these services according to their own priorities. Nevertheless, Scotland Europa represents a minimalist approach to SNA representation in Brussels, particularly through its early attempts to bring together public, semi-public and private sector organisations within the one organisation. As a consequence, Scotland Europa "is not an aggregative body so much as a loose consortium of diverse interests" (Mitchell, 1994, p. 20).

Scottish local government already disenchanted by the Weeple papers, decided not to participate within the Scotland Europa centre upon its creation, due to Scottish Enterprise's (and implicitly, the Scottish Office's) dominance over Scotland Europa, a position a COSLA official explained in the following terms :-
"The original concept of Scotland Europa, which was broadly to be [an] organisation owned by its members, appealed to COSLA. The Scotland Europa we got, was a wholly owned subsidiary of Scottish Enterprise, which was not the preferred model of COSLA" (Case 56).

Opposition to participation within Scotland Europa was strongest amongst the Regional Councils, with only Lothian Regional Council in favour of participation (three Regional Councils expressed concerns), whilst the District Council's were more evenly split on the issue (Mitchell, 1994). In addition to concerns over the structure of Scotland Europa, the Regional Councils which dealt with the majority of EU issues which impacted upon Scottish local government had already established "functioning European teams" (Case 56) and there was therefore a concern that a COSLA office within Scotland Europa would merely duplicate the work of existing Regional Council offices in Brussels. SRC's European and International Affairs Committee certainly took this view, with the Committee reaching the conclusion that "on balance the reduction in service involved in a loss of a dedicated Strathclyde EC officer in Brussels would far outweigh any benefits through COSLA" (SRC Minutes, September 1992), and accordingly SRC was not in favour of financing a COSLA representation within Scotland Europa.

As for SRC entering into Scotland Europa the Committee reached the position prior to the establishment of Scotland Europa that "it is far from clear what Scottish Enterprise can add to this current service [SRC's European structure] to the Regional Council in the short term" (SRC Minutes, September 1992).

Thus upon the establishment of Scotland Europa, the organisation did not contain any Scottish local government 'resident' members or subscribers to the services it provided¹⁴⁴. The antagonism surrounding the establishment of Scotland Europa was reflected in its initial relations with other Scottish actors in Brussels. This was particularly the case in terms of the relations between Scotland Europa and Scottish MEPs partly due to conspiracy theories circulating amongst Scottish actors in Brussels, regarding the politics behind the establishment of Scotland Europa. These theories tended to take two main forms. Firstly, that Scotland Europa was pushed through by the Scottish Office, to give Ian Lang a publicity coup in the run-up to the 1992 General Election¹⁴⁵. Alternatively, a number of Scottish respondents in Brussels took the view that Scotland Europa was an attempt on the part of Ian Lang / Scottish Office civil servants, to pre-empt Labour party / Constitutional Convention plans for a Scottish representation in Brussels (in the likelihood of a Labour victory), through including the private sector within Scotland Europa, and thus establishing an office that was more suited to Conservative / Scottish Office officials¹⁴⁶ desires. Whichever theory is correct (or neither), the view that the Scottish Office was heavily involved in quickly establishing Scotland Europa prior to the 1992

¹⁴⁴ A resident member within Scotland Europa, is an organisation which leases premises within the Scotland Europa centre, whilst a 'subscriber' is an organisation which does not maintain a presence in Brussels and which obtains information and advice / contacts on lobbying European Institutions on areas of interest to the organisation involved.

¹⁴⁵ Initially Scotland Europa was due to open the day before the General Election, however "there was no way that Lang was going to be in Brussels on the day before a General Election" (Case 23). As a result, the opening of Scotland Europa was put back until May of 1992. However, Scottish Enterprise / Scottish Office clearly could not have known the date of the General Election whilst preparing the opening of the Centre.

¹⁴⁶ The majority of respondents on this issue took the view that Scottish Office officials were behind the rush to establish Scotland Europa, as this fitted in with the likely source of the leaking of the 'Weeple Papers'.

Election was widespread amongst Scottish actors in Brussels (although explanations of the motivations behind this varied), as a Scotland Europa official confirmed :-

“The formal basis upon which we were set up was that we were going to be run as a business and make it break even in three years. If you’re going to run a business and make it break even, you are careful about the costs, [but] there was an over-riding political consideration again to get it set up quickly. The matter of costs went right out of the window, it had to be done. The set-up costs were pretty significantly over-budget....That was political. The Scottish Office said Go, and it happened” (Case 23).

As a result of the events surrounding the establishment of Scotland Europa, initial relations between Scottish actors in Brussels and Scotland Europa were strained and in the case of Scottish MEPs fairly hostile. Evidence of these initial strains became apparent in the build-up to ‘Scottish Week at the European Parliament’, which was an event organised by Scottish Enterprise, to raise awareness of Scotland Europa in Brussels. Figure 7.2, provides a indication of the tensions which existed between Scottish MEPs and Scottish Enterprise / Scotland Europa as expressed by a Scotland Europa official which manifested themselves in the organisation of this event.

Table 7.2 - Tensions between Scotland Europa and Scottish MEP's, in the early days of Scotland Europa.

“When they [Scottish Enterprise] decided to do Scottish Week at the European Parliament, that was a fiasco. Everything went right except the politics. If you do something with Parliament, you get the politics right...The [Scottish Enterprise] board went to Strasbourg in March 1993...We had this meeting between the whole of the Scottish Enterprise board and all of the Scottish MEPs. It was an incredible meeting, it was like a lesson in how not to do things. [The] Scottish MEPs all made little speeches, having a go at the Scottish Enterprise board. By which time the Scottish Enterprise board looked pretty bewildered. And then a couple of them [Scottish Enterprise board members] made speeches to counter the points made by the MEPs”. (Case 23).

Nevertheless Scotland Europa began to establish itself in Brussels, and amongst the Scottish organisations present there, to the extent that SRC relocated its office into the Scotland Europa centre in April 1993. A number of factors lay behind this decision by SRC. Firstly, Grant Baird [the Chief Executive of Scotland Europa] had expressed his “enthusiasm for local government participation” (SRC Minutes, September 1992) within Scotland Europa, and some local authorities had agreed to participate at some point in the future. Secondly, the decision made sense to SRC from an administrative perspective, as the lease was due to end on SRC’s current office whilst SRC’s European Liaison Officer (since 1984) was due to retire. Finally, and perhaps decisively, the inability to perceive what Scottish Enterprise / Scotland Europa could add to SRC’s European policy in the ‘short term’, had changed as the ‘short term’ referred to the 1992 General Election as the following extract from SRC Minutes make clear :-

“The matter [whether to enter into Scotland Europa] has taken some time to move forward for a number of reasons, not least in order that full account could be taken of the outcome of the General Election, since all of the Opposition parties had indicated a commitment, inter alia, to establishing a strong Scottish representative office in Brussels (which might or might not have built upon the Scotland Europa concept). It is now of course clear that there will be no early establishment of a Scottish Parliament with [a] consequential Scottish representation in Brussels and it is therefore appropriate to return to detailed consideration of local government representation, whether through Scotland Europa or in other ways” (SRC Minutes, September 1992).

The decision by SRC to locate its representative office within Scotland Europa was a recognition that the nature of sub-national lobbying had changed considerably and that the ‘lone ranger’ approach to Brussels representation was no longer appropriate as the emphasis of sub-national lobbying shifted from obtaining EU funding to the influencing of legislation. Through entering Scotland Europa, SRC would be able to share information and contacts with other Scottish organisations, as well as benefit from the general Scottish persona of the centre, as it became recognised as the focus of Scottish activity in Brussels. By the end

of the 1993, there were four Scottish local government 'resident' members of Scotland Europa¹⁴⁷, and it is to the role of SRC within Scotland Europa from 1993 to 1996, that I now turn.

7.3.3 - SRC and Scotland Europa.

As the focus of SRC's Brussels office shifted (from accessing funds to influencing legislation, participating within trans-regional networks, and establishing informal networks with other SNAs), co-operating with partners within Scotland Europa and benefiting from the 'Scottish persona' of Scotland Europa also became an integral element of SRC's European policy. Initially the co-operation between Scotland Europa and its resident partners was limited to the informal sharing of information within the Centre, however with a change of Chief Executive within Scotland Europa, co-operation began to become more formal notably through the creation of 'specialist groups' dealing with the environment, technology, and education and training. These groups would bring together Scots resident in Brussels, from MEPs and Commission officials to Scotland Europa members to discuss a particular policy area. In addition, the Scotland Europa resident members began to meet fortnightly to outline their respective work programmes and to assess any areas of common interest, as a Scotland Europa official explained as follows :-

"Your constituents here are each pursuing their own independent objectives, the difference is that here they are all under the same roof, there is a commonality in that they all have a Scottish interest. There is a lot of information sharing that goes on, for that which can be shared, and [names a Scotland Europa official] has done a lot to inculcate a team atmosphere amongst the representatives of the various tenants here. And every two weeks, we sit round a table,...and we say to each other, what we have done in the previous two weeks and what we are going to be doing in the coming two weeks. And that has crossovers of all kinds, sometimes which you wouldn't even dream of" (Case 24).

¹⁴⁷ The four Scottish local government 'resident' members of Scotland Europa at this time were : Strathclyde Regional Council; COSLA; East of Scotland European Consortium (ESEC) comprising Central, Fife, Lothian and Tayside Regional Councils; and Highland Regional Council (the Highland Council representative also negotiated "representation contracts" (Case 23) with Borders, Dumfries and Galloway and Grampian Regional Councils).

Scotland Europa certainly seeks to foster contact between Scottish actors in Brussels. For instance the Centre constantly updates a booklet named 'Jock Tamson's Bairns', which is "a network listing of Scots and those with strong Scottish connections" (Scotland Europa, 1996b, p.1) resident in Brussels and Luxembourg¹⁴⁸. This booklet tended to be widely used, as a means of gaining information from an Institution where no previous contacts existed. For example a Scottish Commission official described his use of 'Jock Tamson's Bairns' in the following terms :-

"You're probably aware of 'Jock Tamson's Bairns'. We use that, I think its used quite heavily. Any issue that somebody is finding difficult or strained, they can resort to phoning up the nearest member of the Scottish Mafia and sorting out or at least getting a way round it" (Case 33).

Lobbyists from other SNAs would frequently refer to the existence of a Scottish lobby, and to the role of Scotland Europa in providing a focus to Scottish activity in Brussels, whilst Commission officials valued the Centre as a source of local information (via seminars and policy papers) and as a means of arranging meetings with Scottish representatives. Whilst representatives from within Scotland Europa were aware of this perception amongst external actors, they were also aware of the fragmented nature of Scottish representation in Brussels, as opposed to the concerted lobbying campaigns propagated by the German Lander or the 'fabled' Irish¹⁴⁹. A Scotland Europa official characterised the 'Scottish lobby' in Brussels as follows :-

"Scotland Europa is the focal point of Scottish lobbying, there is a Scottish lobby in the sense that most of the Scottish lobbying is conducted out of the same office. The people on the receiving end, the people in the Commission, think that there is a Scottish lobby, because every time they get lobbied by Scotland..it happens in the same place. Scotland Europa does most of it's work for it's members. The Commission or EP view is its the Scottish lobby again. The sense in which there isn't a Scottish lobby, is that there isn't a lobby covering the interests of the whole of Scotland...There isn't any political direction" (Case 23).

¹⁴⁸ In October 1996, Jock Tamson's Bairns consisted of 311 Scottish contacts in Brussels and Luxembourg, with 268 resident in Brussels and 43 resident in Luxembourg.

¹⁴⁹ For a discussssion of engagement with the Structural Funds within the Irish Republic during the 1980's, see Laffan, B (1989).

From the perspective of SRC's European Liaison officer within Scotland Europa, the 'Scottish card' (where a coalition of Scottish interests existed) was a useful means of lobbying European Institutions, where there was a common interest amongst Scottish actors within Scotland Europa. More generally, the SRC representative would co-operate closely with the other Scottish local government representatives within Scotland Europa, with the extent of collaboration ranging from the sharing of information and policy positions to avoiding a duplication of activity (for example, not attending the same EP Committee meeting) and combining lobbying efforts where mutual interests existed. Such co-operation made sense, due to the proliferation of Scottish SNA representation in Brussels, whilst Scotland Europa enabled co-operation to take place. The COSLA representative in Brussels at the time, summarised the position accordingly :-

"Obviously as the largest council in Scotland, we worked closely with Strathclyde, just as we worked with other councils. Size was not an issue, but obviously working in Brussels with Strathclyde across the corridor, we could co-ordinate activity to make sure that [the SRC representative] and I were working effectively" (Case 56).

7.3.4 - Summary.

The opening of an SRC representative office in 1984, occurred at a time when SNA representation in Brussels was virtually non-existent. This enabled SRC to develop a wide range of contacts within the Commission (particularly DGV and DGXVI), in order to access European funds. With the increasing representation of SNAs in Brussels following the introduction of the 'Single European Act' and the introduction of programming and partnership within Strathclyde, the utility of the Brussels office diminished as a means of leveraging European funds. As a result, the remit of SRC's representative office shifted to becoming increasingly focused upon gaining access to the European policy process, through participation within trans-regional networks, maintaining contacts within European Institutions and developing contacts with other SNAs in Europe, particularly those with agendas similar to SRC, such as regions involved within RETI or Ouverture.

However, SNAs in Brussels not only attempt to co-operate with each other, but also compete with each other, in terms of gaining access to decision-makers and accessing funds that can still be lobbied for in Brussels, such as Community Initiatives. In many respects, the mobilisation of SNAs onto the European policy process can be viewed as a form of 'place competition' (Harvey, 1989¹⁵⁰) within the European political arena. The eventual participation of SRC within Scotland Europa represented a recognition of the changing nature of SNA representation in Brussels by SRC, and of the need for collaboration with other actors in order to lobby effectively. Scotland Europa provided a 'common shop front' for Scottish interests, and while it was frequently perceived as being a 'Scottish' lobby, in effect it provided a means whereby Scottish interests could collaborate where a common interest existed whilst also respecting the independence of Centre's members. This loose collaboration of Scottish actors in Brussels is a reflection of the constitutional tensions of Scotland's position within a 'union state' (Mitchell, 1996), as the controversies surrounding the establishment of Scotland Europa centre clearly illustrated.

Nevertheless, the competition between SNAs in Brussels for access to European Institutions ensured that Scottish actors within Scotland Europa began to increasingly co-operate through sharing information and attempting to lobby jointly where possible. Strathclyde Regional Council was thus able to benefit from the facilities provided by Scotland Europa, and liaise closely with other Scottish local government representatives. However the use of the 'Scottish' card as a means of gaining access to Institutions or lobbying was only one option amongst a range of alternative methods with which to influence the European policy process. Where a common Scottish interest did exist, SRC would participate within these lobbying campaigns. However where no common interest existed or a particular issue required a pan-European lobby (such as the

¹⁵⁰ 'Place competition' is not a new phenomenon in Strathclyde (and especially Glasgow), where the creation of a cosmopolitan image for Glasgow, was part of a strategy to attract inward global investment to Glasgow during the 1980's (see, Booth and Boyle, 1993, and Paddison, 1993 for an account of these processes in Glasgow).

Objective Two lobby), then SRC would utilise contacts within trans-regional networks, and / or informal networks. As SRC's European Liaison Officer stated :-

"as long as the Strathclyde voice is heard, I don't mind if it's heard through Scotland Europa, through RETI or AER, as long as it's heard. I think it doesn't do you any discredit, that you're involved in a number of different interests" (Case 13).

This attitude was no different to the approach of other SNAs in Brussels, and it is to SRC's use of informal networks as part of a lobbying campaign that I now intend to turn.

7.4.1 - SRC and informal networks.

The example of the Objective Two lobby fronted by SRC, illustrated that whilst participation within formal, trans-regional networks are an important means of gaining access to decision-makers and obtaining legitimacy within the decision-making process, the actual lobbying takes place predominantly through informal channels. More generally, the more mundane day-to-day activity of SNA representatives requires cultivating informal contacts with Commission officials, in order to gain the 'inside track' on policy developments within the Commission. Numerous analyses of effective Commission lobbying stress the importance of 'advance intelligence' and consequently of maintaining good links with Commission officials¹⁵¹. For instance, Mazey and Richardson (1996) comment that :-

"there is no substitute for 'advance intelligence' to detect the very earliest stages of a change in policy - the beginnings of a change in 'policy fashion'. It is at the

¹⁵¹ One method pursued by SNA's and national governments in order to ascertain policy developments within the Commission at an early stage, and in some cases to plant them, was to pursue a policy of seconding officials to the European Commission. This was a policy which SRC followed, with the Council regularly having at least one official within either DGV or DGXVI at any one time. Thus secondees can provide an important means of access into the Commission bureaucracy at the early stages of policy formulation, as the following comments from a Scotland Europa official illustrate :-

"We had the good fortune to have one of our secondees, who actually drafted one of the important articles on the ESF. You treat that carefully, because they're working for the Commission, but we're still paying their wages at the end of the month. We knew exactly what was happening with Article 6 of the ESF formulations" (Case 24).

problem identification and options-search stage of the policy process that lobbying has always been most effective - and this is also true for the EU" (Mazey and Richardson, 1996, p.208).

However, once a policy moves beyond these early stages, SNA lobbyists will also utilise contacts within the European Parliament and latterly, the Committee of the Regions. In addition, SNAs will also attempt to lobby their own domestic governments upon a particular issue, when it reaches the Council of Ministers. Accordingly, it is possible to denote a hierarchy of informal networks, which operate at a variety of geographical scales, and which would become operational depending upon the type of issue involved. In the case of SRC, the Council was involved within three main types of informal networks, which can be categorised as :- Brussels networks; Scottish networks; and, Strathclyde wide networks.

7.4.2 - Informal 'Brussels' Networks.

As has been stated above, the 'early' establishment of a Brussels office, enabled SRC to get a 'headstart' in terms of establishing contacts within the Commission, primarily DGV and DGXVI, as the primary motivation for the office prior to 1988 was to obtain European finance. Thus, SRC was well recognised amongst other SNA lobbyists and Commission officials to have strong connections within both Directorates-General, whilst the appointment of Bruce Millan only served to further the perceived entrenchment of SRC interests within DGXVI, as the comments of a Scotland Europa official illustrate :-

"Strathclyde had somebody here since the early 1980s, the name of Strathclyde was and is well-known in DGXVI, DGV and elsewhere. The political and economic strength of Strathclyde Regional Council, was known, recognised, acknowledged....To many people in the Commission, Strathclyde Regional Council was Scotland...Strathclyde was powerful in their own right, it also had at the time, a straight track to the Commissioner for Regional Policy, which was not to be ignored. And when you had that, then all your foot soldiers throughout DGXVI recognised that, and without saying that they bent over backwards to accommodate Strathclyde which was not the case, they recognised and acknowledged that they were dealing with a Region in which their Commissioner previously had a constituency" (Case 24).

As the nature of SRC's office in Brussels changed, so the focus of lobbying expanded to include other DGs, such as Environment. However, SRC's most extensive contacts continued to be located in DGV and DGXVI. In addition, SRC sought to extend its contacts with other SNAs, particularly SNAs which SRC had come into contact with through trans-regional networks. Through collaboration with other SNAs, each 'region' could benefit by jointly lobbying their own respective contacts within the Commission, European Parliament and national governments upon a particular issue, with the Objective Two lobby being a prime example of such an initiative. Whilst a primary motivation for contact with Commission officials would be to obtain information, the European Liaison officer would also attempt to promote existing practice and policy within SRC, provide information for Commission officials relating to Strathclyde and attempt to obtain extra funding for SRC projects. SRC's European Liaison Officer described this activity in the following manner :-

"The Brussels office would be used to promote a project, or to make sure the project was getting to the right people in the Commission, if it was that kind of project for a specific budget - vandalism, anti-racism, a culture project or whatever" (Case 13).

In terms of contacts with the European Parliament and latterly the Committee of the Regions, SRC would tend to approach representatives within the Strathclyde area, i.e. MEPs with a constituency within SRC's boundaries or CoR representatives who were also Councillors within SRC¹⁵². All of the Labour MEPs (and to a lesser extent the SNP MEP) would be in regular contact with the SRC European Liaison Officer and senior SRC Councillors regarding SRC policies, whilst both of SRC's representatives on the Committee of the Regions were members of the Council's 'European and International Affairs Committee'.

¹⁵² The constituencies of five of Scotland's eight MEP's lay either wholly or partly within SRC's boundaries. These were Glasgow, Highlands and Islands, South of Scotland, Strathclyde East and, Strathclyde West. For the majority of the period considered here (1984-96), four of these MEP's were Labour, whilst the Highlands and Islands was held by the SNP (See Lynch (1994) and Denver (1994) for a discussion of the Scottish outcomes of EP elections from 1979 to 1994, and in particular for the two elections of most relevance here, 1989 and 1994.

The close contact between SRC and Strathclyde based MEPs was summed up by SRC's European Liaison Officer in the following manner :-

"Basically, we just keep in touch on a weekly basis. And if there were any big issues I wanted them to raise, I would go and see them about it, or if there was anything they felt the local authority should know about, that had come up in their daily work, they would let me know" (Case 13).

Thus, MEPs could fulfill a number of functions for SRC, such as obtaining information regarding Commission policies and providing intelligence of possible changes in Commission policy. Additionally, MEPs could raise the profile or politicise an issue on SRC's behalf, in order to put pressure upon the Commission or Council of Ministers. Despite having two CoR members within SRC, contact between these members and SRC was rather more limited. In part this was due to the CoR being a new institution which was still unproven in terms of the extent of its influence¹⁵³. However, whilst SRC's European Liaison Officer did have contact with the Leader of the UK delegation (an SRC Councillor and former Leader of SRC), this was limited due to internal political tensions within SRC¹⁵⁴, whilst the other member had a less prominent role within CoR.

