



## **Interest Representation during the Corona Virus Crisis Results from the European Union and Nine European Countries**

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*Publication date:*  
2020

*Document version*  
Other version

*Citation for published version (APA):*  
Junk, W. M., Crepaz, M., Hanegraaff, M., Berkhout, J., & Aizenberg, E. (2020). Interest Representation during the Corona Virus Crisis: Results from the European Union and Nine European Countries.

# Interest Representation during the Corona Virus Crisis: Results from the European Union and Nine European Countries

## Summary Report

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*September 2020*

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## 1. Project Summary and Preview of the Findings

The Coronavirus crisis has exerted a major social and economic shock in countries worldwide. While the behaviour of individuals, such as their willingness to comply with social distancing rules, has been the subject of a big wave of new research, other consequences of this crisis have been less readily assessable. One of these aspects is the effect this pandemic has had on political interest representation and political advocacy. How did interest groups and companies represent their political interests during the Coronavirus crisis? How has this crisis affected their ability to mobilise, and express their views and needs to decision-makers?

The **Interest Representation during the Coronavirus Crisis (InterCov) Project** sets out to assess such questions by collecting data across active interest groups and companies in ten polities in Europe, namely in Denmark, Sweden, Germany, Austria, Ireland, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Italy, France, and at the European Union (EU)-level. From early June to mid-July 2020, an online survey was conducted among ca. 6.000 organisations and large firms. The organisations to receive the survey were selected as samples from existing overviews of the population of politically active organisations in the respective country and included similar shares of different types of organisations, namely business organisations, companies, associations of professionals, labour unions, and public and ideational organisations (from now on called ‘NGOs’).

In this report, we summarise important descriptive patterns we found in the data collected through this survey. We first briefly present our data collection strategy and response rates to the survey (section 2). Next, we discuss initial findings on six questions that we expect to be of interest to both interest organisations and scholars alike (section 3):

- Did Covid-19 change the involvement of interest organisations in decision-making and public debates?
- For whom did access to policy discussions change under the spread of Covid-19?
- Who faced mobilisation problems during the Covid-19 crisis?
- How did lobbying intensity on different Coronavirus-related policy vary?
- How do organisations perceive their impact on crisis management policies in Covid-19 times?
- What potential insights we can use to develop sustainable advocacy and public affairs strategies in the near future?

Notably, the answers we present here are not at all exhaustive but provide a first impression of respective patterns in the survey responses. Textbox 1 summarises our main insights, which we explain in section 3 (subsections 3.1-3.6), where we show both general patterns (across polities), as well as comparisons of the situation within each country. In the near future, we will work more with this data and hope to produce a number of more detailed academic articles on some of these questions. We invite you to stay in touch with us about our research. In the conclusion, the report gives an outlook on the next steps of the project, and ways to follow our progress (section 4). You will also find our contact details in case you wish to stay updated about this project.

### *Preview of the findings*

- 3.1 For the majority of organisations, advocacy access has remained relatively stable during this crisis. Still, there are both some ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ regarding access to political debates and decision-making.
- 3.2 NGOs have decreased their political access more than other types of organisations. At the same time, organisations that see themselves as more affected by Covid-19 increased their access.
- 3.3 NGOs have faced relatively large mobilisation problems in this pandemic, pausing their advocacy more often and mobilising later on Corona-related policies than other types of organisations.
- 3.4 Advocacy on economic rescue packages has been more intense than advocacy on health and safety measures or the easing of restrictions. This varies between sectors, but is similar across countries.
- 3.5 Organisations with lower staff resources have a lower perceived impact on Corona-related policies in all countries. NGOs rate their influence on these policies as lower in many countries.
- 3.6 The transition to online advocacy is not seen as very problematic. Few respondents think it is likely that their organisation will not survive, even under a long next wave of restriction. Still, there is a small share of organisations, that might need support in order to survive future waves of restrictions.

*Textbox 1: Overview of findings presented in section 3*

## **2. Sampling Strategy and Overview of Response Rates**

When Covid-19 spread in Europe in early 2020, it quickly became clear that this pandemic and the resulting crisis management policies could entail big changes for the representation of different social and economic interests in public policy. ‘Business as usual’ was disrupted and organised interests in European democracies were forced adjust to a new and unprecedented situation. With the aim of understanding the effects of this disruption, our team of researchers at the Universities in Copenhagen, Dublin and Amsterdam set out to design a comparative survey across interest organisations in Europe. For this data collection, we aimed at selecting comparable samples of organisations and firms in several European countries. To do so, we drew on existing lists of active organisations, such as lobby registers, directories of associations and lists of interest group populations<sup>1</sup>. When selecting organisations from these lists, we aimed for an equal distribution of different types of organisations within each country to make comparisons between both countries and types of organisations possible. This means that the ‘stratified’ sample of over 6.000 organisations which received the

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<sup>1</sup> For firms specifically, we also used lists identifying the organisations with the largest revenue in a country (such as fortune 500 lists), next to their appearance in these sources.

survey included similar numbers of different types of organisations, namely business associations, firms, associations of professionals, labour unions, and NGOs across nine countries and at the EU-level.

Table 1 shows the numbers of organisations sampled in each polity, as well as the completion rate of the survey.

|              | Surveys Sent | Completed   | Response Rate in % |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|--------------------|
| DK           | 730          | 304         | 41.6               |
| SE           | 650          | 225         | 34.6               |
| IR           | 652          | 175         | 26,8               |
| NL           | 700          | 161         | 23.0               |
| DE           | 549          | 97          | 17.7               |
| AT           | 617          | 95          | 15.4               |
| EU           | 1407         | 207         | 14.7               |
| IT           | 640          | 80          | 12.5               |
| FR           | 617          | 53          | 8.6                |
| UK           | 511          | 37          | 7.2                |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>6343</b>  | <b>1434</b> | <b>22,6</b>        |

*Table 1: Overview of surveys sent and completed per polity*

Overall, 1434 organisations completed the survey to the end and the survey has a total response rate of 22.6 percent. This is comparable to other large-scale survey projects in this area of research. There is, however, also a lot of variation across countries. Respondents in Scandinavian countries were more likely to respond to our questionnaire, with a response rate of 41.6% percent in Denmark and 34.6% in Sweden, compared to France and the UK, where response rates lay at 8.6% and 7.2% respectively. Despite this variation, we were able to use all the collected data for our project, and this report presents an overview of our first results.

### **3. Initial Findings**

In the next subsections, we provide first insights from the survey. We address changes in the involvement of organised interest under this pandemic (3.1), access to policy discussions for different organisation types (3.2), mobilisation problems (3.3), advocacy on Covid-19-related policies (3.4), and perceived advocacy impact on these (3.5), as well as future implications related to online advocacy and future waves of the virus (3.6).

#### **3.1 Did Covid-19 change the involvement of interest organisations?**

Our first general finding relates to potential changes in the overall level of involvement of interest organisations in policy processes after the spread of Covid-19 in Europe. On the one hand, there are reasons to assume that

political advocacy by organisations and companies has *decreased* during the Covid-19 crisis, since there were clear physical limitations to the interaction with decision-makers. Social-distancing rules may have severely limited the ability of interest groups to raise their concerns, be it in face-to-face exchanges with ministries, government actors, members of parliament or journalists. The urgency produced by this crisis might also have forced organisations to focus on other matters than political advocacy, as many organisations were challenged with revenue losses or with adjusting their work and human resources to the new circumstances. On the other hand, however, there are also good reasons to expect that advocacy has *increased* given the severe – even existential – nature of the crisis and its consequences for various groups. These extreme social and economic consequences of this pandemic might also have triggered interest groups to increase their efforts.

To explore these effects, we asked respondents in our survey to rate how frequently they have gained access to different venues of public policy, namely the media, the executive, parliament, and the bureaucracy before and during the crisis on a scale from ‘never’ (1) to ‘almost on a daily basis’ (5). To analyse the **change in access during the pandemic**, we subtracted the frequency of access before the crisis, from the frequency of access during this pandemic (i.e. in the months between March and June, when we ran the survey). Where this measure is positive, an organisation has **increased its access** to the policy venue; where it is negative, the organisation has **decreased its access**; and a value of zero indicates that there has been **no change in access**.

**Figure 1** displays the patterns in this variable for all countries - the change in access after the spread of Covid-19 in Europe across the four venues of public policy in our study. Interestingly, the figure shows that for the majority of respondents, namely ca. 60% in all venues, access has remained stable during this crisis (i.e. a value of 0). However, we also see that there have been both ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ of this pandemic in terms of access (i.e. observations to the left and right of zero).

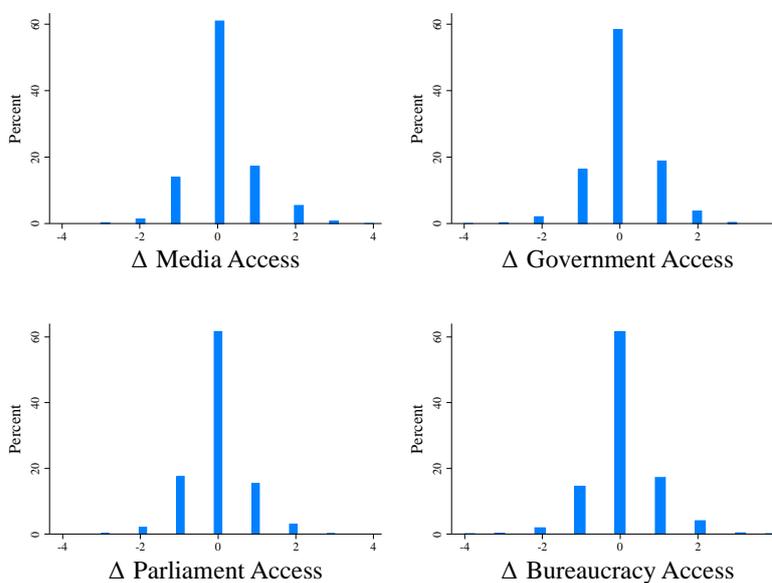


Figure 1: Changes in access under the Corona crisis to four venues of public policy

Roughly 20% of the respondents indicate that they decreased their frequency of access; while another ca. 20% indicate that they have increased their access. This suggests that the Corona virus crisis has not changed the overall frequency of the involvement of interest organisations all that much; venues of policy

debate have continued to consult interest groups and firms. However, there have been some distributional consequences of the crisis regarding who got voice more or less frequently.

A second insight from Figure 1 is that patterns look relatively similar across all four venues under study. Still, there are some nuances: For the media, government and the bureaucracy, the share of organisations *increasing* their access is higher than the share of those *decreasing* their access. Put differently, the mean change in access is positive for these venues ranging between at 0.06 (Mean  $\Delta$  Government) and 0.13 (Mean  $\Delta$  Media Access). In contrast, the pattern is reversed for parliament, where a higher share of organisations *decreased* access and the average change in access is slightly negative at -0.01 (Mean  $\Delta$  Parliament). This potentially mirrors that the role of the legislature has been less central under the pandemic, while media discussions, heads of states and central ministers, as well as (health-related) authorities have become more important targets of advocacy.

An important question is, then, what explains the changes in access during this pandemic. A first possible explanation might be that this might vary strongly between polities: Some countries might have closed their doors, perhaps because they were overwhelmed by this crisis, while others might have continued as usual, or even opened up to stakeholders in order to get valuable input in these highly uncertain times. Interestingly,

our data gives little evidence for this line of reasoning.