The closeness of relations between SRC and Strathclyde MEPs was clearly exemplified in SRC's attempts to obtain a 'derogation' from a directive dealing with 'Urban Waste Water'. SRC had attempted to lobby through its contacts with DGXI at an earlier stage, however, the issue had advanced through the policy process to reach the European Parliament. SRC had not been able to build any alliances with other SNAs whilst DGXI did not wish to allow a 'get-out clause' for SRC within the legislation. As a consequence, SRC made representations to all of the Strathclyde based MEPs, and in particular to the MEP for Strathclyde East

¹⁵³ The role of the CoR as a means of influencing the European policy process will be considered in Chapter Eight, as the CoR came more to prominence following the reorganisation of local government in 1996.

¹⁵⁴ These 'internal political tensions' within the Labour group on SRC, were fairly apparent as Cllr Charles Gray (then Leader of the UK Delegation to the CoR) had been ousted as Leader by the subsequent Leader of SRC.

who was the Chair of the EP's Environment Committee, which would deal with the legislation. Unfortunately for SRC, the MEP took the view that :-

"nobody was going to give a regional authority a derogation from such an important directive. Beside which, all the scientific evidence which was available to me, ran counter to the idea that you could still dump sewage in the sea" (Case 18).

Despite this, SRC continued to pursue their case, by hiring a consultant to investigate the effects of the legislation, whilst the Leader of SRC "actually convened a meeting in Strathclyde House so that I could come and explain what was going on" (Case 18). Whilst the case of the Urban Waste Water Directive exemplified the lengths which SRC was prepared to go in order to influence EU policy and of the importance of 'informal networks', this instance also highlights the necessity for support from other SNAs, and especially from central government and / or the Commission, when attempting to influence the EU policy process.

The 'informal networks' which SRC built up in Brussels would address two main types of lobbying. Firstly, the Brussels office would co-ordinate the lobbying of Commission officials when dealing with the day-to-day operation of European policies and programmes. Secondly, the Brussels office and senior SRC politicians and officials would engage in a concerted lobbying campaign involving the lobbying of Commission officials, Commissioners, MEPs, CoR representatives, national government (primarily the Scottish Office), alongside a similar strategy by other SNAs involved with the same issue through their contacts. Examples of lobbies of this kind undertaken by SRC include the Objective Two lobby and the campaign to retain control over Ecos-Ouverture during the merger negotiations (See Chapter Six, Section 4.1).

7.4.3 - Informal 'Scottish' networks.

A 'Scottish' network or lobby involving SRC with regard to European issues would comprise a wide variety of institutions, such as COSLA, Scottish MEPs,

the Scottish Office (at official and political level), Scottish (and Highlands and Islands) Enterprise, Scotland Europa (and the partners within Scotland Europa) and a wide range of organisations involved within the Structural Fund partnerships in Scotland. Whilst conducting field-work within the European policy sphere in Scotland, there was a constant awareness of the close links between officials and politicians within organisations dealing with European policy. Respondents themselves frequently drew attention to this feature of the policy environment in Scotland, as the following quotes from a range of respondents illustrate :-

“Even at times when the relationship generally has been at rock bottom, I think on some of the practical things, it’s been possible at official level, and indeed at a political level as well, to get a reasonable degree of co-operation” (Former European Commissioner, Case 45).

“There is a different Scottish culture, there is a different way of doing things in Scotland. It is partly because Scotland is much smaller, you will always find that you meet the same people, and you build up a working relationship. In Scotland, it’s a small, I dread to call it elite, but the decision-makers in Scotland are much smaller, therefore you have to work more closely” (COSLA official, Case 56).

“If you want me to summarise in a sentence, what is the difference between Scotland and England, it is that Scotland is a giant village” (Scottish Office official, Case 42).

MacLeod (1996) contends that the “economic development community within Scotland operates like a village....And as with most villages, this is characterised by a certain degree of informality, reciprocity of information, relative temporal stability and community of association which serves to reinforce the distinctive politico-institutional arrangements” (MacLeod, 1996, p.17). It is certainly possible to discern similar trends within the European policy community in Scotland¹⁵⁵, for instance, frequent contact between European policy-makers across tiers of government and governance; regular exchange of information regarding policy (for example, SRC - Scottish Office exchange of information during the Objective

Two lobby); a small policy-elite in key positions over a long period of time, particularly at official level; and finally, distinctive institutional outcomes, such as, the Strathclyde European Partnership. In terms of European policy, an issue which would consistently mobilise the Scottish network was when allocations were being negotiated for Scotland's eligibility and share of the Structural Funds, given that Scottish actors would be keen to see as large a financial contribution coming to Scotland as possible. A senior official within the Strathclyde European Partnership summed up the consensus across all tiers of Scottish government and governance when it comes to lobbying for Scotland's share of the Structural Funds in the following manner :-

"What you find on the Structural Funds, is that the people across Scotland are speaking more or less with the same voice, so there isn't really any disagreement between the STUC or the CBI, or the local authorities or the Scottish Office, or Scottish Enterprise on the Structural Funds. There will be debates and tensions about how it should be used in terms of individual projects, but in terms of the bigger argument, people are really speaking with one voice" (Case 43).

An example of SRC acting in concert with the 'Scottish network' both within Scotland and in Brussels, was the lobbying campaign to obtain an Objective One designation for Argyll and Bute. The Highlands and Islands had obtained the designation of an Objective One region for the period 1994 to 1999. However, the European Commission's designation of the Highlands and Islands was based upon the NUTS II categorisation¹⁵⁶ of the Highlands and Islands, however this classification excluded Argyll and Bute, Arran and Cumbrae from Objective One status, as these areas came under the Strathclyde / Dumfries and Galloway NUTS II region. The excluded areas came within the boundaries of Strathclyde Regional Council and accordingly SRC became the prime mover behind a lobby

¹⁵⁵ Midwinter et.al. (1991) also comment on the stable, restricted elite membership of "functional policy communities which are territorially differentiated or organised separately in Scotland" being symptomatic of the "Scottish style" of governance (Midwinter et.al., 1991, p.202).

¹⁵⁶ NUTS stands for the 'Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics', which designates three categories of territorial division :- NUTS 1, 2 and 3. The European Commission relies upon member-state statistics in order to create this categorisation, and accordingly there is no uniform system of classification across the EU. In the case of the UK, NUTS 1 regions are based upon the UK government's 'standard planning regions', NUTS 2 upon groupings of counties and local

to obtain Objective One designation for these areas. SRC's case rested upon three main premises. Firstly, that Argyll, Bute, Arran and the Cumbraes fell within the Highlands and Enterprise area. Secondly, that the area shared a number of common characteristics with the designated Highlands and Islands area such as, peripherality, low population density and declining industries (agriculture, fisheries etc.). Thirdly, SRC produced a statistical report which concluded that the excluded areas were actually poorer than the designated Objective One area, with the "GDP per capita calculated for Argyll and Bute only 67.2% of the European average and 87.4% of the Highlands and Islands (NUTS 2) figure" (SRC Minutes, July 1993).

This statistical report formed a key part of SRC's lobbying campaigns, as the Leader of the Council made a representation to the Secretary of State for Scotland, whilst the statistical report was sent to the Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary, and President of Board of Trade. SRC's Leader also met Bruce Millan, the Senior Official within UKREP, John Kerr (also a Scot), and a number of senior Commission officials (SRC Minutes, July 1993). Finally, the SNP MEP for the Highlands and Islands, Winnie Ewing, tabled an amendment within the European Parliament "which proposed the extension of the Highlands and Islands area to be covered by Objective One to cover the whole Highlands and Islands Enterprise area" (SRC Minutes, July 1993). The EP passed the amendment by 227 to 27 votes despite Commission opposition, with all the Scottish MEPs voting for the amendment. The lobby also had the support of COSLA, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, CBI, STUC, Grampian Regional Council and a number of district councils affected by the issue. The Council of Ministers accepted the inclusion of Argyll and Bute, Arran and the Cumbraes within the Highlands and Islands Objective One area in July 1993.

authorities, whilst NUTS 3 represent individual counties or local authorities. For a discussion of the NUTS classification scheme, see Eurostat, 1989, and European Commission, 1991.

As has been noted above with regard to the Objective Two lobby, it is not possible to assess the influence of the lobby given the closed nature of decision-making within the Council of Ministers. Nevertheless, the lobby appeared to have the support of the UK government on this issue, for instance the Scottish Secretary wrote to the Leader of SRC stating that :-

“I have consistently acknowledged the desirability of extending Objective One status beyond the statistically defined NUTS 2 boundaries proposed by the Commission” (SRC Minutes, July 1993).

The Scottish territorial network in Scotland and Brussels appeared to be able to influence EU decision-making in this instance. However, it is important not to over-estimate the value of this territorial network. Scottish actors are only able to come together and co-operate in a lobbying campaign when a wide number of varied institutional interests are able to find a common interest or policy position. In addition, the Scottish network was severely constrained through the inability of the Scottish Office to directly lobby on behalf of Scottish interests, as a result of being a Department within the UK government. As a consequence, other Scottish institutions such as regional councils conducted publicity and lobbying campaigns, whilst the Scottish Office provided informal lobbying, information and tacit support. The Scottish territorial network also provides a constant flow of information between institutions involved in European policy. As a result, participation within the Scottish network also acted as a ‘brake’ on independent lobbying campaigns, in order to avoid the alienation of other interests, in particular, Scottish Office interests. McAteer and Mitchell’s (1996) comment that “a situation developed whereby independent action was carried out but within limits that were appreciated and accepted by the Scottish Office” (McAteer and Mitchell, 1996, p.24) describes the relationship between the Scottish network and the Scottish Office particularly well. Similarly Martin and Pearce (1999) comment that in contrast to England:

“structural fund programmes in Scotland are managed by ‘independent secretariats’ which are seen as having helped minimise conflict between local and central government. These factors have combined to create relatively ‘thick’ policy networks in Wales and Scotland which are serviced by well resourced and

effective 'European offices' in Brussels that have been able to build up strong links with EU institutions and regions in other member states". (Martin and Pearce, 1999, p.46).

Once again, it is worth emphasising the importance of Commission or national government support for any attempt to influence EU policy-making. Without such support SNA lobbying is unlikely to be successful once a policy moves beyond the early stage of development amongst Commission officials, unless SNAs such as the German Lander have access to the Council of Ministers. In contrast, Bomberg (1994) considered the Scottish network in terms of Environmental policy to be relatively ineffective due to 'structural and constitutional' constraints, whilst the "personal links among Scots are erratic and unpredictable; they can not substitute for the institutionalised representation on the Council of Ministers. Moreover, the importance of 'personal connections' on policy formulations is probably overstated by network participants" (Bomberg, 1994, p.55). In general, Bomberg considers the Scottish network as being 'peripheral' both to UK and EU policy networks.

This is a rather harsh assessment of the value of the Scottish network. Whilst lack of access to the Council of Ministers (not many SNAs enjoy access to the Council of Ministers) and the position of the Scottish Office as a relatively minor department within UK government, may be considered as detrimental to Scottish SNA lobbies, the close relations between SRC and the Scottish Office provided a significant means of access to information for SRC representatives. Equally, it is unlikely that SNAs in the rest of the UK experienced as close relations with a central government department as the mutually beneficial relationship that Scottish SNAs developed with the Scottish Office, within the sphere of European policy (see McAteer and Mitchell, 1996). In relation to this point, where Scottish interests do coalesce as in the case of the Argyll and Bute lobby, the Scottish network can provide an extremely useful means of access to the EU policy process. Finally, in conducting fieldwork amongst Scottish actors involved in European policy, the contacts between individuals located within a variety of

institutions, including the Scottish Office, were found to be anything but 'erratic and unpredictable'. Instead, frequent contact amongst a wide range of officials and politicians cutting across a range of policy areas was apparent throughout the process of conducting interviews¹⁵⁷.

To summarise, the Scottish network provided a valuable means of access to information for SRC. In addition, Scottish actors involved in European policy became increasingly inter-connected over time, due to the necessity of co-operation in influencing the EU policy process, most notably within Scotland Europa. However, for SRC and the Scottish network to engage in lobbying campaigns required a common interest to exist, i.e. that a common interest existed between SRC and the Scottish Office. Where such a situation did not arise, then co-operation would continue through contact between a range of institutions outlining their policy positions and the sharing of information. Thus for SRC the Scottish network was only one network amongst a range of options to be utilised when attempting to influence EU policy. However, the importance of the Scottish territorial community as a means of articulating a policy position (i.e. representing a policy position as the 'Scottish' policy position) and of access to European Institutions, intensified over time particularly through the establishment of Scotland Europa and as a result of the need to compete with the increasing number of SNAs represented in Brussels.

7.4.4 - Strathclyde-wide networks.

In addition to a Scottish network, SRC was also a focal point for information and advice with regard to European policy within Strathclyde. The Strathclyde network would involve a wide range of actors at the local level¹⁵⁸ with an interest in European policy, such as local authorities, Scottish Enterprise / LEC's,

¹⁵⁷ On an anecdotal level, on a number of occasions when conducting interviews, respondents were aware of interviews I had conducted previously within other institutions, including the Scottish Office.

¹⁵⁸ For a wide ranging discussion of Strathclyde elites, and the concordance in attitudes amongst these elites and co-operation between institutions at the local level in Strathclyde, see Christopoulos (1996).

voluntary sector organisations, chambers of commerce, STUC and Strathclyde-based MEP's¹⁵⁹. Contact between institutions at this scale would frequently relate to advice on accessing European funding, information on European policy developments and the policy of institutions on particular issues. Initially, SRC was the main source of advice for information on obtaining European funds. However, with the establishment of the Strathclyde European Partnership (SEP), the partnership became the main contact for such advice. An SRC official summarised the role of the SRC within the Strathclyde network as follows :-

“Right through the 1980s, local authorities were seen as a source of knowledge and intelligence on European issues, and that remained the case right to the end. But increasingly when it came to the funding, with the creation of the SEP, the role of giving general advice about how to get European money really belonged to that unit” (Case 12).

The Strathclyde network enabled participants to develop joint positions regarding particular issues prior to the Scottish level, and to a limited extent to co-operate to further their own interests. For instance, the European Parliament's 'Regional Policy Committee' had never had a Scottish representative upon it, in contrast to the Welsh position where Wyn David's (MEP) membership (and Vice-Chairmanship) of this committee had “been extremely useful for South Wales” (McAteer and Mitchell, 1996, p.21). Part of the explanation for the lack of Scottish representation on this committee may have been due to having “had Bruce Millan as Commissioner, and they [Strathclyde] had good regional representation” (Case 17), resulting in no Scottish MEP feeling that there was a direct need to be on the Regional Policy Committee. However, places on the Committee were due to become vacant in December 1996, and it became clear whilst interviewing that representatives from institutions around Strathclyde, such as SEP, Ecos-Ouverture and a number of the 'new' unitary authorities were keen to place a particular Strathclyde-based MEP on this committee. Thus, a number of respondents had made representations to this MEP who “took a bit of

¹⁵⁹ For instance, Strathclyde-based MEPs would frequently attend the meetings of SRC's 'European and International Affairs Committee', and the European committees of district councils, where they would ask questions of the Council's policy, despite not being Councillors.

persuasion” (Case 43) despite other Scottish MEPs expressing an interest in joining the Committee. Accordingly, the ‘chosen’ MEP became a member of the Committee at the beginning of 1997. A senior official described the need to persuade this particular MEP to join the committee in the following terms :-

“We’ve now got [names a Strathclyde MEP] onto the EP’s Regional Policy Committee. Now we’ve never previously had a Scottish member on that Committee, which is crazy, as that is a very important committee for us...Basically a number of people said to him, somebody has got to do it, and you are the one that knows most about it. We saw that committee as a gap in our ability to influence. So, we’ve got an MEP now who is on the right committee, and who is building up more of a knowledge of this area. And he will work much better with WoSEC¹⁶⁰, COSLA and the others” (Case 43).

Thus a network of actors at the local level in Strathclyde with an involvement in European policy, would interact frequently not only in terms of providing information and advice, but also in order to protect the influence of Strathclyde as a ‘region’ and as a corollary Scottish interests, in order to maintain their access into the European policy process.

7.5 - Conclusions.

Analyses of multi-level governance have tended to focus upon institutional outcomes as a result of sub-national mobilisation with regard to European policies, most notably, with regard to the implementation of partnership within the Structural Fund regulations. However, it became evident when attempting to analyse SRC’s attempts to influence the EU policy process that informal networks were at least of equal importance in understanding the mechanisms via which SRC attempted to influence EU decision-making. This is not to decry the value of SRC participation within institutional structures. For instance, membership of trans-national networks provided SRC with a range of benefits, such as access to Commission officials; a means of developing contacts with other SNAs and obtaining ‘partners’ for EU funding; legitimisation for lobbying

¹⁶⁰ WOSEC refers to the ‘West of Scotland European Consortium’ which represented the European interests of West of Scotland local authorities following local government reorganisation in 1996.

campaigns through the backing of a network, and correspondingly of all its SNA members; and, as a vehicle for the promotion and protection of SRC policies (such as Ecos-Ouverture) vis-à-vis outside interests. However, trans-national networks can at times resemble little more than talking-shops, particularly to SNAs that are not close to the central decision-making centres within such networks.

The ability of SNAs to obtain access to the decision-making heart of networks is likely to be a product of the resources they bring in, such as reputation as a key SNA actor within Europe, informational resources, size and political profile of the SNA etc. As a consequence, 'peak level' networks which attempt to influence EU policy on a regular basis, tend to be dominated by the most prominent SNAs within Europe, such as the German Lander and the Spanish Autonomous Communities. The ability of SRC to gain access to the decision-making centres of trans-national networks such as AER, was due to the reputation which SRC had cultivated amongst SNAs in Brussels over a period of time, allied to the perceived influence of SRC within DG's V and XVI, which are typically of most interest to SNAs.

The explosion of regional representation in Brussels since the late 1980s (Jeffrey, 1996), is also symptomatic of the importance which SNAs place on developing informal contacts with a wide range of actors involved in European policy-making. The early establishment of SRC's Brussels office gave the Council a considerable advantage over SNAs that arrived later, particularly in terms of the establishment of considerable contacts within the Commission, accessing European funds and developing a profile for the region in Brussels. However, the shift in emphasis of sub-national representations in Brussels post-1988, away from European funding and the increased competition (as well as collaboration) between SNAs in Brussels, was reflected in SRC's decision to relocate within the Scotland Europa centre.

The importance of the Scottish 'territorial community' to SRC's European policies increased over time. Whilst SRC was largely able to engage in bi-lateral negotiations with the Commission in the early 1980s for funding packages, as the extent of the involvement increased and structures became more systematic (for example, the IDO), co-operation with Scottish partners and in particular the Scottish Office became increasingly important. SRC engaged in a largely co-operative relationship with the Scottish Office (despite political tensions) with a significant degree of information sharing and Scottish Office support for SRC policies (such as, the Objective Two lobby), despite the Scottish Office being apparently constrained by its constitutional position. This is not to deny that tensions did exist. The Scottish 'territorial network' could only be effective when interests between a range of European policy 'stakeholders' coalesced. The controversies surrounding the establishment of the Scotland Europa centre provide an indication of the tensions which did exist. Nevertheless, SRC's eventual participation within the Scotland Europa centre enabled the Council to benefit from a Scottish profile where interests merged to present a policy position as the 'Scottish' position. Despite initial tensions, the Scotland Europa centre enabled increased co-operation to occur between Scottish representatives in Brussels (especially local government representatives), whilst also adding a cohesiveness to the 'Scottish lobby' in Brussels.

However the reliance of SRC (and SNAs more generally) upon informal networks, trans-regional networks and sub-national representations highlights the relatively weak position of such actors within the European policy process, with the exception of SNAs which are able to influence European policy through constitutional measures entrenched at the domestic level (See Chapter Two). SNAs rely upon early intelligence and contacts with Commission officials, in order to influence policy prior to the formal policy-making process, due to the weakness of SNAs at that stage. Beyond this, for an SNA to be successful usually requires the support (tacit or otherwise) of national governments or the Commission, whilst SNAs may be viewed as being left as proxy campaigners for

their backers through raising the political temperature of an issue, via lobbying campaigns (for example, the Objective Two lobby). Where SNAs act independently or without Commission / national government support, then such campaigns are unlikely to be successful in the short term, thus perhaps explaining the role of networks such as AER in pursuing a long-term political strategy with regard to issues such as the establishment of the CoR. However, SNAs do not engage in mobilising at the European level, in order to influence the European policy process alone. A substantial part of any SNAs activity in Brussels (including SRC), relates to promoting the SNA / region itself and to protect current gains.

Significant opportunities exist for SNAs to influence the European policy process, however the ability to do so varies depending upon the type of issue involved, the stage the issue has reached in the policy process, and the support which exists for the SNA policy position. Of particular importance is whether or not an SNA (or more likely a network / group of SNAs) can rely upon the support of DGs within the Commission or a member-state(s) and act in alliance with such parties. As a result, SNAs can be perceived as inhabiting a “complex, multi-layered, decision-making process” (Marks, 1992, p.221), where SNAs can influence policy. However, the member-states and the Commission remain the key gatekeepers in the process, with SNAs able to exert influence or pressure through the “multiple cracks or points of access” (Marks et.al, 1996, p.61) within the process, in particular when SNAs demands combine with national or Commission interests.

Chapter Eight - Local Government Reorganisation and European Policy in the West of Scotland, 1996-97.

8.1.1 - Introduction.

“Local government’s relations with the European Community are generally of two types - councils both implement Community policies and have a voice in their development. It is likely that all of the new councils will be involved to a greater or lesser extent in both roles. It will be their responsibility to determine how this should be managed. It is likely however that there will be a need, particularly when local authorities are seeking to provide input into the development of European policy, for them to group together (as some do at present) to equip themselves with as strong a voice as possible. These groupings may need to be pursued at an all-Scotland level through the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities or on an area basis, whether in formal or informal groupings” (Scottish Office, 1993, p.11).