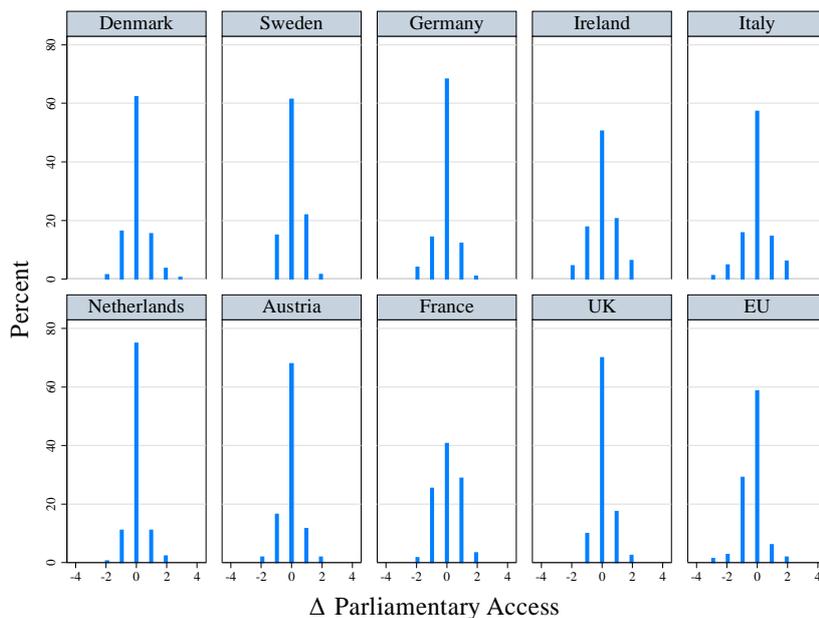


Figure 2: Changes in parliamentary access under the Corona crisis by polity

As **Figure 2** shows for the example of changes in access to parliamentarians, patterns look relatively similar across countries. Still, smaller differences between polities can still be noted in Figure 2: The share of ‘stable’ access (i.e. values of zero) varies between ca. 40% (France)<sup>2</sup> to over 70% (the Netherlands). Moreover, the share of increases in parliamentary access is larger than the share of decreases in some of the countries (Sweden, Ireland,

the UK and France). Another notable exception seems to be the case of the European Parliament, where access seems to have decreased for over 30% of the respondents and increased for very few. This reflects a general

<sup>2</sup> Note, however, that in France our response rate is very low (8.6%), which might explain that this is more of an ‘outlier’ than other countries.

pattern that we see in our data: access of interest organisations to EU institutions seems to have decreased for a larger share of respondents during this pandemic. Presumably, this is because the national level has been a more pivotal arena for decision-making, for example on closing borders, opening sectors etc. It could also be that the international travel restrictions had a greater practical impact on the EU policy process than the national one.

**3.2 For whom did access to policy discussions change under the spread of Covid-19?**

An important next question is which kind of organisations gained more access to decision-makers during this pandemic. A concern might be that some types of organisations may not have received enough voice, while others were able to dominate policy debates. Our next finding, therefore, relates to the types of organisations, which increased their access to different venues of public policy during the Covid-19 crisis.

**Figure 3** compares the changes in access for 1) Business organisations (including: business associations and firms), 2) Profession groups (including: professional associations and labour unions) and 3) NGOs (including: citizen membership groups and cause groups)<sup>3</sup>. It shows that across all four venues, there is a higher share of NGOs that have decreased their access relative to pre-crisis access, whereas a higher share of both Business organisations and Professional groups have increased their access in most venues.

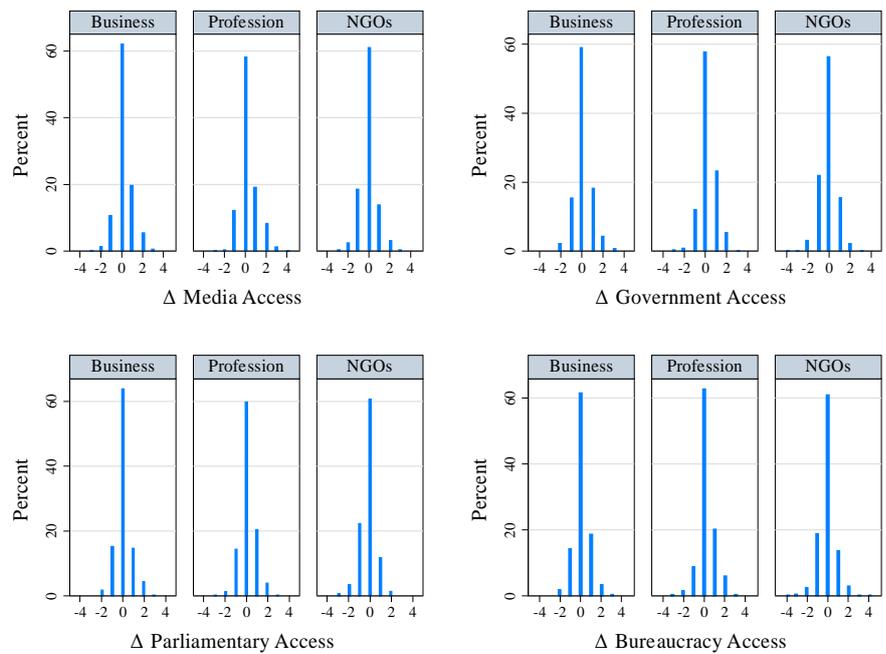


Figure 3: Changes in access under the Corona crisis by organisation type

One may argue that these findings could be driven by two factors: 1) differences in the resources of these organisations and/or 2) their level of affectedness by the Coronavirus crisis. We probe these two considerations

<sup>3</sup> Research organisations and think tanks were categorised depending on their stated focus on economic issues (Business organisations) or social issues (NGOs).

in bivariate aspects in turn. Moreover, we report briefly on the findings of multivariate analyses we have run to assess the joint effects of these factors.

In a bivariate analysis, we find some preliminary evidence for an effect of resources, measured in terms of the full-time staff members that work on public affairs and political work for the organisation. As **Figure 4** shows, a higher share of organisations with higher advocacy resources (i.e. 5 or more full-time employees working on