On the 1st April 1996, the two-tier regional and district council structure of Scottish local government was replaced, with a single tier, all purpose, 32 unit structure. This chapter intends to address the ability of the twelve successor unitary authorities to SRC, to conduct a European policy in the West of Scotland. Whilst this chapter considers the ability of the twelve successor authorities to SRC, to maintain a European policy along the lines developed by the Regional Council between 1975 to 1996, the analysis focuses in particular upon the experience of four unitary authorities. These are :- Glasgow City, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire and South Lanarkshire¹⁶¹. Glasgow City was selected as it forms the largest, in terms of population, successor authority to SRC which is located in the metropolitan centre of the region. North and South Lanarkshire are both authorities located next to each other and within the hinterland of Glasgow which were both undergoing a process of recovering from de-industrialisation. Thus, these two authorities were comparable due to their proximity and the similar policy issues each would have to address as unitary

¹⁶¹ In addition, one interview was conducted with an official from Argyll and Bute Council, as this authority was distinctive due to its primarily rural location and uniqueness with regard to the Structural Funds, in terms of its membership of both the Objective One Highland and Islands European Partnership and Objective Two Strathclyde European Partnership. Thus, in terms of

authorities. Due to their location within an area of significant de-industrialisation both authorities would be likely to receive a considerable amount of Objective 2 funding and this would therefore offer an opportunity to analyse the extent to which each authority engaged with European issues and accordingly, assess the structures which these councils put in place to deal with the European function. Lastly, Renfrewshire Council was also located within an area of de-industrialisation and again could be expected to engage with the Structural Funds however the smaller size of the authority, in comparison to the other three councils selected, would enable an assessment to be made of the extent to which the authority was able to put in place a European structure. The selection of these four authorities is discussed fully in Chapter Three, however the emphasis upon these authorities was based upon the rationale that they would provide a representative sample of the experiences of all twelve unitary authorities. However, the operation of European policy within all twelve authorities was also assessed via a postal questionnaire, upon which many of the results of this chapter are also drawn (See Chapter Three).

The analysis of the European policies of SRC's twelve successor authorities will occur across four axes. Firstly, the approach taken towards the European function within SRC's twelve successor authorities will be assessed in terms of: - the location of the function within the Council structure; the priorities of the Council with regard to European policy; and the committee structures and staffing levels established to deal with European affairs within the unitary authorities. Secondly, the extent to which the new unitary authorities have been able to access funding from the Strathclyde European Partnership (SEP) and the impact of reorganisation upon the influence of local government as a constituent interest within SEP and the impact of local government reform upon SEP as an institution more generally will be discussed. Thirdly, the impact of the change in local government structure upon the operation of the Ecos-Ouverture programme

European policy, Argyll and Bute Council, was something of an anomaly as compared to SRC's eleven other successor authorities.

and the West of Scotland's role within it will be considered. Finally, the ability of local government in the West of Scotland to articulate interests vis-a-vis European Institutions will be analysed at the various levels at which this occurs: - individual authority level; West of Scotland lobbying structures; and, Scottish local government structures; participation within trans-national networks. In addition, the informal networks utilised by local government in the West of Scotland, with particular regard to contacts with the Scottish Office, MEPs, CoR representatives, and Commission officials will be discussed.

The experience of local government reorganisation in England and Wales and the abolition of the metropolitan counties appeared to have significantly reduced the ability of SNAs to articulate interests vis a vis European Institutions. For instance Roberts (1997) comments that :-

“Reorganisation of local government in the English and Welsh shires and the abolition of the regional councils in Scotland was likely to put back the regional representation of sub-national government in the UK by some 20 years; this threatened to leave a yawning chasm due to the absence of an accountable body that could initiate and regulate strategic thinking and action” (Roberts, 1997, p.269).

Three main disadvantages were highlighted by Roberts for UK SNAs as a consequence of reorganisation, in terms of competing for influence with other European SNAs within the EU. Firstly, the fragmentation of local government within the EU ran counter to trends towards establishing and entrenching the powers of regional representative structures across the EU member states. As a consequence, UK SNAs would have a diminished influence over EU regional and spatial policy. Secondly, due to tensions within the 'Committee of the Regions' (CoR) between 'regional' and 'local' representatives this would result in a diminished status of UK CoR members as regional representatives. Finally UK SNA representation within EU sub-national representative structures would diminish. Roberts highlighted the example of the 'Assembly of European Regions' as providing evidence of the reduced influence of UK SNAs within such structures by stating that :-

“There was a significant UK presence in the AER and a number of UK members played an active role in developing the work of the main assembly and its committees. However, following the abolition of the metropolitan counties and the progressive weakening of the shires in England and the abolition of the Scottish regional authorities, the ability of British members to speak and act with an authoritative voice at the regional level was somewhat diminished” (Roberts, 1997, p.267).

This chapter assesses whether, and if so, to what extent the involvement and influence of local authorities in Western Scotland diminished from the previous practice of SRC in terms of European policy. However this thesis only considers the practice of European policy within the reorganised councils until May 1997. Due to this limited time-span, when the new unitary authorities were still ‘bedding down’, it is important to recognise that the conclusions reached in this chapter are based upon the initial, early experiences of the reorganised councils with regard to European policy. It is to the debates surrounding the reorganisation process, and in particular concerns regarding the viability of the European function within a unitary structure, that I now intend to turn.

8.1.2 - The Background to Reorganisation.

Local government reorganisation in Scotland came into effect on April 1st 1996, with a change in structure from the two-tier system of regional and district councils to a single tier of local authorities. The Scottish Secretary, Ian Lang, contended that Wheatley’s two-tier structure required reform as the “present two-tier system now presents real obstacles to local government in meeting the challenge of change successfully and acts as a brake on desirable and necessary initiatives” (Scottish Office, 1991, p.9). More specifically, the Scottish Office consultation paper on local government reform (Scottish Office, 1991) made a number of criticisms of the Wheatley structure. Firstly, that the two tier structure of regions and districts was not understood by the general public thus causing confusion and as a consequence, a lack of local accountability. In addition, due to the large size of some regional councils, such as Strathclyde, this also resulted in a lack of accountability, as regional councils were remote

from local communities. Secondly, there was a duplication of functions between regions and districts, both in terms of policy roles (such as urban renewal) and in administrative services (such as personnel). Finally, the role of local government had changed significantly since the Wheatley reforms; for instance, economic planning at a regional scale had significantly diminished in importance.

Accordingly, the government viewed local government as moving away from being a provider of services to becoming an 'enabling' authority, as was evident from the thrust of government policy towards local government across a wide range of issues (such as compulsory competitive tendering, consumer choice and increasing the involvement of the private sector).

The Scottish Office consultation paper (1991) proposed that single tier authorities would provide a remedy to the problems of the two-tier structure as "the arguments in favour of the single tier are, in the main, the mirror image of the criticisms of the present two-tier system" (Scottish Office, 1991, p.9). A single tier structure, the Scottish Office argued, would improve public accountability through being closely related to local identities and communities, remove duplication and tensions between regions and districts, and provide a structure more suited to the role of local government as an 'enabler'. After a period of consultation and the presentation of a range of single tier authority structures, from a fifteen to a fifty-one single tier structure (Scottish Office, 1992), the Scottish Office finally settled on a structure of 29 unitary authorities, plus the continuation of the three unitary all-purpose island authorities which previously existed under the Wheatley structure. Figure 8.1 depicts the two-tier structure of local government pre-1996, and Figure 8.2, its successor single tier structure post-1996.

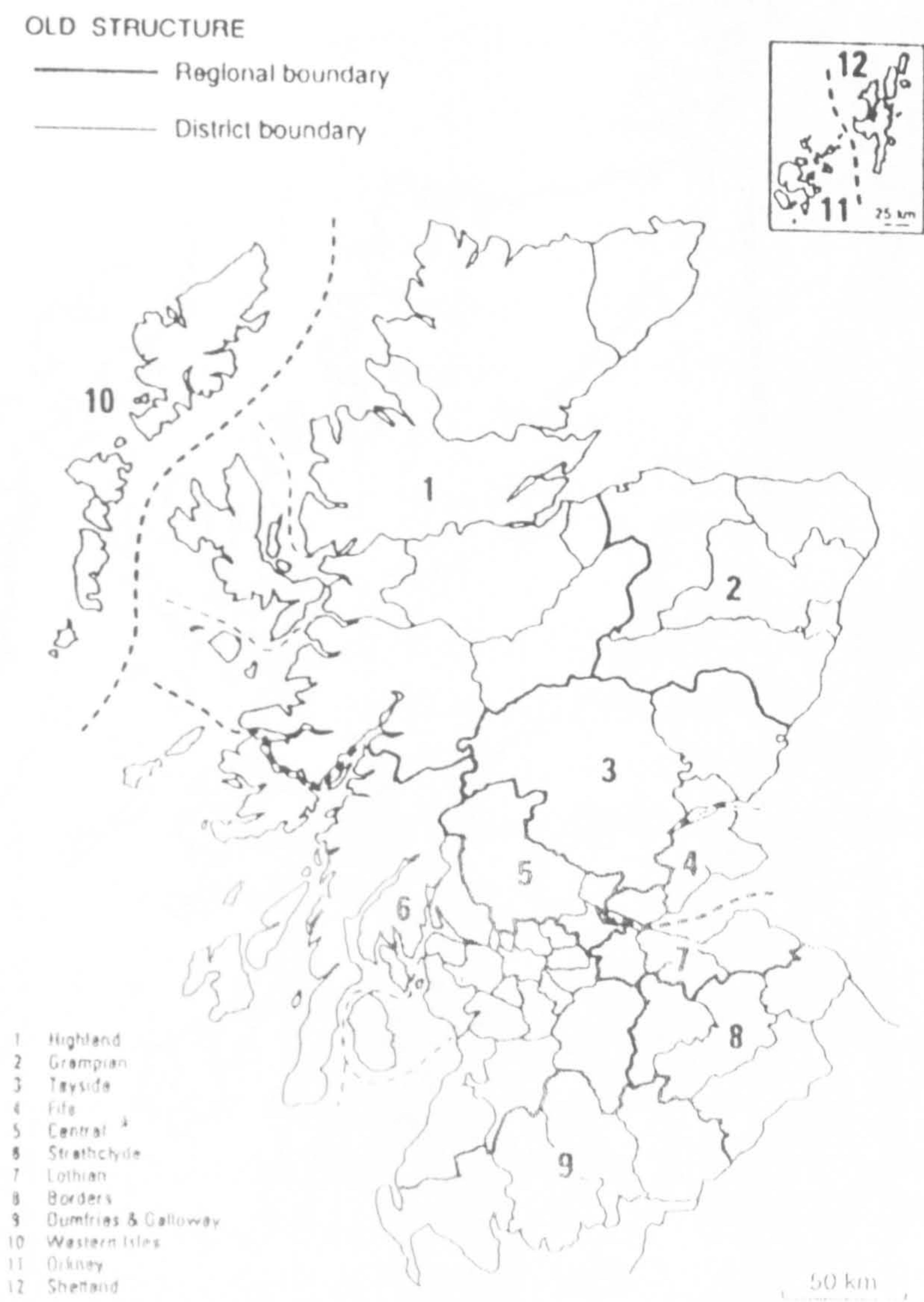
The case for local government reorganisation was widely criticised by a wide range of actors from opposition politicians to local government practitioners and academics. In particular, the criticisms made by the Government of the two-tier structure were widely disputed, as were government claims as to the benefits of

a single-tier structure (for example Midwinter, 1995). In addition, the 32 unit structure was viewed in some instances as little more than attempt to improve Conservative fortunes within Scottish local government, given that the Conservative party did not control any regions or districts under the two-tier system, with the boundaries of some councils appearing to be an outcome of "political and administrative expediency" (Paddison, 1997, p.107). Alongside accusations of gerrymandering, reorganisation was considered by some observers to be a result of :-

"a continuing resentment at its [the Scottish Office] failure to control the two largest regions Strathclyde and Lothian, which had been powerful enough to challenge the government's policies on public expenditure, local government finance and central - local relations" (Alexander, 1992, p.59; See also McAteer et al, 1996)¹⁶².

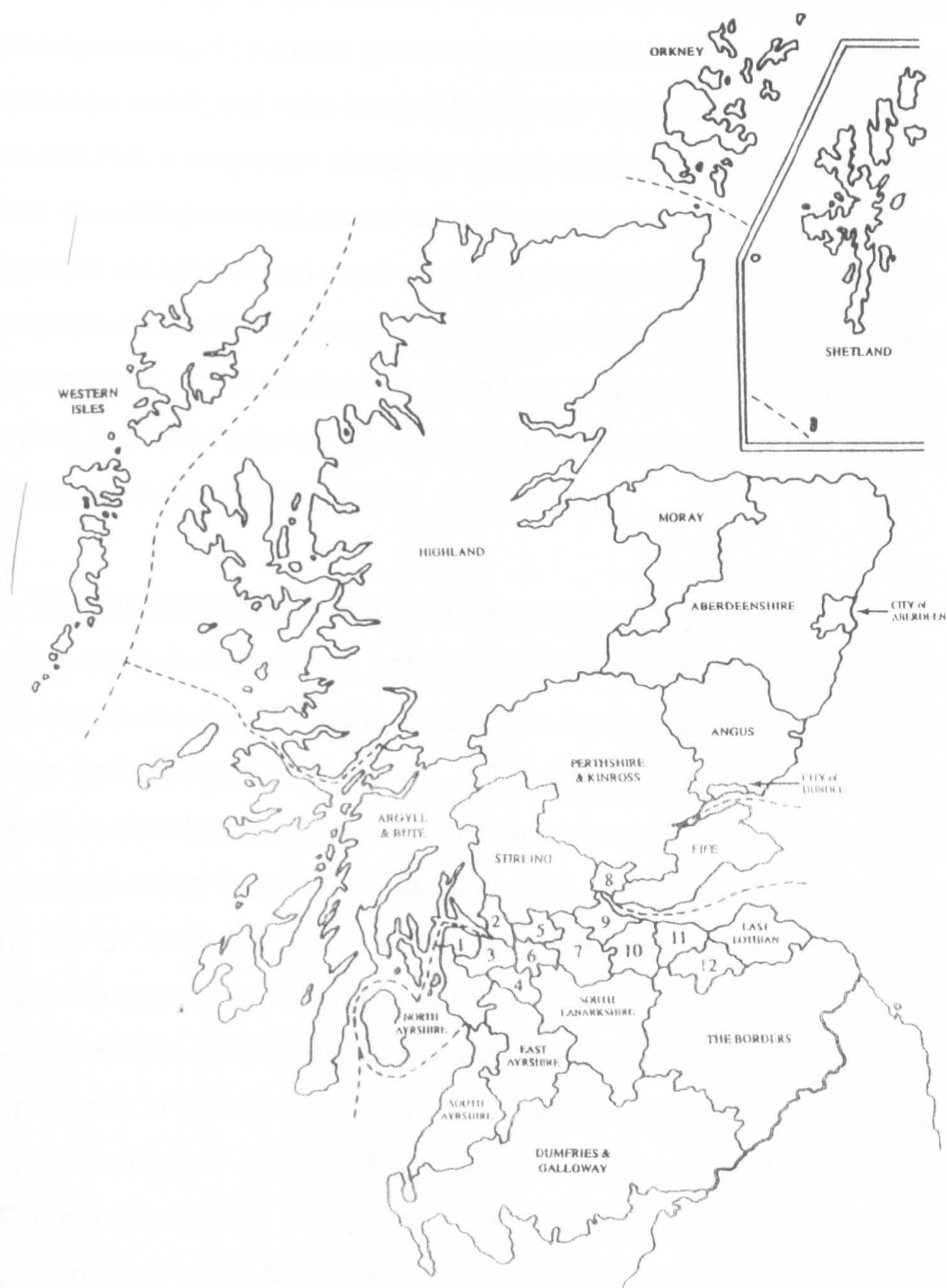
¹⁶² This view was certainly prominent amongst Labour SRC Councillors interviewed, who attributed blame more directly at resentment on the part of the Conservative party than the Scottish Office, and who frequently pointed to John Major's description of SRC as "a monstrosity". This view was formally expressed in SRC's response to the Government's proposals, where the document submitted to the Scottish Office, concluded as follows :-
"The overall impression given by the consultative paper is that it is politically motivated, its primary objective being to continue the process of reducing the role and influence of local government which the Government has been pursuing progressively since the 1980's....The process by which the decision is arrived at should however be as much divorced from party political prejudice as is possible. An independent commission would secure that. The present review does not" (SRC, 1991, p.22).

Figure 8.1 - Two-Tier Scottish Local Government Structure, 1975-96.



Source: - Paddison (1997) p.100.

Figure 8.2 - Single Tier, Unitary Authority Structure of Scottish Local Government, post-1996¹⁶³.



¹⁶³ The Numbered Councils are: 1 Inverclyde; 2 Dumbarton & Clydebank; 3 Renfrewshire; 4 East Renfrewshire; 5 East Dunbartonshire; 6 Glasgow City; 7 North Lanarkshire; 8 Clackmannanshire; 9 Falkirk; 10 West Lothian; 11 Edinburgh City; 12 Midlothian.

During the consultation period Strathclyde Regional Council opposed the entire rationale underlying reorganisation, in particular by emphasising that no evidence had been provided to support government criticism of the two tier structure, whilst the evidence which did exist tended to dispute the government position. SRC contended that a single tier structure would weaken local democracy, whilst regional councils provided a cost-effective service and that the process of local government reorganisation itself would be expensive both financially and in terms of disruption to service delivery. Accordingly, SRC concluded in its response to the Government's consultation exercise that "any move to smaller single tier authorities in Strathclyde would result in increased costs, reduce efficiency and reductions in service quality" (SRC, 1991, p.22).

8.1.3 - The European Dimension to Reorganisation.

During the consultation period, both the Scottish Office and Strathclyde Regional Council commented on the ability of Scottish local government to develop European policy post-reorganisation. SRC argued that it had been extremely successful in developing European policies, this ability was attributed on its part, to the Council using "its political standing, size and research resources to become the UK's lead region in European Community affairs" (SRC, 1993, p.23). To be able to operate successfully at a European level, SRC contended that sub-national authorities (SNAs) with the scale and strategic functions of SRC could have "influence in European affairs and in securing substantial amounts of funding for the region" (SRC, 1993, p.24), in order to compete with SNA's from other EU member-states. Accordingly SRC considered that reorganisation of local government, along the lines proposed by the Government, would have a detrimental effect upon the representation of Strathclyde's European interests as the unitary authorities would be unable to provide the resources or strategic functions necessary to be effective whilst the ability of unitary authorities to provide co-finance for EU funds was also questioned. The impact of reorganisation upon the European policies of Scotland's local authorities was also a prominent area of concern within the Scottish media, for instance, a

Scottish newspaper summarised the potential implications of reorganisation with regard to Europe in the following manner: -

“Reform could threaten local authorities’ chances of securing EC funds which boost development spending...One of the concerns raised by the prospect of abolition of the regions is whether smaller councils will be sufficiently strategically significant to be visible in EC bureaucratic terms” (Scotland on Sunday, 22/11/92, p.14).

Whilst the Scottish Office did not appear to accept that reorganisation would result in reduced local government access to European funding, the impact of reform upon the advocacy and lobbying functions of Scottish local government (and in particular of local government in the West of Scotland) was recognised as a legitimate concern, as in 1992 the Scottish Office stated :-

“Scottish local authorities are competing with a range of other bodies within the [European] Community to make their voice heard. It seems clear that, the larger the population and area represented, the greater the weight which will be given to views put forward. The structure of Scottish local government hitherto has enabled Strathclyde Region to acquire particular authority in handling European issues and representing its views at Community level either alone or in conjunction with other regions within the Community” (Scottish Office, 1992, p.64).

The 32 unit structure established by the Government under the terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act, in 1994, would clearly result in smaller authorities in terms of the geographic size and level of resources available to the new single tier authorities in the West of Scotland as compared to SRC (See Figures 8.1 and 8.2). Accordingly, the Scottish Office recommended that in terms of European policy, local government should either operate under the auspices of COSLA or through voluntarily agreeing to work with other local authorities within sub-Scottish level regional groupings. Figure One depicts the two-tier structure of local government pre-1996, and Figure Two, its successor single tier structure post-1996.

Strathclyde Regional Council was replaced in April 1996 by twelve unitary authorities, Table 8.3 details the population and party political composition of

each of these 12 authorities. Table 8.3 clearly illustrates the wide variations in scale between the twelve successor authorities (as measured by population) replacing SRC, from Glasgow City (the largest local authority in Scotland) with a population of 623,850 to East Renfrewshire with a population of 86,780, although clearly all the unitary authorities represent a significant reduction in scale compared to SRC's population of 2.3 million in 1991¹⁶⁴. However in terms of political representation, the successor authorities were all, except for Argyll and Bute and East Renfrewshire, controlled by the Labour party thus raising the possibility of successful co-operation between the councils as a result of Labour dominance of local government in the West of Scotland. The single tier authorities would fulfill the same functions¹⁶⁵ as performed by the previous two-tier structure, however given the smaller scale of the new councils, the Secretary of State placed a statutory obligation on the authorities to enter into joint arrangements, in order to provide services which could not be managed by the Council alone such as, planning, police and fire services. However, as has been outlined above, in the case of European affairs no statutory obligation was placed upon local authorities to enter into 'joint arrangements', although the councils were free to collaborate at a Scottish or sub-Scottish level with regard to European issues.

¹⁶⁴ See Chapter Seven, Section 3.1, for further details on SRC's population change between 1975 and 1996.

¹⁶⁵ Broadly the responsibilities of the unitary authorities cover the functions of: - Education, Social Work, Police and Fire, Emergency Planning and Civil Defence, Roads, Transport, Planning, Water and Sewerage, Housing, Urban Regeneration, Cultural Activities and Library Services, Relations with the European Community, Tourism, Trading Standards and Environmental Health, Valuation of Property for the Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates, District Courts, Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages, and, Archives.

Table 8.3 - Profile of SRC's Twelve Successor Authorities.