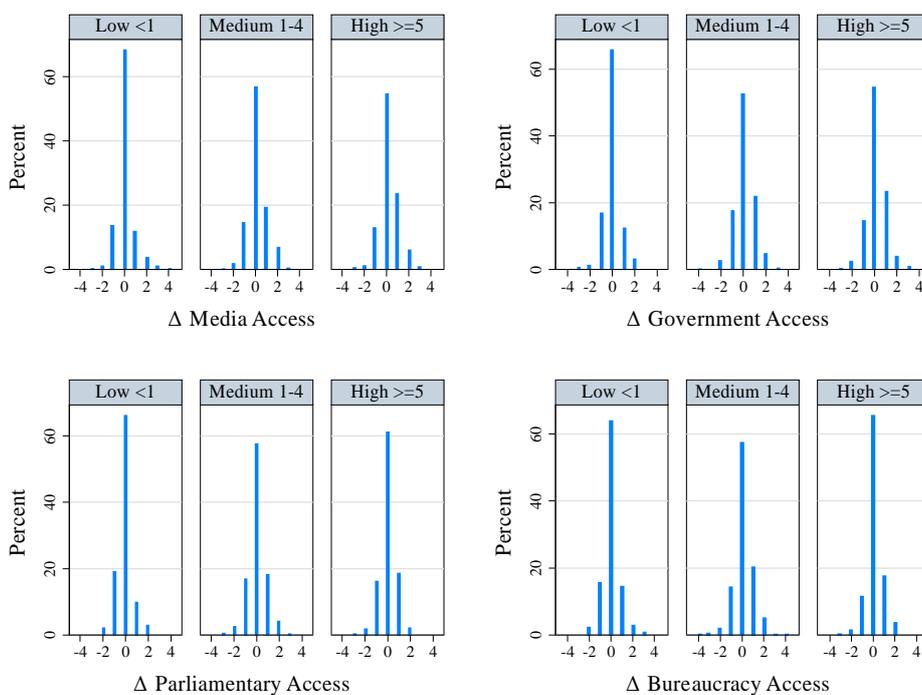


Figure 4: Changes in access in public affairs

public affairs) seem to have increased their access, whereas among organisations with lower resources (i.e. less than 1 full time employee working on public affairs), a lower share increased their access.

Importantly, however, in multivariate analyses that we conducted (not shown here), **we find that there is no statistically significant positive effect** of higher resources on changes in access in any of the venues.

What we do find in these analyses, however, is a highly significant effect of the **self-perceived level of affectedness** by the Covid-19 crisis (relative to other stakeholders in the country). Those organisations that see themselves as more affected by the Corona virus crisis have increased their access significantly more than organisations that see themselves as less affected. **Figure 5** indicates this in the simple bivariate plot. Across all four venues, we see that a higher share of respondents who answered that they were more affected than other stakeholders by the Corona virus crisis increased their access during this crisis, compared to their access before the pandemic. The opposite holds for respondents that see themselves equally or less affected: here it is a higher share that decreased their access. In our multivariate analyses, this is a **highly robust result**: more affected organisations have increased their access significantly more during the Corona virus crisis than less affected organisations. We interpret this as **‘good news’** regarding the adaptability of European systems of interest representation, because venues of public policy have opened their doors proportionately more to those that were especially impacted by this crisis.

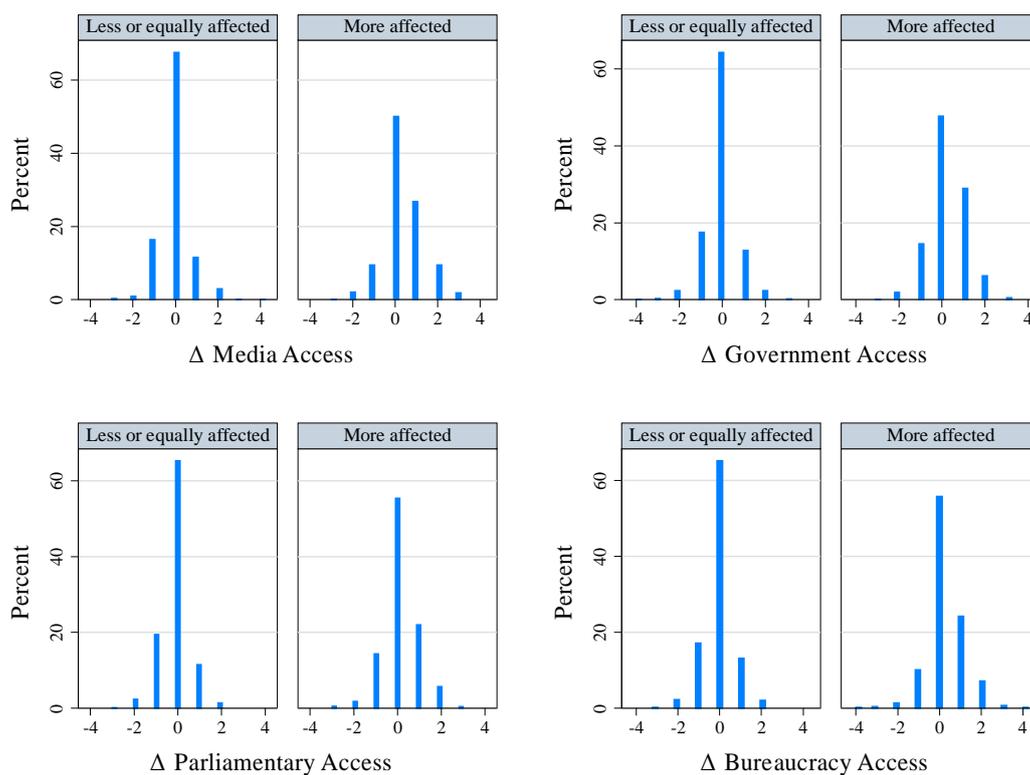


Figure 5: Changes in access under the Corona crisis by levels of affectedness (self-perceived)

Less ‘good news’ – for some actor types - is that, nonetheless, the finding on disadvantages for NGOs (Figure 3) prevails, even when taking into account differences in the levels of affectedness. Our multivariate analyses suggest that NGOs have increased access significantly less than the other group types<sup>4</sup>.

### 3.3. Who faced mobilisation problems during the Covid-19 crisis?

When wanting to probe potential drivers of the changes in access that we documented in the last section, an important question is whether (some types of) organisations were unable to continue their work during this pandemic. Such inability to continue advocating for the organisation’s concerns - or the concerns of its members or beneficiaries - may put the organisation at a disadvantage and might make it difficult to keep relations with officials and or journalists alive. According to the survey responses, roughly 20% the organisation in our study needed to pause their advocacy at some point during the Coronavirus crisis.

<sup>4</sup> We are currently working on a full academic paper on these relationship. Once this is published, a link to it will appear on our professional websites and we will inform about it on twitter.

**Figure 6** shows the shares of different organisation types that paused their advocacy work in the months between March and June. While over 26% of NGOs answered that they put their work on hold at some point, only ca 16% of both Business organisations (firms and business associations) and Profession organisations (labour unions and associations of professionals) answered that this was the case. These more pronounced mobilisation problems faced by NGOs might be one explanation for why they have had disadvantages regarding keeping or increasing their levels of access during this pandemic.

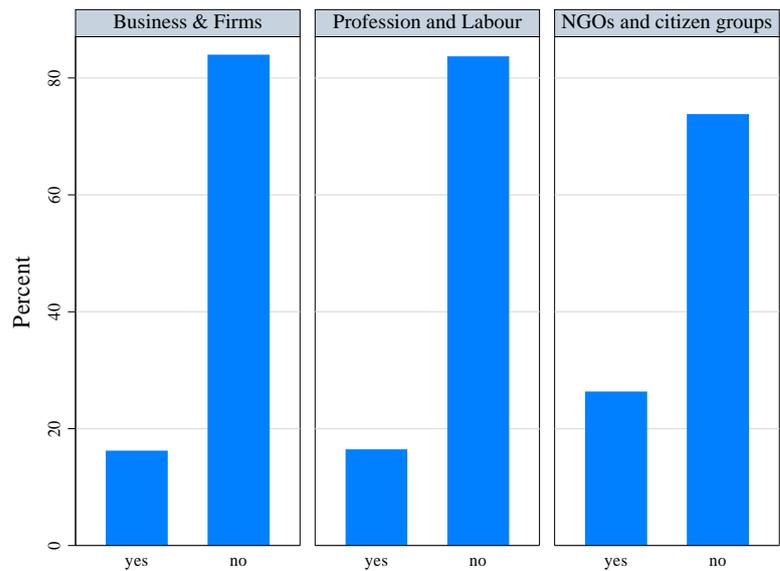


Figure 6: Share of organisations that put their political advocacy on hold

**Figure 7** further supports this interpretation by adding a timing element regarding the mobilisation on Coronavirus-related policies for different types of organisations. The left-hand side of Figure 7 shows that ca. 50% of NGOs started lobbying on Coronavirus-related policies in March, whereas over 60% of respondents in the categories Business and Profession organisations did so. The right-hand side of Figure 7 adds the insight that of these NGOs, a lower share started their activities already in the first week of March (ca 20%) when the situation worsened and most countries were considering or entering lockdown policies. In contrast, over 40% of respondents in the Business category that started activities in March, already started them from the first week. These differences in timing support the argument that NGOs faced somewhat higher mobilisation problems during this crisis.

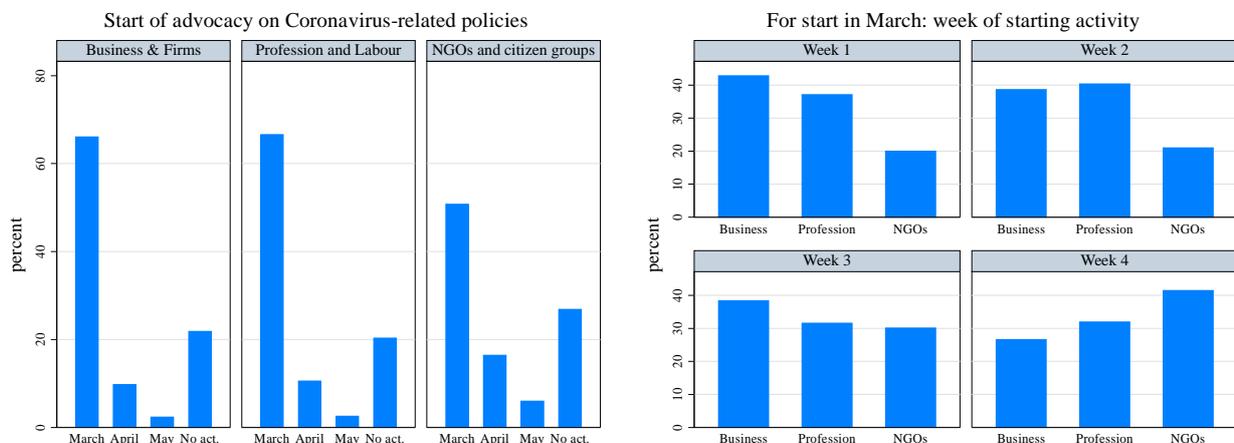


Figure 7: Start of Advocacy on Corona-related policies & For March: Specific Start of Advocacy

Finally, **Figure 8** illustrates some variation in the timing of the start of Coronavirus-related advocacy in the ten different polities. A higher share of respondents in Italy, for example, started their work in March (80%), whereas for EU-level groups only ca. 50% of respondents started Coronavirus-related advocacy work that month. Nevertheless, across countries it seems that most organisations either became active in March or had ‘no activity’ related to Covid-19 policies at all, with only a small share of groups falling in-between. This might suggest that amongst the larger shares of groups working on this issue in March (between ca 50-80% of respondents in each country), ‘early mover’ advantages could be pivotal. Here the patterns we showed in Figure 7 (right-hand side) for NGOs typically mobilising later in March might be important.