UNITARY AUTHORITY.	POPULATION.	PARTY POLITICAL COMPOSITION. ¹⁶⁶
Argyll and Bute	90,550	Independent Control. IND 21; SNP 4; LD 3, CON 3, LAB 2.
Dumbarton and Clydebank	97,790	Labour Control. LAB 14, SNP 7, IND 1.
East Ayrshire	123,820	Labour Control. LAB 22, SNP 8.
East Dunbartonshire	110, 220	Labour Control. LAB 15, LD 9, CON 2.
East Renfrewshire	86, 780	No Overall Control. CON 9, LAB 8, LD 2, IND 1.
Glasgow City	623, 850	Labour Control. LAB 77, CON 3, LD 1, SNP 1, IND 1.
Inverclyde	89, 990	Labour Control. LAB 14, LD 5, CON 1.
North Ayrshire	139, 020	Labour Control. LAB 27, CON 1, SNP 1, IND 1.
North Lanarkshire	326, 750	Labour Control. LAB 60, SNP 7, IND 2.
Renfrewshire	176, 970	Labour Control. LAB 20, SNP 13, LD 3, CON 2, IND 2.
South Ayrshire	113, 960	Labour Control. LAB 21, CON 4.
South Lanarkshire	307, 100	Labour Control. LAB 62, SNP 8, LD 2, CON 2.

Source: - SLGIU (1995) p71-78

¹⁶⁶ The 'party political composition' of SRC's twelve successor authorities represent the outcome of the local government elections held in April 1995, as the unitary authorities took shape during a shadow year (April 1995 to April 1996), prior to formally replacing SRC in April 1996. The abbreviations used to label parties are as follows: - CON - Conservative; IND - Independent; LAB - Labour; LD - Liberal Democrat; SNP - Scottish National Party.

8.2.1 - The Internalisation of the European Function within Local Government in the West of Scotland.

“The first point to make in looking at the role of European policy in the new councils is that there is no ‘blueprint’ for organising European activity. The role that European policy plays in a council will depend on many factors - including its size, its status in terms of the structural funds, the activities of the predecessor authorities, the structure of the new council and the resources that it can put into the activity. While there is no ‘blueprint’, it is clear that Europe is a key issue for the new councils. It will be interesting to look at the way in which they tackle this complex issue, and many of the regional councils have an excellent track record in Europe. This record has been achieved because they have not only had the financial resources and staff to devote to European policy but because they have been able to recruit capable and experienced staff. It is important that this experience is not lost in the re-organisation” (Jordan, J,¹⁶⁷ 1996, p.116).

The debates surrounding the reorganisation of Scottish local government, prior to April 1996, raised a number of concerns with regard to the impact of restructuring upon the ability of Scottish local authorities to conduct European policy. Broadly these concerns fell into four main categories. Firstly, that the new councils would lack the financial resources to provide co-finance for European funding at the same level as had been previously committed, in particular by the regional councils. Secondly, that the unitary authorities would be less effective in terms of interest representation at the EU level. Thirdly, that the loss of experience in European affairs, in terms of staff turnover as a consequence of reorganisation, would result in a less effective European policy on the part of Scottish local government. Finally, that the unitary authorities would face financial difficulties (See McAteer et al, 1996, on this issue), and would accordingly fail to make adequate provision for the European function within councils, as it was not a statutory responsibility.

Although the research from which this chapter is derived concluded in April 1997, and therefore the new councils had only been in place for a year, the initial dislocation caused by reorganisation had begun to diminish and it was possible to assess the effects of restructuring upon the operation of European policy

amongst the successor authorities to SRC. Accordingly in this section, I intend to discuss the structure put in place by the new councils with regard to some of the issues raised above. Table 8.4 provides a summary of the structures put in place by SRC's twelve successors in terms of the number of staff employed to deal with European policy, the location of the European function within the councils, whether a European committee had been established and places each council within the 'continuum' of SNA involvement devised by John (1994a)¹⁶⁸. Given that the new unitary authorities had only been operational for a year when the research was conducted, the structures which had been put in place can be viewed as providing a sign of intent with regard to the extent to which the council was preparing to engage with European policy developments.

Table 8.4 clearly illustrates that a wide variety of European structures had been put in place by the new unitary authorities, with four main approaches being identifiable along a continuum from an extensive engagement with European affairs to a minimal (perhaps non-existent) engagement. The most extensive arrangements made by a unitary authority to deal with the European function, was via the creation of a separate European and International Unit staffed with seven officers in both cases alongside a designated political committee dealing solely with European issues. Two councils adopted this approach to the European function:- Glasgow City and South Lanarkshire. This approach clearly represents a significant engagement due to the degree of resources required to maintain these structures. In both instances, officials and politicians contended that these structures were symptomatic of the importance of European affairs to these councils. The establishment of a separate European and International Unit certainly represents a high degree of 'Europeanisation', for instance in South Lanarkshire the structure of the Council's European Unit took the following form:-

¹⁶⁷ Jordan is a COSLA European Officer.

¹⁶⁸ See Table 7.1 for a summary of the John (1994a) typology against which to assess the extent to which a SNA has responded to European policy developments.

“the remit of the unit is threefold, firstly looking at policy development, secondly funding and thirdly, looking at information. What we do is that we operate almost as a consultancy within the Chief Executive’s service. It is very much a corporate function, we act and service the clients, and the clients are seen as the 15 service departments, which make up South Lanarkshire Council. And all 15 departments have some form of European contact” (Case 52).

Table 8.4 - The European Function within West of Scotland Councils.

NAME OF COUNCIL	LOCATION OF THE EUROPEAN FUNCTION	SPECIFIC EUROPEAN COMMITTEE WITHIN THE COUNCIL	NUMBER OF EUROPEAN STAFF EMPLOYED	SCALE OF SNA EUROPEANISATION
Argyll and Bute	Planning Development and Tourism	No	1	EU Financially-orientated SNA
Dumbarton and Clydebank	None	None	0	Euro-Minimal SNA
East Ayrshire	Development Services (Corporate department)	No	2	EU Networking SNA
East Dunbartonshire	Economic and Social Strategy Unit (Within Chief Executive's Department)	No	1	EU Networking SNA
East Renfrewshire	Economic Development and Environment	No	1	EU Financially-orientated SNA
Glasgow City	European and International Unit	Yes	7 ¹⁶⁹	Fully Europeanised SNA
Inverclyde	Economic Development	No	1	EU Financially-orientated SNA
North Ayrshire	Planning Roads and Environment	No	2	EU Financially-orientated SNA

¹⁶⁹ At the time of conducting research, although Glasgow City Council had seven European 'posts', only three were actually in position during the research period.

North Lanarkshire	Chief Executive's Department	Yes	2	Fully Europeanised SNA
Renfrewshire	Economic Development Unit (Within Planning and Transportation dept)	No	3	EU Financially-orientated SNA
South Ayrshire	Economic Development	No	1	EU Financially-orientated SNA
South Lanarkshire	European and International Unit	Yes	7	Fully Europeanised SNA

Source: - Questionnaire results; COSLA (1996)

Thus, in addition to seven officers within the European Unit, each department of the Council also had at least one officer dealing with European issues. The creation of a European Unit had differing motives however, in Glasgow City the structures appeared to have been put in place in order to mimic the structure of SRC, as the initial motivation of Glasgow City's European policy "was to make sure that existing programmes and projects were protected, and that was our number one priority" (Case 55). In contrast the role which South Lanarkshire Council (SLC) envisaged for European affairs was, in part, borne out of criticism of the manner in which SRC dealt with the function, which was viewed within SLC as being too concerned with "high level policy"(Case 52) to the neglect of integrating the European function through the work of the whole council via a bottom-up as opposed to SRC's top-down approach¹⁷⁰. Divisions between councils, particularly those which are most active in terms of European policy, which favoured the 'SRC approach' to European policy and councils favouring

¹⁷⁰ To a certain extent, criticism of SRC may in part be a result of tensions between SRC and the district councils of which there was substantial evidence (See Stodart, 1981). For instance, the politician and official interviewed at SLC, were both previously members of a district council.

alternative approaches would prove to be a hindrance to co-operation between West of Scotland authorities within the sphere of European policy.

The second form of structure, which appears to indicate a high recognition of the importance of the European function, adopted by a number of the new councils was to place the European function within a corporate department (usually the Chief Executive's department). Placing European policy within a corporate department clearly indicates a recognition on the part of these councils to integrate the European function into the operation of all the council departments and was adopted by three councils (East Ayrshire, East Dunbartonshire and North Lanarkshire). The third and most prominent approach taken by SRC's successor authorities, was to place the European function within a non-corporate department of the council, this department usually being concerned with economic development. Six councils followed this approach (Argyll and Bute, East Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, North Ayrshire, Renfrewshire and South Ayrshire). The adoption of this structure may tend to represent that the council views European policy purely in terms of accessing the Structural Funds, and correspondingly has a minimal desire to engage with policy issues arising from the European function. A COSLA official commented on the importance of the location of the European function, in terms of assessing a Councils stance with regard to Europeanisation, in the following manner: -

"Originally, many authorities located responsibility for European policy in their economic development section or related departments, and this reflected the importance of the structural funds. However, a growing trend, accelerated by both the implementation of the Single European Act and the Maastricht Treaty, has been to view European policy as a corporate activity and to locate the European function in a corporate department or service" (Jordan, 1996, p.117).

Finally, only one council, Dumbarton and Clydebank, did not create a European structure in place or appointed staff to deal with the European function. Overall, councils which either established a European Unit or located the function within a corporate department, can be considered as 'fully Europeanised' (See Table 7.1), given that this indicates a desire to engage with European policy in all its

forms, from funding to legislative issues. It is worth noting that the three authorities (Glasgow City, North Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire) with the largest population base of SRC's successors, can all be considered 'fully Europeanised' (See Table 8.3)¹⁷¹. However, given that half of SRC's successor authorities appear to view the European function as primarily a funding issue, this highlights the variety of responses to European policy being adopted post-reorganisation. In addition, this finding also lends weight to the pre-reform concern that disaggregation would result in a reduced effectiveness on the part of local government in the West of Scotland to represent its interests to European institutions. The perception that the role of local government with regard to European policy is limited to securing structural fund finance is understandable given the financial difficulties facing local government in Scotland post-1996.

Given the corporate nature of European policy, the extent to which Council European officers believed that there was a co-operative relationship with other council departments, in terms of integrating European policy into the work of the council, would provide an indication of the extent to which European policy had been integrated into the policy profile of the councils. 87.5% of questionnaire respondents claimed to have either very co-operative or co-operative relations with external departments (Question 3). However, one respondent (6.3%) was experiencing an unco-operative relationship with external departments, whilst another (6.3%) was obtaining no co-operation whatsoever. Neither of these respondents was employed within a council categorised above as being fully Europeanised. Another indicator of the extent of integration of the European function within the new councils, would be the number of departments with which European officers would be in regular contact (Question 8). Respondents identified a wide range of departments, again indicating a fairly high degree of integration, with which they were in regular contact with over European issues,

¹⁷¹ While North Lanarkshire did not put in place a European Unit along the lines of Glasgow City and South Lanarkshire, the Council has demonstrated a considerable commitment to engaging with European policy issues, within its first year of operation, through hosting the WOSSEC Secretariat whilst the Leader of North Lanarkshire Council was also the Leader of WOSSEC.

the most prominent being Planning and Development, Economic Development, Education, Chief Executive's and Social Work.

Prior to reorganisation, the issue of restructuring resulting in loss of staff with experience of European policy being an unintended outcome of the disruption caused by the shift to a single-tier structure was frequently expressed.

Questionnaire results confirmed the relevance of this concern as 50% of officials employed in European officer posts had not previously held a position dealing with European policy¹⁷². The majority of officials interviewed (as opposed to being contacted by questionnaire) had previous experience of European policy, however an official from Argyll and Bute reflected that following reorganisation there had been a "local hiatus of being unable to tap into a pool of information, of experienced people who dealt with these issues for a long time" (Case 57). A further tension referred to by some interviewees was that some of the new councils were discriminating against former SRC employees, due to resentment of SRC amongst the former district councils. Questionnaire results provide a rather unclear answer to this point, although a number of respondents did refer to this practice taking place (See Table 8.5). Of those employed in European posts in the West of Scotland, 52.9% had previously been employed by SRC with 41.2% being drawn from the district councils, the remaining 5.9% having being employed by other regional councils (Question 19).

Prior to re-organisation it was posited that a unitary authority structure would result in a reduced ability on the part of the new councils to access the structural funds, due to the financial obstacles in providing co-finance. At the time of conducting research, it was rather early to obtain a conclusive answer on this point, as the majority of councils were mainly dealing with funding projects which had been put in place by SRC, and thus the new councils had no option but to commit funds to these schemes. However, amongst practitioners dealing with

European funding, there was an expectation that the number of applications from local authorities in the West of Scotland would decline post-1997, this in part being due to the financial pressures which the single-tier authorities were subject to. Table 8.5, illustrates the opinions of an official outside local government, with regard to local authorities accessing the Structural Funds and of the resentment which, on occasion, existed towards former SRC officials and politicians.

172 Anecdotal evidence from officials employed within SRC confirmed this trend, as a number of European policy officers took up post in the new councils, that were not dealing with European policy.

Table 8.5 - An Outsiders' View of Reorganisation, in terms of the Structural Funds and West of Scotland Rivalries.

What we do know is that there is going to be more problems with local government finding co-finance, match funding for European projects because of the cuts they are facing in capital budgets. But again, that has been happening over the last few years, but most of the Councils are probably finalising their budgets, so are the LECs. So we really don't know what they are going to have available to fund economic development projects or to look for European funds. But again, the trend has been that local authorities had to look for smarter ways of putting projects together, finding ways of getting private finance in, finding ways of getting lottery money in, so the amount they put into a project goes down all the time.

There has always been a resentment, even when the Region was around, about how much Glasgow got versus the rest of the Region...The main resistance has come from Ayrshire, Ayrshire is the one area that you see becoming increasingly independent, and the three Ayrshire councils are working together on a whole number of joint schemes, and really they see themselves as a different area. We've now got two structure plans for the old Strathclyde, and one is basically Clyde Valley, and the other is Ayrshire. So again the system is dividing off Ayrshire, and politically the most hostile people to the Region were probably North Ayrshire and they're still very hostile. You can see that in the way various councils have made appointments....So there are a lot of these battles going on. And that's happened in a number of councils, and at a political level, ex-regional councillors are getting nowhere, and at an official level, ex-regional officials are getting nowhere. It's not true everywhere. So, it's different in various parts of the region, everything is a bit delicate at the moment. The Councils have spent their first year trying to cope, and deal with these huge budget cuts.

From an overall perspective, the vast majority of respondents considered that reorganisation had diminished the effectiveness of European policy from a West of Scotland perspective, as 58.8% of respondents considered reorganisation to have had a negative impact, and in a further 11.8% of cases an extremely negative impact, in terms of the ability of the West of Scotland to represent its interests vis-a-vis the EU. A wide variety of negative outcomes were attributed to having diminished the functioning of European policy in the West of Scotland, with the most prominent issue raised by 52.9% of respondents being that the West of Scotland now lacked a strategic focus in approaching European policy and setting its priorities. Other negative impacts were judged to have been: - a loss of experienced European policy officers; less resources being available for

European policy; a lack of interest in the new councils regarding European policy; and finally, that the West of Scotland had experienced a reduction in status vis-a-vis other EU regions. However, a minority of respondents did consider reorganisation to have been generally positive in terms of European policy, for instance a European officer based in a rural authority, commented that “the perception now, with the function being based in a smaller Council, appears to be that there is beginning to be a greater feeling of ownership and awareness within the Council of the potential of European funding possibilities and lobbying powers” (Case 57). Other respondents also drew attention to a greater sense of ‘ownership’ over European policy as opposed to the function being centralised within SRC, as well as increased awareness of the European function and of EU funding applications being more closely tailored to local needs. It was notable however, that respondents who made these positive comments with regard to reorganisation tended to have previously been located within district councils and post reorganisation, were located within authorities that tended to be COSLA-orientated (the split between COSLA-orientated and WOSEC orientated councils is discussed in Section 8.5.2).

8.2.2 - Summary.

During the consultation period preceding reorganisation, a number of actors raised issues which broadly claimed that Scottish local government’s ability to conduct European policy would be diminished as an unintended consequence of the change to a single-tier structure. The issues raised were fourfold :- that the new councils would lack the finance necessary to co-finance EU funding; that the councils would be less effective in terms of representing interests vis-a-vis EU Institutions; reorganisation would result in a loss of experienced European officers, as a result of staff turnover; and finally, the new councils would fail to make adequate provision for the European function, due to the financial pressures the new councils would be under.

In terms of the research results presented above, the experience of the twelve successor authorities to SRC in dealing with the European function points to the conclusion that whilst reorganisation may not have been beneficial to the operation of European policy in Western Scotland, the consequences may not have been as detrimental as those outlined during the consultation process. There had clearly been a loss of experienced European personnel post-reorganisation, as 50% of those employed in European positions post-reorganisation had no previous European policy experience. However, the effects of this turnover in personnel (and the disruption caused by reorganisation) should be expected to diminish over time. Local government in the West of Scotland appears to have a well developed grasp of the importance of the EU to local government, as all except one local authority had European policy officers in position. The main impact of reorganisation may have been for the new councils to view 'Europeanisation' as a purely funding related issue, with this development being particularly pronounced amongst the smaller local authorities. However, five councils had clearly recognised the European function as having policy as well as funding implications, through locating the policy field within either a corporate department or through establishing a separate European unit.

However, the focus on funding issues alone, within half of SRC's successors, may result in a diminished ability, on the part of West Central Scotland local government as a collective, to represent interests vis-a-vis the EU (the issue of interest representation will be discussed further in Section 8.5). Equally the majority of respondents (both via questionnaires and interviews) considered that reorganisation had had a detrimental impact upon the operation of European policy in the West of Scotland, with particular regard to the loss of a West of Scotland strategic view. Whilst it is not possible to accurately ascertain the impact of reorganisation upon the ability of the new councils to co-finance EU funding, a number of respondents referred to a lack of resources post-reorganisation, whilst practitioners outwith local government expected a decline in local government applications, although the source of this decline is

attributable to a variety of factors. It is to the impact of local government reorganisation, and of developments within SEP more generally, that I now turn.

8.3 1- Reorganisation and the Strathclyde European Partnership (SEP), 1996-7.

Chapter Five documented the development of 'partnership' within Strathclyde Region between 1988 and 1996. Across this period of time the influence of SRC within the SEP diminished due to a variety of reasons. Firstly, the Scottish Office recognised the importance of EU funding as an economic development tool, and mobilised in terms of staff, resources and policy accordingly. Secondly, the institutionalisation of partnership arrangements, following the Reform of the Structural Funds in 1989, ensured that SRC would be unlikely to negotiate a deal as favourable as the 'Integrated Development Operation' (1988-92) package had been in terms of funding and SRC's policy priorities. Thirdly, the expansion in the number of 'partners' eligible for Structural Funds support, notably through the introduction of the LEC's, reduced the salience of SRC as a 'resource-provider' of local economic development knowledge and expertise as well as increasing the competition for funding. Finally, the Commission's policy of shifting the emphasis of European regional aid away from hardware (e.g. infrastructure projects) towards software (e.g. business development) projects, reduced the proportion of funding which SRC received as it was the main provider of infrastructure within the region.

Thus the influence of local government (SRC was the main local government unit to engage with the Structural Funds in Strathclyde) within the SEP was already waning, prior to re-organisation. However the financial pressures which single tier authorities are subject to may exacerbate the trend of declining local authority funding applications, and correspondingly of local government influence within the SEP, although at this stage the figures are not available to conclusively prove this to be the case. In addition during 1996, the projects for which the new councils would be responsible, would have been projects bequeathed to them by

SRC, as the Regional Council purposively made applications on this basis with the consent of the shadow authorities during 1995, in order to limit any losses of funding caused as a result of reorganisation (See footnote 103, Section 5.5 on this issue).

SRC's twelve successor authorities also attempted to minimise the disruption caused by reorganisation, in terms of their influence as a constituency within the SEP, by maintaining the position of individuals on SEP Committees, who had sat on SEP committees prior to reorganisation, where this was possible. However due to the turnover of staff, new representatives did take up positions on SEP Committees, with the 'West of Scotland European Consortium' (WOSSEC)¹⁷³ "co-ordinating who should do what" (Case 52) and ensuring that as many of SRC's successor authorities were represented as possible. Of the single-tier authorities where interviews were conducted, all had at least one representative on an advisory group, whilst South Lanarkshire had a representative on the 'Programme Management Committee' and North Lanarkshire on the board of SEP.

Nevertheless, European officers within the unitary authorities were aware of the reduced influence of local authorities within the SEP, for instance, a European officer within South Lanarkshire Council commented:-

"there has definitely been a shift of power...we've had regional dominance or SRC dominance to then criticism, for instance of business development, in terms of the over emphasis of the LECs involvement in it [within SEP]" (Case 52).

The reorganisation of local government in 1996 also had considerable ramifications for SEP as SRC fulfilled the role of 'lead partner'¹⁷⁴ with regard to the partnership. Clearly SRC could no longer fulfill this role post-1996 and the SEP would have to find a new 'sponsor' or structure following reorganisation.

¹⁷³ The role of the West of Scotland European Consortium (WoSEC) will be discussed fully in Section 8.5.

¹⁷⁴ The designation 'lead partner' refers to the authority responsible for the premises, staffing and administrative requirements of SEP (See Chapter Five, Section Five).

Accordingly, the Strathclyde European Partnership formed itself as a 'company limited by guarantee', thus removing any sense of ownership which local authorities may have perceived with regard to the partnership when SRC was the 'lead partner'. This change in the status of SEP, was perceived by a variety of European officers as diminishing the influence of local authorities within the SEP, whilst the other partnerships in Scotland remained linked to local institutions through 'lead partner' arrangements. For instance, one official commented on the shift in SEP's status as follows: -

"The establishment of the SEP as a company limited by guarantee is an absolute disgrace, as it has enabled or facilitated a reduction in the democratic accountability of SEP to local politicians and created a much more free rein for SEP Limited. On reflection I think it would be much better to go for the lead authority model, in order to control it, to provide much clearer political accountability"¹⁷⁵ (Case 48).