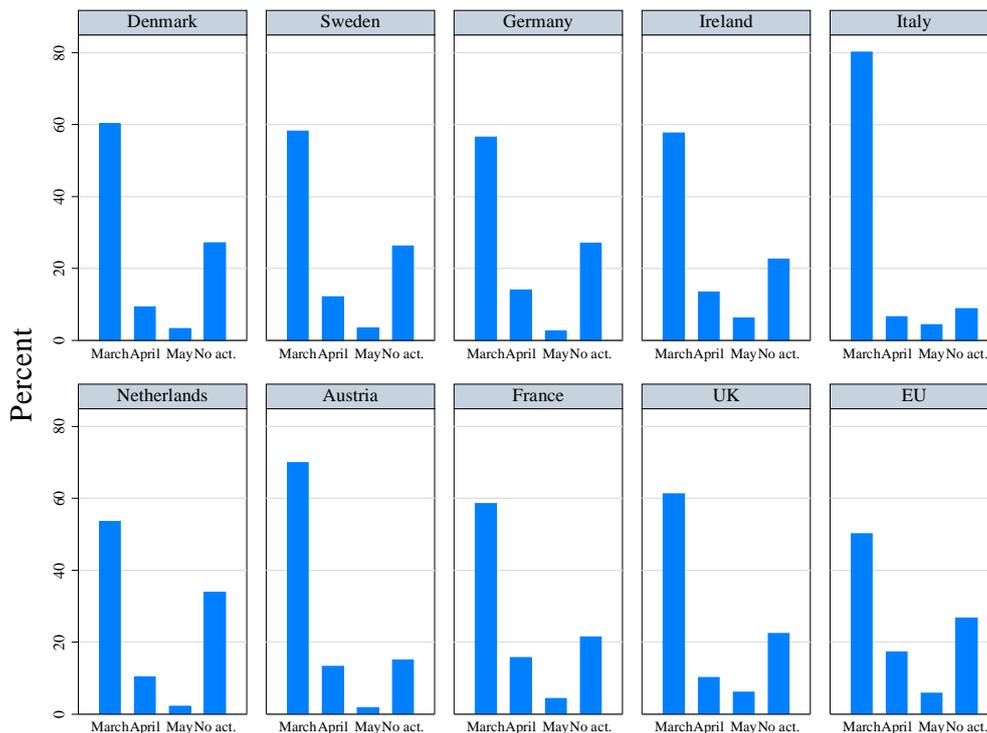


Figure 8: Start of advocacy on Corona-related policies across countries, compared to those not active on such policies ('No act.')

### 3.4 How did lobbying intensity on different Corona-related policy positions vary?

The differences we pinpointed so far might be especially important in relation to the specific Coronavirus-related policies that different kinds of social and economic actors favoured. **Figure 9** shows the intensity, on a scale from 0 ('not active') to 10 ('very active'), with which respondents from organisations in different categories advocated on **three Coronavirus-related issues**: 1) the introduction on continuation of **strong health and safely policies**, 2) the **easing of restrictions**, for instancing opening certain sectors, and 3) the introduction or extension of **economic help packages**.

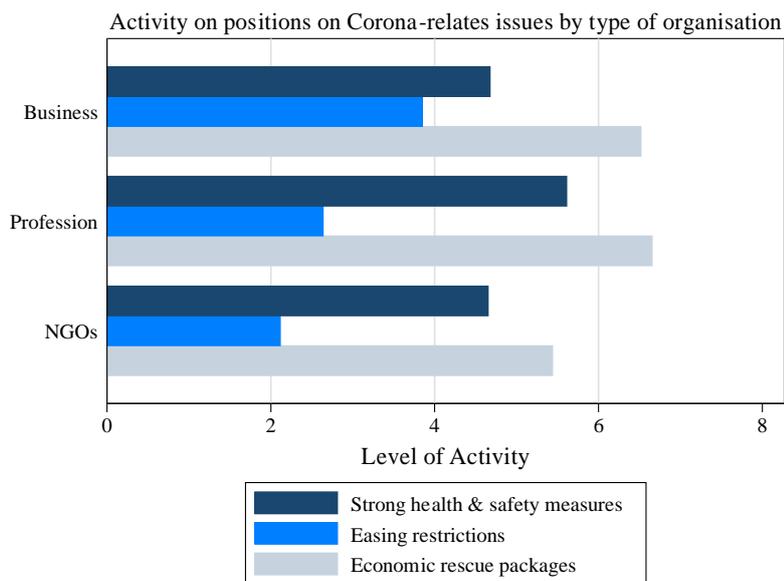


Figure 9: Mean Levels of Activity for different Corona-related policies by organisation type. Scale 0-10

For all three organisation types, mean intensity is highest for the aspect of economic rescue packages, and lowest for easing restrictions. Business organisations and firms, however, have the highest mean intensity of advocacy activity on this aspect (mean: 3.9), whereas respondents from NGOs have the lowest mean on the advocacy activity on easing restriction (mean 2).

**Figure 10** adds to this by looking at how these activity levels varied **by sector in which organisations are active** in our total sample of ten polities; and shows marked differences. The respondents in the sectors ‘Development & human rights’ and ‘Environment & animal rights’ generally have low mean levels of activity in all three Corona-related positions. In contrast, the sectors ‘Arts, Entertainment & Leisure’ and ‘Transportation & hospitality’ have higher levels of activity, especially when it comes to economic rescue packages. Notably, these differences in advocacy intensity, for instance on help packages, might have important distributional consequences in the future, if the size of help packages is also related to this intensity of advocating different interests in society. We aim to assess this in future stages of this project.

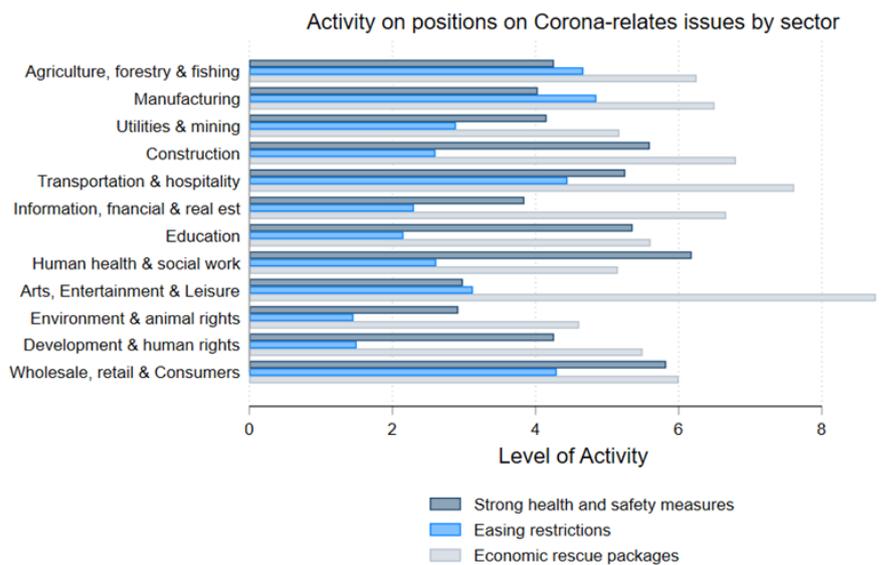


Figure 10: Mean Levels of Activity for different Corona-related policies by sector. Scale 0-10