The second major change to the operation of SEP during this period was the renegotiation of the partnership's 'Single Programming Document' (SPD), for the period 1997-99. The six-year programme agreed for 1994 to 1999 was intended to be assessed at the end of 1996 but not to be subject to major changes for the period 1997 to 1999. However upon the commencement of negotiations during 1996, SEP officials realised that the Commission desired significant changes to the programme for the period 1997 to 1999. The extent of the Commission's success in obtaining changes to the SEP's priorities becomes immediately apparent when comparing the objectives of the 1994-96 and 1997-99 programmes. The priorities for the SEP between 1994 to 1996 were: - business development; business environment; tourism; and, economic and social cohesion¹⁷⁶. The SPD for 1997 to 1999 sets out five priorities for the programme:-

¹⁷⁵ For the new round of Structural Fund programmes, 2000-06, only the Highlands and Islands had not become a company limited by guarantee whilst the Highlands and Islands partnership was actively considering becoming such a company in the course of the new programme.

¹⁷⁶ See Chapter Five, Section Five, discusses the 1994 to 1996 SPD in detail.

- 1) Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and Local Services (49.724m ECU);
 - 2) Applied Research, Technological Development and Innovation (13.516m ECU);
 - 3) Strategic Spatial Development (33.801m ECU);
 - 4) Tourism and Cultural Industries (21.804m ECU);
 - 5) Community Economic Development (23.284m ECU).
- Source: - SEP (1997).

These priorities closely matched Commission guidelines issued to Member States in April 1996 (SEP, 1997, p.51). The shift from hardware to software schemes in line with Commission policy (See Chapter Five), continued in the new SPD. The 1997-99 SPD also asserted the importance of private finance as a means of leveraging finance for European funding and increasing the likelihood that the partnership would expand in size. Equal opportunities and the environmental impacts of EU funding were also emphasised as central to SEP operations.

The final and most controversial change to the 1997-99 SPD from the previous programme was that EU funding would “concentrate resources on the areas of greatest need and locations offering the maximum opportunities for employment creation” (SEP, 1997, p.55). The Commission initially wanted funding focussed on the most deprived areas within Strathclyde which was accepted by SEP partners, however the Commission also proposed focussing funding upon ‘strategic sites’, along lines similar to a growth pole strategy. This caused considerable concern amongst SEP partners and was ultimately dropped during the negotiations due to a coalition of opposition ranging from the Scottish Office, LEC’s, local authorities and SEP Executive. An SEP official (Case 43) viewed the strategic site proposal, as an attempt to reduce Objective Two geographical coverage with a view to EU enlargement. Generally the attitude of Commission officials during the SPD negotiations was viewed by a number of actors as representing an increasingly hands-on approach by the Commission with regard to the workings of SEP. The 1997-99 SPD as a document provides considerable

evidence of the extensive information, which the Commission expected from partnerships when compared to previous SPDs. For instance, the 1994-96 SPD consists of 88 pages compared to 124 pages for 1997-99. An SEP official commented on these increasing demands as follows: -

“We’ve had to add in a huge amount of extra information. The content of it, are really only the thirty or forty pages of strategy and what we are going to do with the funds. The rest is a revised environmental profile and much more information on the socio-economic characteristics of the region. Now we produced that three years ago and they have actually asked us for more” (Case 43).

Thus the 1997-99 programme contained some considerable changes from 1994-96, due to the prompting of the Commission, resulting in considerable consternation over the apparent centralising tendencies of the Commission, within SEP. An SEP official remarked, with regard to the increasing influence of the Commission that “there is meant to be continuity, this is the second half of a six-year planning period, and they [the Commission] ignored the plan for the six years, and treated it as two separate three year programmes” (Case 43). The increasing interventionism of the Commission within the SEP was also causing considerable resentment amongst local authority European officers. Whilst the Commission was viewed as having become increasingly interested in the fine detail of the partnership arrangements over a number of years, the extent of Commission involvement during the 1997-99 SPD negotiations reached new levels. The comments of two European officers below reflect the resentment of local government actors at Commission interventionism.

“They should basically put their money where their mouth is, in terms of subsidiarity, and let us tell them what is best in terms of our area” (Case 47).

“What we have increasingly moved towards, and a bit of self criticism, what we have allowed the Commission to do, is move towards dictating how we should run our economy and how we should set our own socio-economic priorities, and I think that is fundamentally wrong...I think now the local authorities, and all the partners in the West of Scotland, are beginning to say we just can’t work within these parameters, the Commission have overstepped the mark, they have just taken it a step too far” (Case 52).

8.3.2 - Summary.

It is still too early to judge the impact of local government reorganisation upon the ability of the new councils to obtain European funding. However, the initial indicators tend to point to a reduced role for local government with regard to the Structural Funds, although EU funding will remain a major source of finance for local government. However, local government's role within the partnerships would have diminished even if restructuring had not taken place, given the direction of Commission policy towards expanded partnerships, an increased role for private finance and the move towards software schemes. Nevertheless, the tight budgetary constraints on local government post-1996 may limit the uptake of EU funding by the unitary authorities. Certainly the diminished influence of local government within Scotland post-reorganisation has been recognised by COSLA, which in its European workplan for 1996-97, commented: -

“In the current Structural Fund programmes there is concern at the matching funding difficulties faced by local councils, and the reduced role of local councils in structural fund partnerships” (COSLA, 1996b, p.3).

In broader terms, partnership continued to develop and evolve during 1996 and 1997, firstly through the establishment of SEP as a company limited by guarantee, and secondly through the agreement of the 1997-99 SPD which featured some significant changes from the 1994-96 SPD, of which it was intended to be a continuation. Most dramatically, the Commission appears to be adopting an increasingly interventionist stance, with regard to the policies pursued within partnerships, in part due to the pressures to prepare for EU enlargement. Nevertheless, this approach is resulting in an increased scepticism amongst local government actors with regard to the role of the European Commission as an active participant in economic development policy at the regional scale. More importantly, developments within SEP during 1996 and 1997 highlight the fluid power relations between actors within multi-level governance institutions, and in particular the extent to which SNAs are ultimately reliant upon the European Commission and / or central government when attempting to direct policy. Where no such support exists, it rapidly becomes

apparent that SNAs are unlikely to shape the decisions which are made within such institutions, due to their reliance upon the resources (in the case of the Commission, the finance) which these actors bring to institutions such as the SEP. It is to the experience of the new unitary authorities within another multi-level institution, the Ecos-Ouverture programme that I now intend to turn.

8.4 1- Reorganisation and Ecos-Ouverture.

Prior to reorganisation the Ecos-Ouverture programme had been subject to considerable scrutiny, as a result of two principal factors. Firstly, Article 10 projects in general had attracted considerable criticism from DGXX (Financial Control) of the European Commission and from a Court of Auditors report dealing with Article 10 projects operational in the Mediterranean. As a consequence, DGXVI attempted to centralise financial and administrative procedures across all Article 10 projects including Ecos-Ouverture, thus diluting the initial vision of subsidiarity underlying the programme. Secondly, antagonism aroused during the merger process between Ecos and Ouverture continued post-merger, resulting in DGXVI becoming disillusioned with the organisation of the programme. The pressures upon DGXVI with regard to Article 10 projects in general, and discontent with the structure of Ecos-Ouverture, resulted in DGXVI announcing during 1997 that Ecos-Ouverture would be put out to 'open tender' with the successful bidder obtaining control of the programme in January 2000. This section intends to address the role of SRC's successor authorities within Ecos-Ouverture, as Chapter Six dealt with the impact of the above issues during 1996 and 1997 on Ecos-Ouverture.

Prior to reorganisation, SRC had provided finance to cover the operational costs of maintaining Ecos-Ouverture for the first year of the programme following reform, thus ensuring the continuation of funding until April 1997. SRC's responsibility as the regional authority responsible for the headquarters and a local office of Ecos-Ouverture was transferred to Glasgow City Council in April 1996, as the offices of the programme were located within this authority's

boundaries. However, prior to reorganisation SRC had instigated negotiations between its twelve successor authorities regarding the establishment of a 'West of Scotland European Consortium' (WOSSEC), which would assume control of the programme from Glasgow City Council upon its establishment. WOSSEC was not formally established until October 1996, whilst the negotiations to transfer control to WOSSEC were not formally agreed until April 1997. Accordingly at a time when Ecos-Ouverture was under considerable pressure as the tender process began, the programme was lacking a significant presence from the region, which held the headquarters of the programme. An Ecos-Ouverture official commented that the principal impact of reorganisation had "over time weakened politically the Glasgow base of the structure, and the fact it has taken WOSSEC a long time to come into being¹⁷⁷..has created a political vacuum over the last year" (Case 44). This political vacuum was a cause of concern amongst the SNA partners within the programme, as the lack of direction from the West of Scotland weakened Ecos-Ouverture as a whole. For instance, a Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) official commented on the vacuum which SRC's demise had left within the programme, in the following terms: -

"There has been an absence from the Ouverture side. The City of Glasgow, which was supposed to have taken over, we have not really seen them anywhere. The only person we have seen at a political level has been Cllr. McGrath¹⁷⁸, but I am not exactly sure what he is doing or what his job is with Glasgow City. Whereas before we knew the people with whom we negotiated and their system and their role, now these people don't seem to be in the same places, and we haven't seen the new ones, so there is an absence" (Case 36).

Discontent amongst the Ecos-Ouverture partners at the lack of an active involvement on the part of the unitary authorities in the West of Scotland became evident in January 1997, as agreement was reached to transfer WOSSEC's representation on the programme's 'Steering Committee' to the 'Assembly of European Regions' (AER). The impact of this change in representation was to

¹⁷⁷ The role of WOSSEC and the reasons for the delay in its establishment will be discussed in Section 8.5.

¹⁷⁸ Cllr. McGrath was Chair of Glasgow City Council's European and International Affairs sub-committee.

clearly signal the diminution of the West of Scotland's influence within the programme. An Ecos-Ouverture official based in Glasgow commented upon the significance of this change in the following terms: -

"That political vacuum has effectively been filled by AER, largely because the other partners in the Ouverture consortium were a bit worried about this lack of political clout, and they effectively invited AER to take the lead in the regional partnership. So where in the past Strathclyde led the regional partnership, it is now AER itself in the shape of its Secretary General, who is the senior AER officer in Strasbourg and the President of AER who is the President of the Flemish region in Belgium. For instance, I am sitting on a technical working group, which is preparing the proposal for the tender. That working group reports to the Secretary-General of CEMR and of AER. That is a big change" (Case 44).

While SRC provided finance to the 12 successor authorities for the period 1996 to 1997, at the beginning of 1997 agreement had to be reached between the WOSSEC authorities over providing finance to the programme for the following year. The requirements of obtaining the agreement of twelve authorities to finance Ecos-Ouverture was a long drawn-out process, given the financial pressures the unitary authorities were subject to. An Ecos-Ouverture official commented on this process in the following terms: -

"It has been a long job to talk to and convince all of the authorities. It is very different from that point of view, whereas in the past you would go to the European Affairs committee of the Region [SRC], and they would say Yes or No, now effectively we are doing that twelve times over" (Case 44).

The difficulties that Ecos-Ouverture experienced in attempting to obtain funding from the unitary authorities were symptomatic of changing attitudes within the new councils towards the organisation from those of SRC officials and politicians. Whilst SRC representatives would frequently claim that involvement within Ecos-Ouverture brought significant benefits to the Regional Council, such as status within the EU and access to Commission officials, respondents from the unitary authorities referred on a number of occasions to the need for Ecos-Ouverture "to sell themselves to us and give us some results, otherwise we will have some problems providing finance next year" (Case 57), whilst one Council Leader stated: -

“I’m unsure about the direct benefits of having the management of the programme in Glasgow, I am unsure about what they are” (Case 53).

The stark choices facing the reorganised councils with regard to European policy where finance was involved, were made abundantly clear by a European officer within South Lanarkshire council, which has one of the most developed European functions in the West of Scotland (See Table 8.4): -

“What you will find is, and I am as guilty as anyone, I have a LIFE tender in and if that comes off, it will create four jobs and I cannot support the Ecos-Ouverture tender and run a LIFE project, because the money runs out. And at that point, well there are so many unforeseen possibilities, and we don’t know if the tender [for Ecos-Ouverture] is going to be successful yet. And I think most authorities are in that position” (Case 52).

The increasingly constrained financial environment within which the authorities were operating and the change in attitudes towards Ecos-Ouverture, marked a significant change from the pre-reform situation. The lack of finance, and from some councils, the lack of a political will to retain the management of the programme raised doubts as to the ability of WOSEC to win the tender process or lobby as effectively as SRC had done during the merger negotiation with ECOS. These considerations may have been apparent to the personnel within ECOS-Ouverture, which lost a number of employees post-reorganisation, most notably in the case of the Director of the organisation who left ECOS-Ouverture to join a private consultancy which was a rival bidder in the tender process.

8.4.2 - Summary.

The reorganisation of local government in Scotland occurred during a critical period for Ecos-Ouverture, as the organisation as a whole came under considerable scrutiny from the European Commission and the Court of Auditors. Strathclyde Regional Council went to considerable lengths to cushion the impact of reorganisation upon Ecos-Ouverture via firstly, the provision of a ‘dowry’ to finance the West of Scotland’s contribution to the programme from April 1996 to April 1997. Secondly, SRC had entered into negotiations with the then ‘shadow’ councils over the establishment of a ‘West of Scotland European Consortium’,

which would act as the political representative of the programme in Western Scotland. Despite the substantial encouragement provided by SRC to the new councils to maintain their involvement within Ecos-Ouverture, the political status of the West of Scotland within the programme was considerably diminished as AER replaced the West of Scotland within the programme's 'Steering Committee'.

The delay in WOSEC's establishment and subsequent negotiations between WOSEC and Ecos-Ouverture resulted in Glasgow City Council being the political representative of the programme until April 1997. This situation aroused considerable concern amongst Ecos-Ouverture 'partners' at the lack of profile and direction amongst the West of Scotland authorities during a period when a tender bid would have to be prepared for the programme post-1999. Accordingly, AER assumed Glasgow's representative responsibilities within the programme. The lack of commitment amongst the WOSEC authorities to ECOS-Ouverture became apparent during 1997, when the unitary authorities were expected to contribute financially to the programme. Whilst agreement was reached, the financial negotiations raised questions over the ability of the unitary authorities to be involved in Ecos-Ouverture post-1999, should the tender bid be successful. In addition, individual authorities within WOSEC were beginning to openly articulate doubts over the benefits of involvement within Ecos-Ouverture and of their ability or willingness to finance the programme post-1999. In short, the reorganisation of local government had a detrimental effect upon the ability of West of Scotland local government to participate within (in SNA terms) a high profile EU initiative. In part, this outcome was due to the lack of finance available to the unitary authorities, however, the lack of political will to support the programme also reflected divisions with WOSEC regarding the appropriate direction which Scottish local government should adopt with regard to European policy. The role of WOSEC and the wider Scottish dimension to European interest representation post-reorganisation are addressed next.

8.5 1- Reorganisation and EU Interest Representation.

There are a wide variety of approaches which SNAs may take in order to attempt to influence EU decision-making, ranging from formal participation within trans-regional networks to the informal lobbying of Commission officials (See Chapter Seven). Section 8.5 deals with the approaches taken by SRC's successor authorities between April 1996 and May 1997 with regard to EU interest representation. Whilst this is a relatively short time-period with which to assess the policies put in place by the unitary authorities, it was possible to draw conclusions regarding the difficulties the new councils were experiencing and the likely direction which Scottish local government interest representation was likely to take in the future. In terms of the local government in the West of Scotland, EU interest representation developed across two main strands, post April 1996. Firstly, informal alliances were developed amongst European policy practitioners within Scotland and to a much lesser extent, informal alliances were developed with representatives at the European level. Secondly, the unitary authorities became engaged within formal structures of interest representation, notably within trans-regional networks (such as AER) and regional consortia concerned with EU interest representation at the Western Scotland (WOSSEC) and Scottish levels (COSLA). Given the relatively limited profile of the new councils, as compared to SRC, in terms of population or finance, and the need to build alliances in order to influence within the EU, it is not surprising that some degree of co-operation with regard to European policy, should take place between the unitary authorities in order to lobby as effectively as possible within the EU.

8.5.2 - Regional Consortias :- WOSSEC and COSLA.

Prior to reorganisation, SRC had approached the shadow councils with regard to the possibility of establishing co-operation between the new councils in the West of Scotland with regard to European issues. By January 1996, a Working Group had been established, comprising representatives from all the shadow authorities and SRC to discuss "the general principles of inter-authority co-operation on European issues..[and the] details of organisational and staffing costs of

European activity, including the nature of possible joint representation at Brussels level” (North Lanarkshire Council, 1996). North Lanarkshire Council was nominated as the Chair of the Working Group, whilst Dumfries and Galloway¹⁷⁹ Council was to be approached and offered a place within the Working Group. The “formal proposals” (North Lanarkshire, 1996) of the Working Group were to be submitted by March 1996, in order to allow the unitary authorities to sign up to a structure prior to reorganisation coming into effect.

Ultimately, WOSEC was not formally established until October 1996, whilst the European Liaison post of WOSEC was not occupied until January 1997. This delay can, in part, be attributed to the relatively low priority of European affairs as opposed to other local authority functions, at a time of great upheaval within Scottish local government, however, the delay was also a result of “disagreement within WOSEC” (Case 46). In particular, Glasgow City representatives desired a more prominent position within WOSEC (particularly as the council was the largest financial contributor to the Consortium, See Table 8.6), whilst a number of other local authorities were keen to resist this. The imprint of the earlier Working Group on the structure of WOSEC, was apparent on the establishment of the Consortium in October 1996, as North Lanarkshire acted as the lead authority for WOSEC, providing the Chair secretariat and financial support services to the member councils of WOSEC. WOSEC consisted of SRC's twelve successor authorities and Dumfries and Galloway. The objectives of the Consortium were fivefold: -

¹⁷⁹ The motivation for Dumfries and Galloway Council's membership of WOSEC is rather unclear (apart from wishing to be part of a regional consortia to improve its influence in European terms), as the authority did not obtain Objective Two funding and was unlikely to share the interests of many Western Scotland authorities with regard to urban and industrial issues. Instead the Council was heavily engaged in rural issues with regard to Europe, exemplified by the Council providing the secretariat for the UK Objective 5b partnership, which is a political lobby representing 5b “rural and deprived areas” (Dumfries and Galloway, 1996) with regard to European issues. This lack of common interests with the other WOSEC members presumably accounts for the Council's withdrawal from WOSEC in April 1997.

- 1) To seek to influence the development and implementation of European policies, programmes, directives, regulations, legislation etc, in the interests of the communities of the West of Scotland.
- 2) To disseminate information about European policies, programmes, legislation etc., and promote amongst Member Authorities the adoption of a European dimension to relevant policies and plans.
- 3) To maximise the benefits of European Union financial assistance to the West of Scotland and encourage the development of appropriate proposals, projects and programmes amongst Member Authorities, individually and jointly.
- 4) To represent the interests of the West of Scotland through membership of appropriate European networks and other appropriate associations.
- 5) To facilitate co-operation amongst Member Authorities on European issues and take such initiatives as may be agreed to serve the common aims of the Member Authorities.

Source: - WOSEC (1997), p.2.

The creation of WOSEC was an attempt, more specifically, to maintain “the profile and the reputation of the West of Scotland, and the positive image that Strathclyde had, and retain that for the new local authority set-up in the West of Scotland” (Case 49). In order to achieve these objectives, the Consortium appointed a European Liaison Officer located within North Lanarkshire Council, but based also within the Scotland Europa offices in Brussels for one week a month. The Consortium would meet at least twice a year to determine policy, with decisions being taken by majority vote. The budget of WOSEC initially was £134,546 p.a. (WOSEC, 1996 p.2), with each council contributing according to its population share (see Table Four).

In addition to the twelve successor authorities to SRC being members of WOSEC, all twelve authorities were also members of COSLA and as a consequence obtained access to the services of COSLA’s European policy services. The existence of a European section within COSLA preceded reorganisation, as COSLA had established a European team and opened an office within Scotland Europa in October 1993. Prior to reorganisation, the COSLA European team had consisted of a European Liaison officer (plus a secretary) based in Brussels. However in the period leading up to

reorganisation, COSLA reviewed its entire operations with regard to the form COSLA should take post-reorganisation. As a result of this assessment, COSLA decided to significantly enhance its European function in order to provide an improved service for its member council's post-April 1996. European policy was believed to be an area where the new councils would require assistance for reasons a COSLA official outlined as follows: -

"The nature of the councils we were dealing with changed. You didn't have the large regions. The largest council in the old structure was 2.2m, in the new structure it is 650,000, whilst the smallest mainland council is 44,000. In the old system a small council could gauge a relationship with its Regional Council, to ensure that it had advice on Europe, while protecting its ability to generate individual projects. That relationship has now gone, the size means that only the largest can afford large European teams, so the whole nature and aspect of European liaison in Scotland changed with the reorganisation. We had to respond to the new structure and we did" (Case 56).

Table 8.6 - Unitary Authority Financial Contributions to WOSEC (excluding Dumfries and Galloway Council).¹⁸⁰

AUTHORITY	POPULATION (%).	BUDGET CONTRIBUTION (£).
Argyll and Bute	3.9	4,945.63
East Ayrshire	5.4	6,847.79
North Ayrshire	6.1	7,735.47
South Ayrshire	5.0	6,340.55
East Dunbartonshire	4.3	5,452.87
West Dunbartonshire	4.8	6,086.93
Glasgow City	27.4	34,746.21
Inverclyde	4.0	5,072.44
North Lanarkshire	14.3	18,133.97
South Lanarkshire	13.4	16,992.67
East Renfrewshire	3.8	4,818.82
Renfrewshire	7.6	9,637.64
TOTAL	100.0	126,810.99

Source: - WOSEC (1996), p.5.

COSLA’s response to reorganisation was twofold. Firstly, to increase COSLA’s European staff from one to five and increase the resources dealing with European policy accordingly. Secondly, European policy was recognised as being central to COSLA and the European function was located at the centre of the reformed COSLA decision-making structure, within the Strategy team of the COSLA Secretariat. Accordingly, COSLA set out four principal aims of the European team within COSLA in terms of European policy, these were: -

- 1) To contribute to the development and implementation of EU policies and EU funding programmes to the benefit of Scottish local government.
- 2) To secure the influence and raise awareness of Scottish local government in European and international organisations and networks.
- 3) To ensure that Europe is fully taken into account across all the activities of COSLA and its member councils.

¹⁸⁰ Dumfries and Galloway contributed £7,735.01 p.a. to WOSEC.

- 4) To provide advice, information and training support to member councils to enable them to benefit from and respond to developments in European policy and programmes.

Source :- COSLA (1996c) p.2.

Clearly there are a number of shared objectives between COSLA and WOSEC which raised questions as to whether it was necessary to have regional consortia's representing parts of Scottish local government and COSLA representing Scottish local government as a whole vis-à-vis the EU. In theory, both COSLA and WOSEC representatives claimed that both organisations would have a role to fulfill with regard to European policy, for instance a COSLA official commented: -

"The regional consortia are part of COSLA, and they are a regional dimension of the national, but they are not the only grouping within COSLA. There will continue to be interplay between COSLA's agenda, the regional agendas, and the individual member council agendas. You use the different levels to give different emphases" (Case 56).

In practice, the distinction between the roles of COSLA and WOSEC were perhaps less clear to SRC's successor authorities, whilst the impact which COSLA made upon individual European officers following reorganisation, via the holding of seminars, producing information booklets and issue papers on areas of policy contrasted with the apparent inactivity of WOSEC. In addition, COSLA maintained a full-time representative in Brussels, whilst the WOSEC representative was only present in Brussels for a week a month. This overlap in functions between the two organisations was apparent in the close contact between European officers in the West of Scotland with both COSLA and WOSEC (See Table 8.7).

Table 8.7 – Contact between Unitary Authority European Officers and COSLA and WOSEC.

Frequency of contact.	% / (number) of respondents in contact with COSLA.	% / (number) of respondents in contact with WOSEC ¹⁸¹ .
Every day	0% (0)	12.5% (2)
Every two or three days	29.4% (5)	6.3% (1)
Weekly	5.9% (1)	18.8% (3)
Fortnightly	23.5% (4)	12.5% (2)
Monthly	23.5% (4)	18.8% (3)
Less frequently than Monthly	17.6% (3)	31.3% (5)
TOTAL	100% (17)	100% (16)

Source: - Reorganisation Questionnaire, Questions 9 and 10.

The overlap in functions between WOSEC and COSLA was evident to a number of European officers, whilst some European officers noted that whilst COSLA had reorganised its European function prior to reorganisation, WOSEC was still trying to find a role for itself, for instance one European officer commented: -

“I think COSLA plays an important function now, I don’t know about the role of WOSEC, it is in such a unique situation with the Clyde Valley councils all pulling in so many different directions, with their own identities, desperate to maximise the little funding that they have got and basically everyone is throwing the strategic priorities out of the window” (Case 57).

The overlap between the roles of WOSEC and COSLA in terms of European policy, began to have practical implications during 1997 as the unitary authorities in Western Scotland began to devise their lobbying strategies for the debates which were beginning regarding the renegotiation of the Structural Funds post-1999. COSLA had established a ‘working group’ to consider the position of Scotland with regard to the Structural Fund debates, however WOSEC perceived that a separate Western Scotland interest existed, given the urban and post-industrial nature of the region, and that a case could be made along the lines of

¹⁸¹ Note that there is one less respondent to the ‘% of respondents in contact with WOSEC’ question. This is because one of the respondents to the questionnaire was a WOSEC official and therefore his answer to this question was not relevant.

SRC's lobby to maintain Objective Two funding in 1992. An official within North Lanarkshire Council described the need for a variation in approach between WOSEC and COSLA in the following terms: -

"There certainly is a distinction with regard to the interests of the West of Scotland versus COSLA. Ours is primarily urban industrial and I would say that COSLA is displaying a heavy rural, agricultural orientation. There is a distinction there in the interests of the two. There is also a difference with regard to the Structural Funds issue, in the way that we think we ought to be going about things. COSLA is very much more locked into playing a Scottish game and sees everything as being lobbying on a Scottish basis, whereas while we see the value of that, we also feel we share a lot with other UK and European regions" (Case 48).

WOSEC on its establishment had taken over SRC's membership of AER and RETI. RETI which had been a major player in the Objective Two lobby (See Chapter Seven), was once again organising a study into the 'impact of economic and monetary union (EMU) and enlargement on industrial regions' with regard to the forthcoming renegotiation of the Structural Funds. WOSEC had agreed to co-finance this study, however this decision had led to "a running battle, with let's say the members of the Consortium who are more COSLA-led than Consortium led" (Case 48). Such disputes were a result of divergent approaches to EU interest representation and whether lobbying was most effectively organised at a Scottish or Western Scotland level. Equally, the lack of a consensus as to the role of WOSEC in terms of European policy vis-à-vis COSLA from the establishment of the Consortium and tensions between authorities in Western Scotland which were determined to establish their own identity as councils, ensured that developing common strategies within WOSEC was bound to be a fraught process, thus raising questions about the organisations effectiveness. Certainly a number of local authority European officers believed that their authority had fallen into WOSEC, without any clear view of its function, simply because their authority did not want to be left out of any emerging structures post-reorganisation. However, the resignation of Dumfries and Galloway from WOSEC in 1997 was a clear signal of the problems which the Consortium was experiencing attempting to develop a role for itself. These problems combined

with the enhancement of COSLA's European function following reorganisation, and the distinctively Scottish approach it was adopting, for instance through withdrawal from the LGIB¹⁸², established COSLA as the main Scottish actor with regard to EU interest representation.

8.5.3 – Formal and Informal Interest Representation.

Given the short existence of WOSEC, little evidence existed of active efforts to develop contacts within the European Commission or participate in sub-national lobbying efforts. For instance, COSLA had taken the lead from a Scottish perspective in terms of trying to influence the outcome of the 1997 'Inter-governmental Conference' (IGC) in Amsterdam (McAteer et.al., 1998). Equally, efforts to establish collaborative links with other SNAs were also at a fairly early stage. As mentioned above, upon establishment WOSEC became a member of AER and RETI. However, while WOSEC held positions on these trans-regional networks as a carry-over from SRC, a number of respondents questioned the benefit and cost involved of participation within these trans-regional networks. A common consensus amongst respondents was that AER membership would only be of value whilst WOSEC retained an involvement within Ecos-Ouverture. The financial costs of trans-national network participation was also proving to be a burden for a number of councils, for instance, with regard to RETI membership. One European officer observed that her council would "have real problems contributing to RETI next year" (Case 57) whilst an official from North Lanarkshire Council noted that: -

"There are real problems with these organisations, in terms of the amount of time and the cost involved...It starts to get absolutely daft, in cost terms, it costs £400 just to fly to Brussels, and when you add in the hotel, you are talking about £600 per person, per visit. And if you really want to get involved, that's a real expense" (Case 48).

¹⁸² The LGIB refers to the 'Local Government International Bureau', which represented all UK local government associations within the EU and internationally. For instance prior to 1997, the LGIB provided the Secretariat for all UK Committee of the Regions members. However, COSLA withdrew from the LGIB at the start of 1997, resulting in a situation where Scottish CoR members

In comparison to SRC's active involvement within trans-national networks (See Chapter Seven), the extent of WOSEC's participation looked likely to be far less extensive as a result of the financial commitments involved and the relative difficulty to reach a consensus amongst the Consortium member councils, regarding the benefits of involvement. Equally, WOSEC's involvement with actors at a Brussels level was also significantly reduced, this in part being due to the absence of a presence in Brussels for three weeks out of every month and the lack of any coherent strategy existing as to the type of SNAs with which WOSEC would wish to co-operate, although some effort was being made to improve contacts with Scandinavian SNAs (Case 49). However, at the Scottish level regular contacts between actors engaged with European policy were commonplace. Individual councils at an officer and political level would be in contact with Scottish MEPs and CoR members on a fairly regular basis (at least once a month – Questions 11 and 13), whilst relations with the Scottish Office were considered to be 'co-operative' in 76.5% of cases (Question 15).

8.5.4 – Summary.

The reorganisation of Scottish local government had a significant impact upon the structure and form of Scottish local government interest representation vis-à-vis the EU. Whereas prior to reorganisation large regional councils (notably, Strathclyde, Highlands and Lothian) tended to dominate Scottish local government interest representation in Europe, the focus shifted to COSLA as the primary actor engaged in this activity post-April 1996. This shift took place despite the creation of regional consortia at the sub-Scottish level to represent coalitions of unitary authorities. In Western Scotland, the establishment of WOSEC as an attempt to maintain the profile of the region following the fragmentation of SRC, failed to operate effectively due to a number of difficulties.

received their briefings from COSLA, thus establishing a virtual Scottish delegation to the CoR. See Christopoulos and Herbert (1997) for a more detailed discussion on this point.

Firstly, there were significant rivalries between authorities in the West of Scotland which diminished their ability to co-operate, whilst the process of obtaining agreement amongst all thirteen authorities to a common policy weakened the ability of the West of Scotland to “come up with influential clear cut policies” (Case 48) and portray the organisation as an active SNA. Secondly, the financial strictures facing the new councils significantly diminished their ability to finance European policies and maintain the level of engagement with European policies, programmes and networks sustained by SRC. As a consequence, WOSEC’s involvement within organisations such as Ecos-Ouverture, AER and RETI, looked set to decline in the foreseeable future. Finally, the restructuring of COSLA’s operations and the extensive resources applied to the European function following reorganisation, ensured that WOSEC was experiencing a significant degree of ‘competition’ from a structure with a similar function to WOSEC. As a consequence, a number of authorities in Western Scotland began to orientate their European policy towards COSLA initiatives, as the organisation appeared to be providing a more effective service than that offered by WOSEC.

Whilst the ability of local government in Western Scotland to act as a significant actor at the European level in terms of interest representation virtually disappeared following reorganisation, there did remain a close network of actors involved in European policy at both the Western Scotland and Scotland-wide levels, with this network involving frequent contact and information sharing between local authorities, Strathclyde European Partnership, Scottish Office, MEPs and CoR members. The shift in focus of Scottish local government EU-interest representation from the sub-Scottish regional scale to the Scottish scale, need not necessarily be a disadvantage given the likelihood of EU enlargement and the imminent prospect of a Scottish Parliament. Indeed such an arrangement could enable Scottish local government to be more recognisable and as a consequence, more effective in terms of interest representation vis-à-vis the EU.

8.6 – Conclusions.

Prior to reorganisation a number of concerns had been voiced regarding the ability of the unitary authorities to conduct an effective European policy. Four main problems were identified by a variety of actors as potential problems for the operation of European policy as a result of restructuring. These were firstly, that the new councils would lack the financial resources to provide the same level of co-finance as previously provided by the regional councils. Secondly, that local government would be less effective at articulating their interests vis-à-vis the EU. Thirdly, the disruption caused by reorganisation would result in a significant loss of personnel experienced in dealing with the European function. Finally, that the unitary authorities would fail to make adequate provision for the European function, as it is not a statutory responsibility, and would therefore be an easy target for cutbacks in terms of the provision made to deal with European policy by the new councils. This chapter assessed the impact of reorganisation upon the twelve successor authorities to Strathclyde Regional Council in terms of European policy between 1996 to 1997, with regard to these issues.

In terms of the provision made by SRC's successors to deal with the European function, a wide variety of structures were found to have been established by the unitary authorities, with only one authority having put no structures in place to deal with European policy. Broadly two main approaches were adopted by the unitary authorities. Firstly the larger authorities were found to have dedicated the greatest resources to deal with European policy, with the function either being located within the Chief Executive's Department or through a separate European Unit being established to deal with the function. Such an approach reflected a recognition on the part of these councils that European issues had policy as well as financial implications for these authorities. Alternatively, the remainder of authorities tended to place the European function within an economic development or planning department, reflecting an overriding preoccupation with obtaining European funding. Overall, the reorganised councils have attempted to maintain a European policy, although clearly this has been more problematic for

smaller authorities with less resources to deal with strategic issues such as the European function.

The process of reorganisation certainly caused widespread disruption across local government during the transition process, and European policy was not immune from this trend. Whilst there was a considerable turnover of staff during this period, the effects of this disruption were short-term. In terms of the ability of local government to provide co-finance for European funded projects, there was considerable evidence that local authorities were experiencing difficulties providing co-finance at the same levels sustained by local government pre-reorganisation. In terms of the Structural Funds, local authority applications had already been declining prior to reorganisation and changes to EU funding regulations continued to intensify this trend post-1996. Officials dealing with EU funding considered that reorganisation would intensify the difficulties local authorities were experiencing to provide co-finance. The influence of local government within the Strathclyde European Partnership (SEP) continued to diminish post-1996, as other institutions such as the LECs increased their levels of project funding. However the local partners and the Scottish Office were able to act in concert to limit Commission attempts to change the geographical coverage of the SEP. A notable trend was an increasing sense of disillusionment amongst the local partners with regard to what was perceived as the excessive demands of the European Commission within the SEP. In broader terms, lack of finance was inhibiting the effectiveness of local authorities with regard to European policy. Local authorities were reluctant to provide extra finance for programmes such as Ecos-Ouverture or for participation within trans-regional networks, thus reducing the profile of Western Scotland authorities within European structures.

Finally, in terms of interest representation vis-à-vis the EU, reorganisation had a fundamental impact upon the form this took in Scotland. Attempts to maintain SRC's profile via the establishment of WOSEC were largely unsuccessful. In

part this was due to a reluctance on the part of SRC's successors to commit funds to European policy. However of equal importance were tensions between the WOSEC authorities as to the direction in which European policy should develop as some authorities were keen to develop their own identity.

Reorganisation enabled resentment between localities in the West of Scotland to come to the surface, and certainly within WOSEC there was a desire to minimise the influence of Glasgow City Council. As Sutcliffe (1997) notes ;-

"In Strathclyde..a frequent point of contention was the extent to which Glasgow's interests dominated over those of outlying areas. Reorganisation, however, institutionalises such conflicts of interest" (Sutcliffe, 1997, p.59).

Certainly the need to reach agreement between thirteen authorities within WOSEC reduced the effectiveness of Western Scotland interest representation vis-à-vis the EU. Additionally, the significant enhancement of COSLA's European function shortly prior to reorganisation, provided a competitor to WOSEC in terms of articulating Scottish local government interests to the EU, and certainly a number of Western Scotland authorities considered COSLA to be more effective and relevant to their interests than WOSEC. Whether COSLA will be able to overcome the differences of interest between Scottish local authorities in terms of European policy, such as between rural and industrial authorities, remains to be seen but certainly by 1997 COSLA had become the principal vehicle for articulating Scottish local government (including Western Scotland authorities) interests vis-à-vis the EU.

A number of respondents noted that reorganisation had resulted in some positive benefits, notably through broadening the base of knowledge, in terms of the number of individuals dealing with European policy, and enabling European policy and in particular, funding applications to be brought closer to the needs of local communities. Alternatively, the ability for strategic decision-making to take place in the West of Scotland, and for concerted campaigns of interest representation vis-à-vis the EU to be conducted, was considerably diminished.

The new unitary authorities have attempted to develop European policies, insofar as their financial resources and strategic size will allow. It is difficult to envisage the new authorities being more effective in terms of European interest representation than their predecessors, whilst the early indications are that the new councils are experiencing difficulty providing co-finance at the levels sustained pre-reform. However, reorganisation had an unintended consequence in reinforcing the Scottish level of interest representation vis-à-vis the EU, although the extent to which COSLA will be able to present a coherent lobbying strategy to European Institutions, in the manner which SRC achieved, remains a moot point. Therefore, the overall impact of reorganisation has been to diminish the effectiveness of Western Scotland local authorities (and Scottish local authorities more generally) to operate within multi-level governance institutions and structures. However, one option for Scottish local government, and more specifically COSLA, maybe to ride on the profile and 'coat-tails' of a Scottish Parliament, through its proposed European structures, in order to engage more fully with the EU. However, this is an issue that is considered more fully in Chapter Nine.

Chapter Nine - Conclusions.

9.1 - Introduction.

As stated at the outset, the research has had two inter-related objectives. These were firstly, to assess the extent to which local government in the West of Scotland has undergone a process of Europeanisation, post-1975. Secondly, where local government in Strathclyde entered into institutional arrangements with European Institutions, these were analysed through the lens of 'multi-level governance' (Marks, 1993). In contrast to many studies in this area, the research adopted a longitudinal approach to these processes, in order to ascertain whether, and if so in what manner, the twin processes of Europeanisation and multi-level governance had changed over time and the impact of these changes upon the role of European policy within local government in the West of Scotland.

In order to achieve these objectives, the research relied not only upon institutional evidence of these processes, such as the creation of new institutions or structures, but also upon the perceptions of the actors involved as to changes which were occurring and the reasons for these. This is not to imply, that the perceptions of respondents were an accurate reflection of 'reality', merely that the responses they provided enabled a picture to emerge as to the form Europeanisation and multi-level governance were taking in Western Scotland, as perceived by these individuals. To some extent, these perceptions may result in policy outcomes, although institutional evidence of such a process was always sought where possible¹⁸³. In relation to this point, the study also adopted an explicitly 'bottom-up' approach to the analysis of these two processes, through focusing upon the impact of European policy upon local government in the West of Scotland. It could be legitimately argued that a 'top-down approach', such as focusing upon policy development within the European Commission, could provide an alternative depiction of events. However, the pre-occupation of the study has been with institutional developments and the perceptions of actors

¹⁸³ See Chapter Three, for a fuller discussion on this point.

within West Central Scotland with regard to Europeanisation. A 'top-down' approach would clearly not be able to engage with these issues and actors to the same extent as the bottom-up approach which has been adopted within this thesis.

Whilst the framework of analysis for the research was provided by the models of Europeanisation and multi-level governance, more specific terms of reference were established in Chapter Three. These were that the study would have four main lines of inquiry.

- Firstly, to analyse the impact of Europeanisation upon local government in West Central Scotland, in terms of the response of Strathclyde Regional Council to European policy initiatives, and the rationale underlying the evolution of SRC's policies. To relate the development of SRC's European policy to the wider literature upon Europeanisation and local government, as outlined in Chapter Two. Following reorganisation of local government in 1996, the extent of Europeanisation would be evaluated through analysis of the policies put in place by SRC's twelve successor authorities.
- Secondly, where institutional developments occurred in Western Scotland as a response to European policy developments, these institutions would be evaluated utilising the model of multi-level governance.
- Thirdly, whether the institutions developed in Western Scotland differed from either those in the rest of Scotland or the UK.
- Lastly, the experience of SRC (and its successor authorities) in terms of mobilisation into European policy-making arenas would be assessed through attempting to ascertain the extent to which SRC engaged with formal networks such as, trans-national networks, and developed informal networks (for instance, through a Brussels office or territorial networks) as means with which to influence EU Institutions and accordingly policy-making.

9.2 – Europeanisation in Western Scotland.

The early recognition by Strathclyde Regional Council of a European dimension to its activities, sets the authority apart from the vast majority of UK local government (with the exception of Birmingham City Council), and had a significant influence upon the policy environment which developed in Scotland with regard to European issues as compared to the rest of the UK. Whilst UK local government (and European SNA's in general) did not attempt to obtain direct channels of communication with European Institutions until after the signing of the Single European Act (1986), SRC was distinct for having successfully engaged in direct negotiations with the European Commission prior to this period. The emergence of a European policy from SRC became evident through the establishment of a representative office in Brussels in 1984 and the negotiation of the 'National Programme of Community Interest' in 1985 between the European Commission, Scottish Office and SRC, in which the authority had a prominent role. The impetus behind the Europeanisation of SRC lay in the need to obtain finance with which to fund the Council's 'economic and social strategies' at a time when central government had rejected the interventionist philosophy underpinning these documents and furthermore was attempting to reduce local government expenditure.

The identification of EEC finance as a means of disengaging the council from the ideologically and fiscally hostile policy environment of UK central government became apparent as early as 1980, through the creation of a European Unit centrally located within the Chief Executive's Department of SRC. This unit provided a co-ordinating point for all SRC funding applications and a centre for information on European policy developments. The European Unit was thus able to participate fully during the negotiations surrounding the NPCI to the extent that SRC was at the very least on an equal footing with the Scottish Office during this process, and more generally, across a wide range of European issues during the early 1980's. The establishment of a representative office in Brussels was in part symbolic as it provided recognition of the importance of European policy to SRC,

and more importantly, raised the profile of SRC within Brussels and in particular within the European Commission. The practical role of the office was to maximise SRC's access to European funding through improving information flows back to Glasgow of funding possibilities, whilst also enabling day-to-day contact between SRC's representative and Commission officials. In addition, the European officer was also able to pursue SRC's case for an integrated ERDF and ESF funding package, which ultimately resulted in NPCI.

The strategy of accessing European funds in order to, at least in part, finance SRC's economic and social strategies achieved notable successes such as the 'Employment Grant Scheme' in the early 1980s. As a consequence, SRC pursued the objective of an integrated European funding package for Western Scotland. The central role of SRC within the negotiations for the NPCI and subsequent partnership arrangements in Strathclyde had a determining effect upon the structure of 'partnership' in Scotland (See Section 9.3). Prior to 1986, the motivation for SRC's engagement with European issues was primarily financial. However the experience SRC developed within this policy field and correspondingly, the contacts established and profile of SRC within the Commission enabled SRC to become a significant sub-national actor amongst European SNAs post-1986. SRC benefited from the lack of competition from other SNAs in Brussels and the relative novelty of SNA mobilisation enabled SRC to have extensive access to the traditionally 'open' Commission bureaucracy.