Finally, **Figure 11** gives an overview of **variation in the level of activity on these Corona-related policy positions by country**. It shows the mean intensity of advocacy by respondents for each aspect in

each polity. This comparison illustrates that advocacy on economic rescue packages has been relatively high in all polities ranging between a mean rating of 5.4 in Denmark to over 7.3 in Austria and France. In contrast, there seems to be more variation in activity on health and safety measures and the easing of restrictions. Some of this variation seems to be in line with varying government policies: In Sweden, for example the level of activity on easing restrictions is low (means of around 2.1), whereas it is much higher in France (means of 4.4). Regarding activity on strong health and safety measures, it seems that in countries that have been especially hard-hit by the spread of the virus, such as Italy and the UK, the mean level of activity on health and safety measures is higher compared to countries that have experienced lower rates of (fatal) infection, such as Denmark and Germany. Overall, this tentatively suggests that the activities of interest groups and firms have been responsive to the national context conditions under this global pandemic.

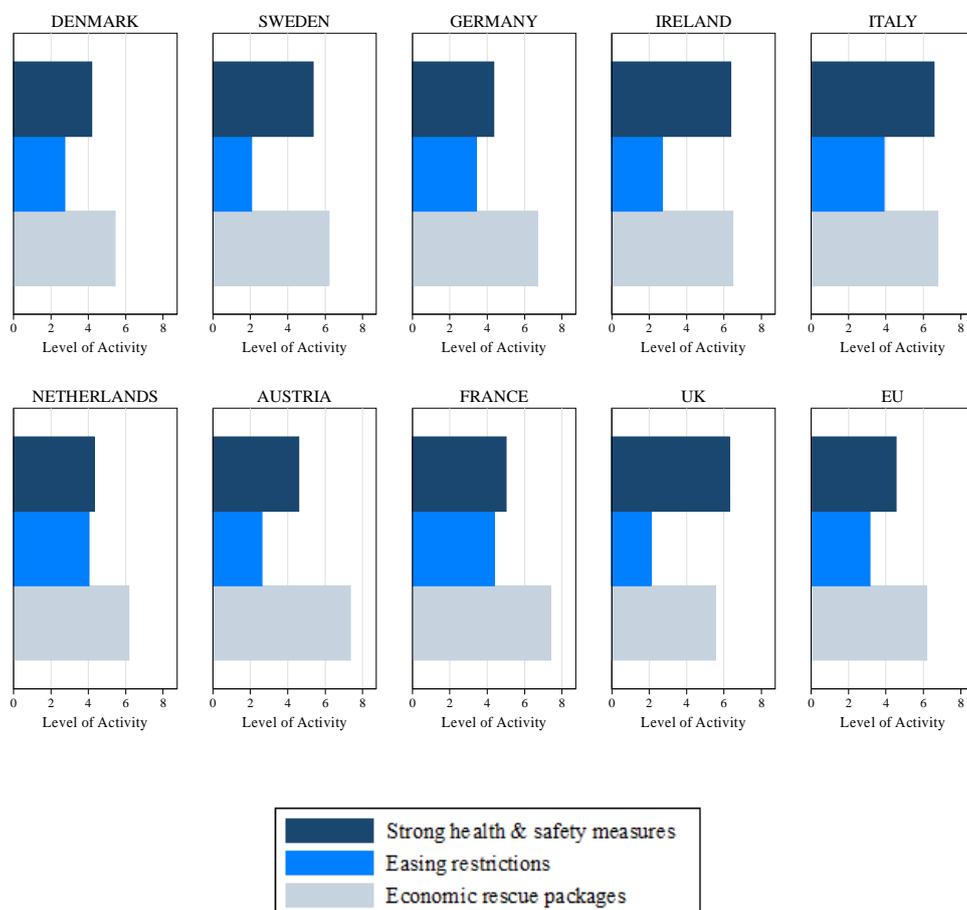


Figure 11: Mean Levels of Activity for different Corona-related policies by polity. Scale 0-10

### 3.5 How do organisations see their impact on policies during Covid-19?

Some might argue that differences in mobilisation, access, and positions during this pandemic are only a first aspect we should be interested in; ultimately, it will matter how much influence different types of actors had on Coronavirus-related policies. While political influence is notoriously difficult to measure, our survey included a question on how respondents **would rate their organisation’s impact** on political decisions related to the Corona virus crisis, on a scale from 0 (no impact at all) to 10 (highest impact).

**Figure 12** summarises mean responses across the polities in our study. It suggests that interest organisations at EU level and in Sweden rated their impact relatively low (mean: ~3), whereas actors in Ireland, Italy and the UK rated their impact higher (mean ~5).

Secondly, we probe how perceived impact varies in different sectors. As **Figure 13** indicates, respondents in the sectors ‘*Transportation & Hospitality*’, as well as ‘*Wholesale, retail & Consumers*’, have rated their impact on political decisions as relatively high (mean: ~5), whereas respondents in the sectors ‘*Environment & animal rights*’ have rated their influence especially low (mean: ~2.3).

These results give a first indication that perceived impact might, again, vary by organisation type. This is indeed the case. In the aggregate across all polities, respondents that are NGOs rate their perceived influence lower (mean: 3.2), while business organisations rate it higher (mean: 4.1) and professional organisations ranging in between (mean: 3.9).