The structure which SRC adopted to deal with European policy remained largely unchanged post-1986. However as the objectives of SRC's policy expanded to include an increasing lobbying and advocacy role for the council (for example through participation within trans-regional networks) so the workload of the European Unit and Brussels office shifted accordingly. The change in emphasis of SRC's European policy towards a broader spectrum of policy issues reflected the increasing policy impact of European legislation and the corresponding

increase in SNA representation in Brussels from across the EU. In addition, the removal of the vast majority of EU funding as a Brussels-based policy issue, following the creation of the 'Integrated Development Operation' in 1988, further reduced the need for SRC to engage in regular contact with the European Commission in relation to funding.

Whilst the European Unit within the Chief Executive's Department remained the co-ordinating point for all the Regional Council's applications for funding, advocacy functions and generally as a source of information on European policy, the impact of Single European Market (SEM) legislation did serve to widen the scope of Europeanisation within SRC as the majority of the council's departments were, to varying degrees, affected by SEM legislation. Post-1992, a number of SRC departments became involved within trans-regional networks which dealt with policy areas of direct relevance to individual departments.

The rapid mobilisation of SNAs onto the supra-national arena, notably through the establishment of representative offices, in order to attempt to gain access to the European decision-making process also impacted upon the form of SRC's Brussels-based operation and the supporting role fulfilled by the European Unit in Glasgow. Direct contact between SRC representatives and Commission officials became increasingly difficult given the number of SNAs desiring access, resulting in increased SRC participation with trans-regional networks, with the authority taking a particularly prominent role within 'peak' or 'generalist' networks such as AER and RETI. In addition, the Brussels representative increasingly had to liaise with MEPs as the European Parliament increased in importance, and latterly with the CoR within which two SRC Councillors were members. The increasing need to form alliances and build coalitions in order to have any chance of successfully influencing EU policy was recognised by SRC, not only through trans-regional network participation, but also through joining the Scotland Europa centre in 1993/4, in order to lend a Scottish dimension to the council's activities. This marked a significant shift in policy, as SRC had previously had little involvement

or co-operation with Scottish agencies in Brussels and indeed had been keen to portray itself as the SNA which represented the majority of Scotland and therefore, by extension, was Scotland. Increasing competition from other SNAs and the changing environment of SNA lobbying in Brussels required that SRC not only co-operate with other European SNAs but also organise territorially in order to conduct an effective European policy.

Strathclyde Regional Council as one of the largest SNAs in Europe, and for most of the period of this study, the largest SNA in the UK (following the abolition of the Greater London Council), could be expected to have experienced a significant degree of Europeanisation given the range of functions under the authorities control which would be subject to European legislation. However the early engagement of SRC in terms of European policy, and the subsequent extensive involvement of the authority within European structures and policy initiatives was not merely a direct consequence of the size, extent of policy competences and accordingly budget of the authority. The early engagement of SRC with European Institutions was as much a result of policy decision by a 'joint elite' of senior councillors and officials to initially, attempt to obtain European funding in order to finance the Council's 'economic and social strategies' and subsequently, expand this involvement as SRC obtained benefits from the initial approaches. This 'joint elite' remained fairly constant in terms of its membership as SRC's policy developed, although it did expand latterly to include officials from Strathclyde European Partnership, Ecos-Ouverture and West of Scotland MEP's. The existence of this 'joint elite' did arouse jealousies within SRC notably leading to significant power struggles within the ruling Labour administration. Nevertheless the cohesive nature of this joint-elite enabled SRC to develop distinctive European policies and to lobby effectively for the perceived 'regional interest' when the situation arose.

The ability to co-ordinate a European policy between the twelve successor authorities to SRC proved problematic following reorganisation. The

establishment of the West of Scotland European Consortium (WOSSEC) as an umbrella organisation intended to maintain the West of Scotland's profile within the EU experienced a number of difficulties which SRC was not subject to. Firstly, the creation of twelve authorities in the West of Scotland opened institutional jealousies between councils as some councils were keen to develop their own version of European policy, whilst all intended to avoid Glasgow City Council dominating the Consortium. Secondly, the tight fiscal regime facing many councils following reorganisation ensured that many councils were not keen to expand their commitments in terms of European policy, whilst a reappraisal of the benefits of existing approaches was underway. Finally, the emergence of COSLA as the main Scottish local government actor in terms of European policy, led to a split between the WOSSEC authorities as to whether a separate West of Scotland approach to European Institutions was necessary.

The reorganisation of local government in April 1996, enabled an assessment to be made of the extent to which Europeanisation had occurred within Scottish local government. The successor authorities to SRC adopted a wide range of institutional structures with which to address the European function. In broad terms, the new councils could be divided into two categories. Firstly, councils that viewed the EU as having a role purely in terms of funding and secondly, authorities which in addition to funding were putting in place processes with which to keep abreast of EU policy developments either through WOSSEC and / or COSLA. A number of authorities, in response to previous practice within SRC, were keen to integrate European policy across the policy portfolio of a council in order to deepen experience of European policy, and avoid a centralisation of policy as occurred within SRC. Whilst the most active unitary authorities tended to be the largest, the importance of European finance was central to all authorities, whilst mechanisms with which to stay aware of EU policy developments were co-ordinated through WOSSEC and COSLA¹⁸⁴. Clearly, the

¹⁸⁴ The ability of Western Scotland local government to articulate a response to EU policy developments or to pre-empt them, will be discussed later in this chapter.

extent of Europeanisation varied between authorities in Western Scotland, dependent upon the financial resources and strategic size of the authorities. However, the relatively 'small' size of all Scottish councils following disaggregation tends to suggest that Scottish local government had experienced a significant degree of Europeanisation which was being maintained, as far as possible after reorganisation, with co-operation between authorities on a pan-Scottish basis likely to offer the most effective approach in terms of both policy and finance within the new structure of local government. The ability of Scottish local government to cope with reorganisation into significantly smaller units and still maintain the European function, albeit in a reduced form, clearly indicates that Europeanisation had become embedded within the policy portfolio of the Scottish local government.

9.3.1 Multi-Level Governance in Western Scotland.

Multi-level governance refers to a "system of continuous negotiation among nested governments at several territorial tiers - supranational, national, regional, and local - as the result of a broad process of institutional creation and decisional reallocation that has pulled some previously centralised functions of the state up to the supra-national level and some down to the local / regional level" (Marks, 1993, p. 392). Western Scotland provided two examples of 'decisional reallocation' and 'institutional creation' within the framework of multi-level governance. These were the Strathclyde European Partnership (SEP)¹⁸⁵ and (Ecos-)Ouverture. Both institutions were a product of SRC's extensive involvement with European policy, in the case of SEP through SRC's extensive lobbying for a region-wide partnership from the early 1980's, whilst Ecos-Ouverture developed from SRC contacts within DGXVI and the prominent role of SRC within AER. The Strathclyde European Partnership was established to administer the distribution of European funding within Western Scotland, with the principal partners within the SEP being the European Commission, Scottish

¹⁸⁵ The term 'Strathclyde European Partnership' will be used in this chapter to refer to all the 'partnership' arrangements which existed within Western Scotland between 1985 and 1997.

Office and Strathclyde Regional Council, whilst latterly Scottish Enterprise and the LEC network became prominent actors within the partnership. Ecos-Ouverture was an Article 10 project involving collaboration between a range of SNA's from across the EU along with the European Commission. The programme represents an interesting example of multi-level governance as there was no member-state involvement within the programme. It is to the form that multi-level governance took within these two institutions and in particular, the changing nature of multi-level governance over time within these institutions that I now intend to turn.

9.3.2 - Multi-Level Governance and Partnership in Western Scotland.

Partnership in Western Scotland originated in 1985 through the designation of a 'National Programme of Community Interest' (NPCI) for the City of Glasgow, far in advance of most European regions where partnership typically began in 1989/90 following the Reform of the Structural Funds in December 1988. Accordingly Western Scotland offers a considerable amount of evidence with which to assess the development of multi-level governance and of the nature of the partnership process with regard to the Structural Funds. The early development of partnership in Western Scotland occurred as a result of persistent lobbying by SRC of the European Commission, with regard to the need for an integrated approach to the implementation of European funding. The NPCI provided a fixed amount of ERDF finance over a three year period, with the initiative being expanded in 1988 (into the 'Integrated Development Operation') to include the vast majority of SRC's territory and combine ERDF and ESF funding.

These early attempts at partnership were notable for two reasons. Firstly, the extent to which all the organisations involved (principally, SRC, the Scottish Office and, the European Commission) were engaged in a process of policy learning, and secondly the extensive involvement of SRC in establishing the structures and functions of these early partnerships, in contrast to the top-down bargain between member-state and European Commission envisaged by Marks

(1993). The extent of SRC's involvement in the negotiations for the NPCI and IDO, as an equal partner alongside the European Commission and Scottish Office, was in part due to SRC's early development of a European policy whilst the Scottish Office was relatively late in recognising the potential of European funding. Accordingly, SRC was able to benefit from this involvement through shaping the structure of the partnership and ensuring that SRC would benefit considerably in terms of the funding objectives of the partnership. Nevertheless, even at this early stage in the development of partnership in Western Scotland, the Scottish Office ensured that it would chair all the committees within the NPCI and IDO in a manner which closely resembles Anderson's depiction of the role of central government as a 'gatekeeper' which "mediate(s) between their respective domestic political systems and EC institutions" (Anderson, 1990, p.417).

However SRC's influence within the partnerships arrangements in Western Scotland began to diminish post 1988, a process which became apparent in the West of Scotland Operational Programme (1993) and the Strathclyde European Partnership (1994-96). This decline in influence was a consequence of a number of factors. Firstly, the formalisation of programming and partnership arrangements through the Reform of the Structural Funds in 1988 ensured that SRC would be unable to negotiate a funding package as lucrative as the IDO, given the competition for funding between EU regions. Secondly, the Scottish Office became a more dominant actor within funding negotiations through significantly increasing the staffing and resources to deal with the Structural Funds. In addition, the 1988 Reform of the Structural Funds resulted in the Scottish Office being legally designated as the 'implementing authority' for the programme, responsible for monitoring the finances of the SEP. In this sense, the increasing formalisation of Structural Fund regulations diminished the ability of SRC to innovate with partnership arrangements, given that the initial model developed in Strathclyde became commonplace within Scotland, and across the EU in various guises, resulting in less scope for policy innovation. Thirdly the increase in the number of partners within SEP, in line with Commission policy,

resulted in an increased competition for funds and correspondingly, SRC's share of overall funding fell. Fourthly, the shift in Commission policy away from 'hardware' infrastructure schemes, from which SRC traditionally benefited as the principal provider of infrastructure within the Region, towards 'software' schemes resulted again in SRC's share of funding diminishing. Finally the inclusion of new local actors within the SEP, in particular the LECs, reduced SRC's claim to be the principal source of local knowledge with regard to economic development in Strathclyde thus reducing SRC role in the negotiations of the Single Programming Document (SPD) in 1993 and 1994. These trends continued following reorganisation, thus reducing the share of funding liable to be available to local government, whilst the tight fiscal environment which local government operated within the period after reorganisation, appears to have reduced the ability of the unitary authorities to provide match funding for the Structural Funds.

The experience of partnership in Western Scotland is unusual insofar as the region provided a test-bed for early formulations of the concept prior to its formal introduction in the 1988 Reforms. As a result, Western Scotland provides a longer time-period with which to assess multi-level governance as experienced within the Structural Funds. Marks (1993) cites the example of partnership as one of the principal examples of what he terms multi-level governance, which he envisages as a new political space incorporating tiers of government and governance within new institutional arrangements, as the boundaries of the nation-state are eroded from above and below. The practice of partnership in Western Scotland provides evidence which both supports and refutes this proposition.

The origins of partnership in the region were twofold, firstly the paradiplomatic activities of SRC in the early 1980s, through lobbying the Commission, for an integrated package of funding over an agreed time-scale allied to secondly, Commission desires to experiment with funding arrangements resulted in the NPCI and IDO. The complex procedures developed to implement the Structural

Funds in Western Scotland were designed to incorporate local institutions firmly within the decision making structure of the programme, for example through establishing the objectives of the programme. However, central government was not passive throughout this process, instead adopting a 'gatekeeping role' which enabled it to monitor developments within the SEP and potentially veto policy developments contrary to Scottish Office interests. To imply that partnership represents an erosion of central government powers is to overstate the case, rather the form that partnership takes within a region depends greatly upon the extent to which central government is prepared to cede powers to the partnership and by extension, local actors.

The development of partnership in Western Scotland derives firstly from the proactive stance of SRC upon the issue, but once established the Scottish Office was prepared to advance the policy both within Strathclyde and across Scotland, as long as the department remained in a central position to oversee the process within the partnership committee structure¹⁸⁶. In addition, the partnership model is not fixed once it has been established, rather the whole partnership process is fluid with relations between institutions changing over time. The extent of this fluidity was apparent in the constant institutional adjustments to SEP and the reduction in influence of SRC within SEP as the partnership evolved, often as a direct result of Commission policy priorities. Therefore multi-level governance as experienced through partnership in Western Scotland is not merely an example of a policy arena where power has eroded away from the nation-state to the European Commission and sub-national institutions. Instead, partnership arrangements in Strathclyde illustrate that the nation-state remains central to the process, in terms of determining the degree of autonomy delegated to the sub-national level. Similarly Commission policy decisions do not necessarily empower SNAs within this process. The influence of SNAs within partnership arrangements is dependent upon the resources that they can bring to the

¹⁸⁶ The distinctive Scottish dimension to the implementation of partnership will be discussed in Section 9.4.

process, in terms of their policy competences and as a source of information with regard to the sub-national socio-economic policy environment. Nevertheless the partnership process developed in Western Scotland confirms Marks central proposition, that such institutions represent a new institutional 'space' where institutions from across a range of tiers of governance compete and collaborate within a policy field thus bringing European Institutions into contact with a range of actors not present within neofunctionalist and intergovernmentalist conceptions of EU policy making and implementation.

9.3.3 - Multi-Level Governance and Ecos-Ouverture.

Ecos-Ouverture represents an unusual example of multi-level governance as there was no member-state involvement within the programme as a consequence of the programme being an Article 10 funded project. The programme developed out of initial discussions between SRC and DGXVI officials at an AER conference in 1990, over the need to foster inter-regional cooperation between EU and Eastern European SNA's. In contrast to SEP, Ecos-Ouverture did represent a top-down process of multi-level governance as Commission officials had a clear vision of the role of Ecos-Ouverture (as it would become) when approaching SRC officials with the proposal. In this sense SRC was approached as representing a suitable vehicle for the delivery of the programme. However, whilst the Commission had a clear view of the role of Ecos-Ouverture, the actual format of the programme's implementation was initially devolved down to SRC, which developed the organisational structure of the project and selected partner regions within this framework. The extent of control decentralised to SRC, which operated the headquarters for the programme, was reflected in early Ouverture publications which claimed that the project was not just about inter-regional cooperation but also an attempt to operationalise the 'concept' of a Europe of the Regions.

Despite the visions surrounding the early development of the programme between 1990 and 1994, the direction that Ecos-Ouverture took during this

period was largely driven by DGXVI, as the main provider of finance, again reinforcing the importance of the resources which institutions bring to multi-level governance scenarios. Thus the expansion of the programme into Albania, Romania, the Baltic States, and the CIS during these four years were all instigated by the Commission which increasingly bore a larger proportion of Overture's overall budget. The extent to which DGXVI was directing the development of Overture became apparent during 1994, when DGXVI informed Overture that a renewal of the Article 10 contract for the period 1995 to 1999, was conditional upon Overture merging with a similar Article 10 scheme, ECOS, which dealt with co-operation at the urban scale between EU and Eastern European municipalities.

Merger negotiations proved to be a lengthy and acrimonious process, as both organisations attempted to win overall control of the new programme, via lobbying through institutional contacts and the trans-national networks associated with the two sides, AER and CEMR¹⁸⁷. The distrust between these two organisations ultimately led to DGXVI disillusionment with the management of the negotiated Ecos-Overture outcome by the SNAs involved. Multi-level governance tends to assume a consensual approach to policy and politics with conflict where present tending to be most common between tiers of governance. However the conflict between Ecos-Overture clearly illustrated the potential for conflict between SNAs and the potential this has to destabilise multi-level governance institutions. In addition to SNA conflict within Ecos-Overture, DGXVI was also coming under pressure from other European Institutions to reform the operation of Article 10 programmes.

Between 1994 and 1996, DGXVI had received serious criticism from firstly DGXX (Financial Control) with regard to the potential for financial abuse within Article 10 projects, whilst the Court of Auditors produced a report making similar claims

with regard to an Article 10 project in the Mediterranean (of which Ecos-Ouverture was not a part). In addition the Court of Auditors had questioned the legality of the process in which powers had been delegated to Article 10 projects. As a consequence, DGXVI had begun to centralise functions with regard to what were now termed 'technical assistance operations'. Finally, as Ecos-Ouverture had expanded financially and geographically, DGI (External Affairs) had become an increasingly significant provider of finance through the PHARE and TACIS¹⁸⁸ programme, and accordingly desired a greater input into the objectives of Ecos-Ouverture. In particular DGI was keen to promote a shift away from larger scale projects, as favoured by DGXVI, to a smaller focus for Ecos-Ouverture. The combination of these pressures upon DGXVI resulted in Ecos-Ouverture being put out to tender in 1997, with the programme being split up into three components. Accounts of multi-level governance tended to focus upon DGXVI as the principal provider of the Structural Funds, however the development of Ecos-Ouverture clearly signals the importance of considering not only the potential for policy shifts as a result of the Commission's pillarised bureaucracy, but also of the influence of other EU Institutions such as, the European Parliament and Court of Auditors.

Following Scottish local government reorganisation, the continued involvement of SRC's successor authorities under the umbrella of the 'West of Scotland European Consortium (WOSCEC)', regardless of the tender outcome, also became questionable as a result of the new institutional structure. As part of the general reassessment of European policy which occurred post-April 1996, a number of councils were unclear as to the benefits which WOSCEC authorities received from involvement in the programme. In addition, some unitary authorities were experiencing difficulty providing the limited finance to sustain Ecos-Ouverture. Clearly the restructuring of local government in Scotland had reduced the extent

¹⁸⁷ AER stands for the Association of European Regions and CEMR for the Council of European Municipalities and Regions. See Chapter Six for a discussion of the role of these networks in the merger negotiations and Chapter Seven for a broader exploration of their functions.

to which the new unitary authorities could operate within multi-level governance institutions, given the reduced resources which they could now bring to the process.

9.3.4 - Concluding Comments on Multi-Level Governance.

The experience of partnership in Western Scotland within both the Strathclyde European Partnership and the Ecos-Ouverture programme signify the extent to which all the actors involved, including the European Commission and central government, were involved in a process of policy learning within these multi-level governance institutions. Both institutions experienced a substantial change, within a relatively short period of time, as the partners involved attempted to shape the institutions involved to meet their own policy priorities. Within these institutions SNAs tended to be relatively resource-weak actors and thus over time less likely to be able to influence the direction of policy. Nevertheless where interests coincided between SNA's and either the European Commission and / or central government then SNA interests could be pursued. Despite the existence of multi-level governance and the interpretation that such institutions represent an erosion of central state powers, experience in Western Scotland illustrated that such institutions existed with the co-operation of central government which maintained a gatekeeping role, enabling central government to direct policy within the SEP. Multi-level governance in Western Scotland certainly represented a condition of continuous renegotiation as the influence of various partners within these organisations fluctuated over time, with the exception of the Scottish Office and the European Commission which remained central to the process throughout as a result of the financial resources and legal legitimacy of these actors within these institutions. In contrast SNA's relied upon their experience of the local / regional scale and the legitimacy they provided to these institutions as a lever to influence policy. The extent to which SRC was able to influence the initial form these institutions (in particular the SEP) took, illustrated

188 PHARE stands for 'Poland and Hungary Action for Economic Reconstruction' and TACIS for 'Technical Assistance for the CIS and Georgia'.

that even SNA's within centralised states can influence policy within multi-level governance scenarios. As Jeffrey comments, "while all SNA's lack a strong constitutional base, those which approach European policy entrepreneurially ..are better placed to 'muscle in' for a share of European decision-making alongside the central state" (Jeffrey, 1997, p.22-3). SRC certainly acted entrepreneurially, however part of the explanation for SRC's extensive European engagement lies in the specifically Scottish dimension within which the authority operated.

9.4 - The Scottish Dimension to European Policy.

The form in which partnership was implemented in Western Scotland, and latterly Scotland, is a prominent example of the Scottish dimension to European policy. Partnership in Scotland contrasted with that in England and Wales, where greater control was exercised by central government through partnership executives being staffed by central government civil servants resulting in criticism from local and regional agencies concerning a lack of access and information within the decision-making process in Structural Fund partnerships. The early experiments with partnership in Scotland, and the active role of SRC within this process, enabled an alternative model of partnership to exist in Scotland prior to the Structural Fund reforms of 1989. Accordingly, the other two regional partnerships in Scotland (East of Scotland - Objective Two; Highlands and Islands - Objective One) both followed the model developed in Strathclyde through the creation of an independent programme executive.

The partnership structure reflected a constant finding throughout the research process of a distinct Scottish policy community which dealt with European policy and in particular with the Structural Funds. This 'policy community' straddled a wide range of actors from a number of institutional backgrounds, prominently including the Scottish Office, local government, Scottish Enterprise and MEP's. The Scottish approach to partnership was able to evolve due to the frequent interaction of these actors and the corresponding 'trust' which developed

between them. A number of respondents noted the relative smallness of the Scottish 'policy community', in contrast with England, and the corresponding potential for cooperation between institutions which developed as a result. Such opinions were frequently expressed by officials, who whilst recognising the political tensions which existed (primarily between central and local government), also pointed to the close cooperation on a day-to-day basis between policy-makers. In essence, policy-makers were keen to co-operate in areas of common interest whilst avoiding areas of confrontation. Notable examples of the Scottish 'policy community' co-operating in order to achieve common aims, included the high-profile campaigns to retain Objective Two funding, obtain Objective One funding for the Highlands and Islands and subsequently, extend the Objective One funding to Argyll and Bute. The development of partnership in Scotland and the co-operation between Scottish institutions based in Brussels within Scotland Europa both provide examples of the operation of a Scottish policy community within the context of European policy.

In addition to a Scottish policy community, the early development of European policy within SRC was reflected in the creation of a European policy-community within Western Scotland as expertise in this field developed due to SRC's engagement with the EU. The network centred around SRC politicians, officials from the Chief Executive's Department, SEP officials and Strathclyde MEP's. This network gained prominence during the mid to late 1980s in part, due to the activism of SRC within trans-national networks and through the access these actors could obtain within DGXVI, in particular to the Commissioner, Bruce Millan and his senior officials. However, this network gradually became part of a wider Scottish policy community during the early 1990s as Scottish institutions mobilised more generally onto the European policy arena, notably through the establishment of Scotland Europa. Nevertheless, a number of respondents from unitary authorities post-reorganisation were still aware of a distinct close knit policy community in Western Scotland which centred upon SEP, and was a legacy of SRCs European policy. Local government reorganisation encouraged

Scottish local government to cooperate on a pan-Scottish basis and also distinguish itself from the rest of the UK, notably through withdrawal from the Local Government International Bureau (LGIB).

As Marks postulates (1996c) the existence of a regional identity / sense of regional distinctiveness, or in the case of Scotland, the role of distinctly 'Scottish' institutions which shared a perception of a common interest, which could be divergent from wider UK interests, certainly aided the development of multi-level governance within both Western Scotland and Scotland. In addition such factors also facilitated cooperation between institutions, particularly following the rapid mobilisation of other European SNA's to Brussels.

9.5 - Formal and Informal Channels of SNA influence.

'Multi-level governance' tends to emphasise the importance of institutional outcomes as indicators of SNA mobilisation onto the European policy arena. In terms of the 'stronger' European SNA's such as the German Lander, such an approach clearly carries weight given the entrenched constitutional position of the SNA's within their member-states. Nevertheless proponents of 'multi-level governance' do also point to more informal procedures via which SNAs can influence the European policy-making process (McAteer and Mitchell, 1996).

The early origins of SRC's European policy developed out of informal contacts between SRC officials and Commission officials. Such developments led to the early establishment of an SRC representative office in Brussels, again to foster informal contacts between SRC and the European Commission. Participation within formal trans-regional networks came later, following the mobilisation of European SNAs with regard to European policy and the correspondent increase in competition between SNAs for the attention of Commission officials. Formal networks such as AER and RETI provided a number of benefits to SNAs such as SRC, including access to Commission officials as trans-regional networks represented a large number of SNAs, whilst the support of a network also

provided legitimacy to SNA opinions. In addition trans-national networks can also provide legitimacy to a Directorate-General within the Commission, such as the legitimacy provided to DGXVI's policy position through RETI's role in lobbying for the retention of Objective Two funding in 1992. In addition, trans-national networks also provide a forum for contact with other SNAs wherein support can be garnered for individual SNA policies, such as SRC promotion and protection of Ecos-Ouverture under the auspices of AER, whilst also providing a 'meeting point' for SNAs to obtain partners for EU funding programmes.

However, a frequent complaint from respondents, particularly officials, was that the formal trans-regional networks amounted to little more than grandiose 'talking-shops', with the actual politics occurring within the informal networks which developed around the executives of organisations such as RETI and AER and the European Commission. In the case of SRC, the prominent role which the authority developed within AER and RETI was a product of the extensive informal contacts which SRC held within the Commission, thus for instance enabling SRC to hold the Presidency of RETI and take the lead in the lobby for the retention of Objective Two in 1992. Significantly following reorganisation, the new unitary authorities began to question the value of continued involvement within trans-national networks such as AER and RETI, as these authorities were not prominent within these networks and correspondingly had little influence in terms of their decision-making structures.

Clearly, the reliance of many SNAs upon informal channels of influence within the European decision-making process reflects the relatively weak position of these actors within EU structures. Attempts to influence EU decisions were certainly more likely to be successful when SNAs had the support, whether tacit or explicit, of the Commission or a member-state. Whilst SNAs with entrenched institutional procedures for dealing with European policy, which Jeffrey (1997) terms 'European Domestic Policy', may rely upon formal procedures, SRC and

by implication 'weaker' SNAs clearly rely upon informal procedures in order to further their interests with regard to European policy.

The principal mechanism developed by SNAs to further informal contacts between an SNA and European Institutions (and indeed, other SNAs) has been through the establishment of a representative office in Brussels. SRC was a pioneer in this area of European policy, with the initial establishment of a representative office designed to aid closer contact with Commission officials and correspondingly increase European funding to the Council. However, the Reform of the Structural Funds in 1989 significantly reduced the potential for a Brussels office to increase funding flows to the 'home' region through the partnership procedures outlined above, although this had been the case in Strathclyde since 1988 following the designation of the vast majority of the region within the boundaries of the IDO. Accordingly the role of SRC's office shifted to focus upon tracking EU legislation with regard to the Council's policy competences (particularly with regard to lobbying Commission officials early in the policy formulation process), establishing links with other SNAs, and identifying the remaining funding opportunities which existed, primarily Community Initiatives. The rapid expansion of SNA representation in Brussels also led to increased competition, as well as cooperation between SNAs, whilst the corresponding mobilisation of Scottish institutions within Brussels principally through the establishment of Scotland Europa, ensured that SRC's activities became increasingly coordinated with those of other Scottish institutions following SRC's entrance into Scotland Europa, in order to compete with SNA mobilisation from across the EU. Again, the impact of reorganisation served to weaken the ability of the West of Scotland authorities to mobilise effectively through WOSEC due to the costs involved, resulting in West of Scotland local government interest representation becoming increasingly channelled through COSLA on a pan-Scottish basis.

9.6 - Multi-Level Governance In A Devolved Scotland.

The experience of SRC and its successor authorities between 1975 and 1997 with regard to the evolution of multi-level governance relationships, clearly illustrates the extent to which such a process consists of continual change and complex, shifting alliances of interest between institutions at a variety of governmental tiers. The policy environment post-1997 continues to exhibit the same features, which offer both opportunities and pitfalls for Scottish local government with regard to the extent to which it will continue to Europeanise and engage in multi-level governance relationships in order to influence EU decision-making. The post-1997 policy environment consists of two key institutional events which will have a fundamental impact upon the relations between Scottish local government and the European Union. These are the implications of EU enlargement through the Agenda 2000¹⁸⁹ programme and the impact of devolution upon Scottish local government's relations vis-a-vis the EU. Although the research upon which this thesis rests considers the period between 1975 and 1997, I intend to briefly discuss these two events with regard to Scottish local government European policy.

The impact of Agenda 2000 upon local government in Scotland is likely to be most noticeable in terms of a reduction in the amount of finance available via the Structural Funds. The Structural Funds have been reduced from five objectives (if Objective 5a and 5b are counted as one objective) to three objectives¹⁹⁰. The West of Scotland remains an Objective Two area with a budget of £272m for the period 2000-06 (Scottish Executive, 22/12/99). However, the SEP area has been divided into fully eligible areas and transition areas. The majority of Objective 2 funding will be concentrated into the fully eligible areas. Transition areas

¹⁸⁹ For a discussion of the impact of Agenda 2000 upon the Structural Funds, see House of Commons Library, 1998a. For a more general introduction to the potential political and financial implications of EU Enlargement, see House of Commons Library, 1998b and 1998c.

¹⁹⁰ Objective One remains as constituted during 1994-99 while Objective Three and Four have been merged into a single objective Three and Objective Two activity has been merged with Objective 5b functions. In addition, the number of Community Initiatives has been reduced from thirteen to four.

represent roughly half the area of the SEP area and will receive funding until 2005 after which these areas will lose Objective Two status. As a result, local government in the West of Scotland (and indeed Scotland more generally) can expect to face significant cuts in finance from European sources. Consequently, Scottish local government is likely to find that the primary impact of Europeanisation in the new Millennium will be in terms of EU legislation. Clearly the role of the Scottish Parliament with regard to European policy will significantly structure the extent to which Scottish local government can influence EU policy-making.

The Devolution White Paper 'Scotland's Parliament' (Scottish Office, 1997) set out the framework for the Scottish Parliament's European policy, which would include the Parliament having powers of scrutiny and implementation over EU legislation as it affected its policy competences, whilst the Scottish Executive is to have full access to UK government policy discussions on the member state position and access to Council of Ministers negotiations. A European policy concordat has been drawn up to structure Scottish Executive relations with Whitehall in this policy area. The Devolution White Paper stated that 'the guiding principle which the UK Government sets out to establish in the relationship with the Scottish Executive on EU matters is that there should be the closest possible working relationships and involvement' (Scottish Office, 1997, p.18). In addition, the Scottish Executive will continue to have representation within the UK Permanent Representation in Brussels, whilst the Scottish Executive opened a European office in July 1999, in offices located in the same building as Scotland Europa and therefore alongside Scottish local government representation. The functions of this office, which are similar to those of Scottish local government representative offices, are :-

"The office will assist the Executive in supporting the European responsibilities of the Scottish Parliament. It will provide information to facilitate scrutiny of European legislation; it will assist visits to Brussels by Parliamentary Committees. It will help raise awareness among Scottish European decision-makers of Scottish issues and perspectives; it will ensure that the Scottish dimension is fed in early as European proposals are being formulated. It will

work to build Scottish links with other European regions and their Member States” (Scottish Office, 1999, p.1).

In addition a close relationship between the Scottish Executive and Scotland Europa is envisaged, for example the Scottish Secretary, Donald Dewar, stated:- “We need to project a strong, unified presence. We can best do this by working together with Scotland Europa” (Scottish Office, 1999, p.1).

Clearly the devolution settlement holds significant potential for Scottish local government in terms of European policy, particularly through improved information flows between the Scottish Executive and Scottish local government. A particular role may exist for COSLA, which has frequently been pointed to as an intermediary between Scottish local government and the Scottish Executive¹⁹¹, and post-reorganisation was becoming the principal Scottish local government actor with regard to European policy. Given that tracking EU legislation and building alliances with other European SNAs will become the principal task of Scottish local government in the coming years, the establishment of a Scottish Parliament and Executive will offer a considerable resource to local government. Access to information remains the key asset for SNAs, and the role of the Parliament as a receptacle and gatherer of information regarding policy developments will offer a considerable resource for Scottish local government. The opportunity to collaborate with the Scottish Parliament could enable local government to be considerably less ‘resource-weak’ when lobbying European Institutions. In essence, European policy may move closer to Jeffries model of ‘European Domestic Policy’ in Scotland, through the powers devolved to the Scottish Parliament.

¹⁹¹ For example, the McIntosh ‘Commission on Local Government and the Scottish Parliament’ in its second consultation paper which intended to indicate the direction it was taking, commented :- ‘Each council has a proper concern for the special interests of its own area; and these concerns need to be heard by government. Nevertheless, it seems to us obvious that it is essential for the health of local government that it should be able to speak also with a single voice, where that is appropriate, especially in dealing with government. If COSLA did not exist, it would have to be invented for this purpose. It is therefore important that COSLA should develop

Whether Scottish local government grasps this opportunity remains to be seen. Local government in Western Scotland was certainly experiencing difficulties in conducting a European policy post local government reorganisation. However, this did result in a strengthened role for local government at the Scottish level through COSLA at the same time. The European Union, will certainly provide less opportunities financially in the future. However, local government in Western Scotland experienced a significant degree of Europeanisation between 1975-97, developing a considerable amount of experience in European policy-making and the role of SNA's in this process. Whilst SRC was initially a pioneer with regard to European policy, Scottish local government more generally also developed European policies and structures of interest articulation in later years. As a result, European policy has become an integral part of Scottish local government's policy portfolio. The experience gained from this process of Europeanisation and the potential to 'ride on the coat-tails' of the Scottish Parliament with regard to European policy ensures that, despite the loss of a financial incentive, Scottish local government will continue to contribute to EU policy-making through evolving multi-level governance relationships.

its role and capacity to represent local government as a whole to the new institutions' (Scottish Office, 1998, p.10).

Appendix One – List of Interviewees.

Case Number	Position of the Respondent	Date of Interview
Case One	Senior Labour Councillor within SRC.	January 1996.
Case Two	Labour Councillor within SRC.	January 1996.
Case Three	Senior Labour Councillor within SRC (and CoR representative). Reinterviewed in third series.	January 1996.
Case Four	Liberal Democrat Councillor within SRC.	January 1996.
Case Five	Conservative Councillor within SRC.	January 1996.
Case Six	Scottish National Party Councillor within SRC (and CoR representative).	April 1996.
Case Seven	Liberal Democrat Councillor within SRC.	January 1996.
Case Eight	Former Labour Party Secretary within SRC.	February 1997.
Case Nine	Official from the Department of Physical Planning.	February 1996.
Case Ten	Official from the Roads Department.	February 1996.
Case Eleven	Official from the Education Department. Interviewed on three occasions.	February 1996.
Case Twelve	Official from the Chief Executive's Department. Interviewed on three occasions (once as a Third Series respondent).	March 1996.
Case Thirteen	Official from the Chief Executive's Department.	April 1996.
Case Fourteen	Senior Official from the Chief Executive's Department.	April 1996.
Case Fifteen	Senior Official from Strathclyde Business Development.	March 1996.
Case Sixteen	Official from Strathclyde Business Development.	April 1996.
Case Seventeen	Assistant to West of Scotland Labour MEP.	October 1996.
Case Eighteen	West of Scotland Labour MEP.	October 1996.
Case Nineteen	Scottish National Party MEP.	October 1996.
Case Twenty	West of Scotland Labour MEP.	October 1996.
Case Twenty One	West of Scotland Labour MEP.	October 1996.

Case Twenty Two	West of Scotland Labour MEP.	October 1996.
Case Twenty Three	Scotland Europa Official.	October 1996.
Case Twenty Four	Scotland Europa Official.	October 1996.
Case Twenty Five	Scottish Local Government lobbyist.	October 1996.
Case Twenty Six	Scottish Local Government lobbyist and former Ecos-Ouverture official. ¹⁹²	October 1996.
Case Twenty Seven	Senior Scotland Europa official.	October 1996.
Case Twenty Eight	Scottish Journalist.	October 1996.
Case Twenty Nine	Scottish Journalist.	October 1996.
Case Thirty	Scottish Journalist.	October 1996.
Case Thirty One	DGXVI official	October 1996.
Case Thirty Two	Commission official and formerly a member of Millan's 'Cabinet'.	October 1996.
Case Thirty Three	DGXI official.	October 1996.
Case Thirty Four	DGV official.	October 1996.
Case Thirty Five	DGXVI official.	October 1996.
Case Thirty Six	CEMR official.	October 1996.
Case Thirty Seven	Wales European Centre lobbyist.	October 1996.
Case Thirty Eight	LGIB lobbyist.	October 1996.
Case Thirty Nine	Merseyside partners lobbyist.	October 1996.
Case Forty	Lancashire Enterprises lobbyist.	October 1996.
Case Forty One	Saschen-Anhalt lobbyist. Partner region in Ecos Ouverture.	October 1996.

¹⁹² This respondent was interviewed twice. The first interview concerned her role as a lobbyist for a Scottish local government organisation, whilst the second dealt with her previous employment with Ecos-Ouverture.

Case Forty Two	Senior Official, Industry Department, Scottish Office.	January 1997.
Case Forty Three	Senior Official, Strathclyde European Partnership. ¹⁹³	July 1996.
Case Forty Four	Senior Official, Ecos-Ouverture. ¹⁹⁴	February 1996.
Case Forty Five	Former European Commissioner and Scottish Labour politician.	July 1996.
Case Forty Six	Labour Councillor (and CoR member), North Lanarkshire Council. Also interviewed in First series.	January 1997.
Case Forty Seven	European Officer, North Lanarkshire Council.	February 1997.
Case Forty Eight	Senior Officer, North Lanarkshire Council.	May 1997.
Case Forty Nine	European Officer, WOSEC. Also interviewed in First series.	February 1997.
Case Fifty	European Officer, Renfrewshire Council.	May 1997.
Case Fifty One	Labour Councillor (Chair of COSLA's European Committee), Renfrewshire Council..	May 1997.
Case Fifty Two	European Officer, South Lanarkshire Council.	March 1997.
Case Fifty Three	Labour Councillor, South Lanarkshire Council.	May 1997.
Case Fifty Four	Labour Councillor, Glasgow City Council.	February 1997.
Case Fifty Five	European Officers, Glasgow City Council.	March 1997.
Case Fifty Six	European Officers, COSLA.	March 1997.
Case Fifty Seven	European Officer, Argyll and Bute Council.	March 1997.

¹⁹³ This respondent was re interviewed in April 1997, in order to stay aware of developments following the first interview.

¹⁹⁴ This respondent was re interviewed in March 1997, in order to obtain information on developments within Ouverture post-February 1996.

Appendix Two – The Reorganisation Questionnaire.

This is a short questionnaire concerning the impact of local government reorganisation upon the operation of European policy and interest representation at the sub-national level. The data derived from this questionnaire will be used for the purposes of research, in order to obtain a PhD. The responses from this survey are confidential, however if you do have any concerns or questions, regarding the questionnaire, please do not hesitate to contact me at the address at the end of the below. The estimated completion time of the questionnaire is **10-15 minutes**.

Section A :- The European Affairs of your council.

Q1) Does your council have a Committee which deals specifically with European Affairs? (Please name the Chair of this Committee).

Yes. **No.** _____

Q1b) If you answered No, to Q1, which Committee does deal with European Affairs? (Please name the Chair of this Committee).

.....

Q2) Does your council have a department which deals specifically with European affairs?

Yes. No.

Q2b) If you answered Yes to Q2, how many officials are employed within this department?

_____. (Continue to Q3).

Q2c) If you answered No, to Q2, which department of your council, does deal with European affairs? (Continue to Q2d)

[illegible]

Q2d) How many officials within this department, are employed to deal with European affairs?

_____.

Q3) How would you term the extent of co-operation between your European team and other departments, affected by European issues within your council?

Very Co-operative	Co-operative	Not co-operative	No co-operation	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5

Q4) Which departments are you in most frequent contact with regarding the impact of European affairs upon their department ? [Please list the three most contacted departments, in order of frequency].

1. _____.

2. _____.

3. _____.

Q5) What are the three priorities areas in terms of your council's European policy, over the next two years?

1. _____.

2. _____.

3. _____.

Q6) Is your council a member of any European networks, e.g. AER, RETI, CEMR etc.

Yes.

No.

Q6b) If you answered Yes, to Q6), please name these networks.

_____.

Q7) Has your council applied for, or have any plans to apply for Community Initiatives ?

Yes.

No.

Q7b) If you answered Yes, to Q7), please state which Community Initiatives, these are :-

_____.

Q8) Which three areas of European legislation, is your European department, most concerned with?

1. _____.

2. _____.

3. _____.

Section B:- The External Relations of your Council.

Q9) How frequently are you in contact with the West of Scotland European Consortium?

Every Day	Every two to three days	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Less frequently than Monthly	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q10) How frequently are you in contact with the COSLA European team?

Every Day	Every two to three days	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Less frequently than Monthly	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q11) How frequently are you in contact with a Strathclyde based MEP?

Every Day	Every two to three days	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Less frequently than Monthly	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q12) How frequently are you in contact with a non-Strathclyde-based, Scottish MEP?

Every Day	Every two to three days	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Less frequently than Monthly	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q13) How frequently are you in contact with a Scottish, Committee of the Regions member?

Every Day	Every two to three days	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Less frequently than Monthly	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q14) How frequently are you in contact with Scottish Office officials, who deal with European issues?

Every Day	Every two to three days	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Less frequently than Monthly	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q15) How would you term the relations between your department, and Scottish Office officials, dealing with European affairs?

Very Co-operative	Co-operative	Not co-operative	No co-operation	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5

Section C:- Re-organisation.

Q16) How would you term the impact of the reorganisation of local government, upon the representation of Strathclyde's interests vis-à-vis the EU?

Extremely positive	Positive	No change	Negative	Extremely negative	Don't Know
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.

Q17) Dependent upon your answer to Q17, what have been the three main advantages / disadvantages, upon the representation of Strathclyde's interests vis-à-vis the EU, since re-organisation ?

1.-----.

2.-----.

3.-----.

Q18) Prior to re-organisation, were you employed in a position, which dealt with European affairs?

Yes.

No.

Q19) What was the name of the local authority you were employed by prior to re-organisation?

-----.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Once again, if you have any comments or concerns regarding this questionnaire, please outline these in the space below, or contact me at:-

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Glasgow University,
Glasgow,
G12 8RT.
Tel:- 0141-339-8855. Ext. 2500.

**Appendix Three - 'Resident' and 'Subscription' members of Scotland
Europa, July 1996.**

Residents.

COSLA.

East of Scotland European Consortium (ESEC).

Highlands and Islands EU Office.

Scottish Enterprise.

Maclay Murray and Spens.

West of Scotland European Consortium (WoSEC) (formerly SRC).

Subscribers.

British Energy.

British Telecom.

Caledonian Publishing Ltd.

Clydeport plc.

Committee of Scottish Clearing Banks.

Committee of Scottish Higher Education Principals.

East of Scotland Water Authority.

Telford College (Edinburgh).

Euro-Info Centre.

Europa Institute.

General Accident.

Glasgow Caledonian University.

North of Scotland Water Authority.

Scottish Whisky Association.

Scottish Chambers of Commerce.

Scottish Council (Development and Industry).

Scottish Council for Educational Technology.

Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations.

Scottish Design.

Scottish Environmental Protection Agency.
Scottish Environmental Industries Association.
Scottish Financial Enterprise.
Scottish Further Education Unit.
Scottish Homes.
Scottish Hydro-Electric.
Scottish Natural Heritage.
Scottish Power.
Scottish Tourist Board.
Scottish Vocational Education Council.
Scottish Water and Sewerage Customers Council.
Sea Fish Industry Authority.
St George's School.
Stevenson College.
STUC.
Robert Gordon University.
University of Edinburgh.
University of Glasgow.
University of Paisley.
West of Scotland Colleges' European Partnership.
West of Scotland Water Authority.

Source :- Scotland Europa, 1996, p.3.

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