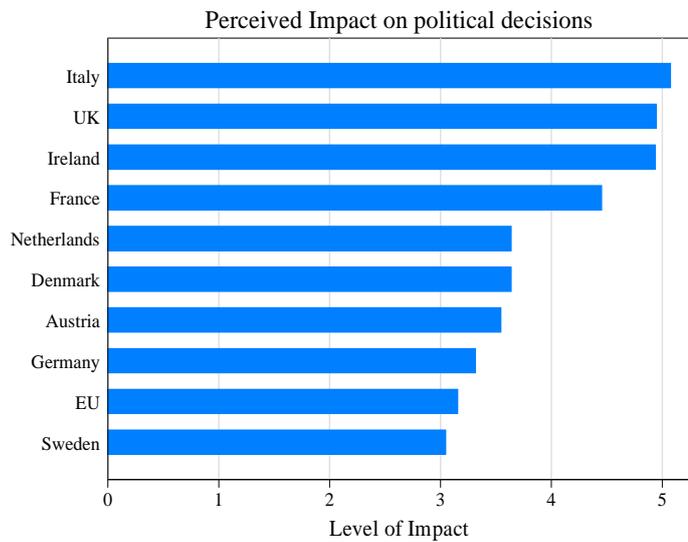


Figure 12: Perceived impact on political decisions related to the Corona crisis across polities

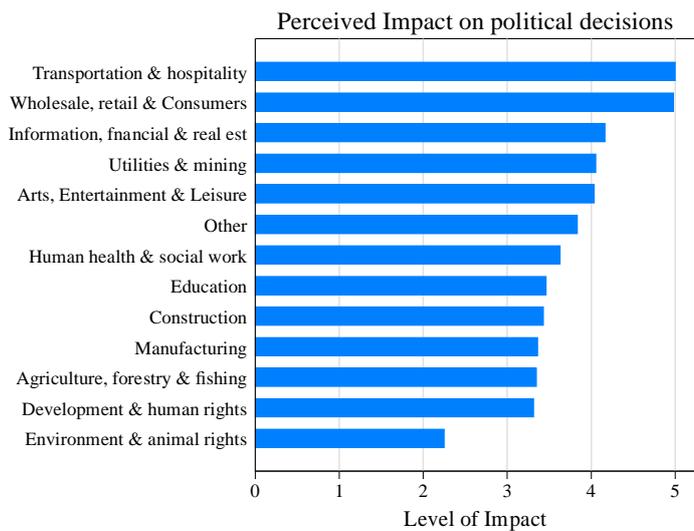


Figure 13: Perceived impact on political decisions related to the Corona crisis across sectors

Notably, however, as **Figure 14** suggests, these differences **vary between the polities**. While in Denmark all three organisation types rate their impact quite similarly, the low rating by NGOs is especially pronounced in Sweden, Germany, Austria and France.

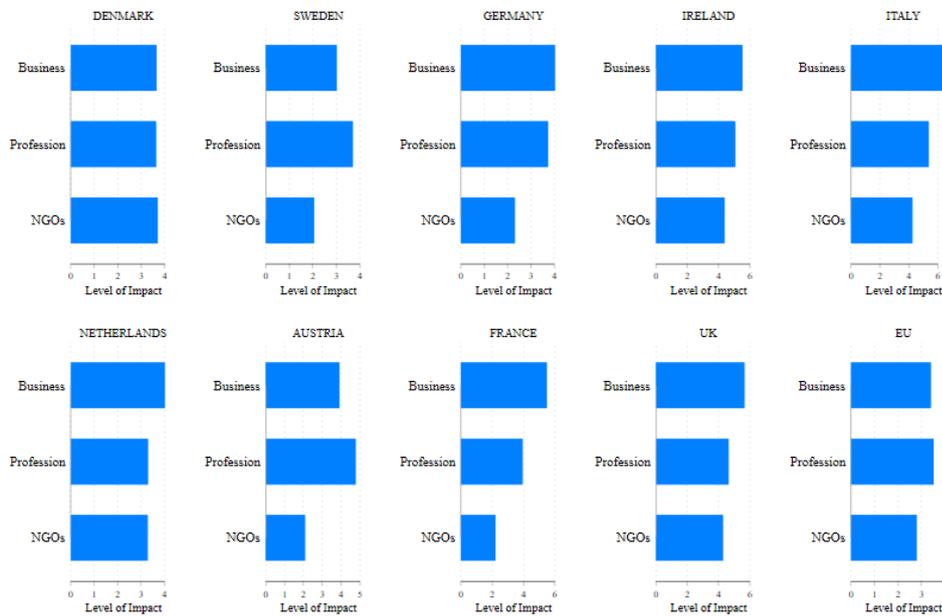


Figure 14: Perceived influence on political decisions related to the Corona crisis by organisation type across polities

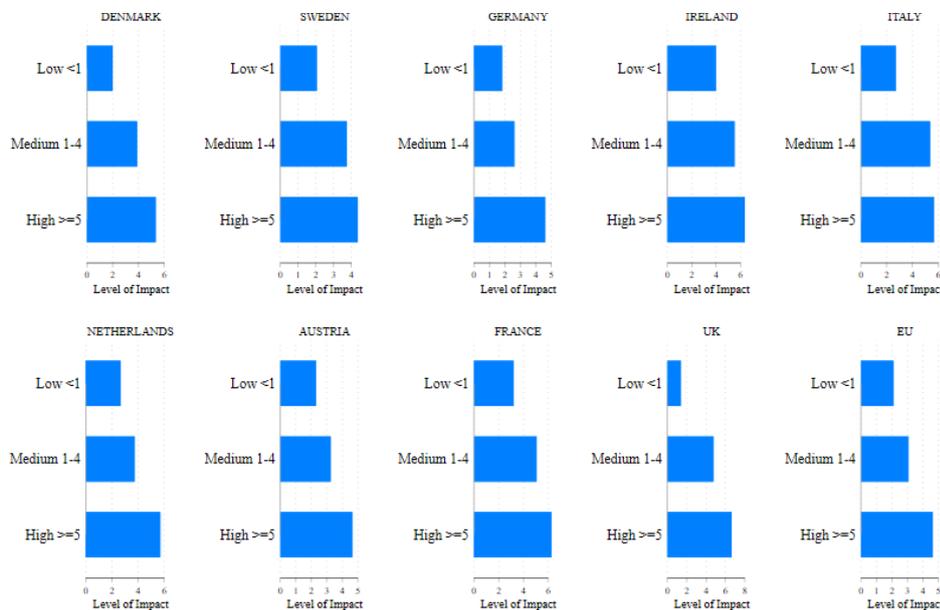


Figure 15: Perceived influence on political decisions related to the Corona crisis by level of advocacy resources

A consistent finding across all 10 polities is, however, that organisations with low advocacy resources rate their impact on Corona virus-related policies lower than organisations that have high staff resources.

**Figure 15** shows this by comparing the mean ratings of impact for organisations with low staff resources (i.e. less than 1 full-time staff member working on public affairs) with ratings by organisations with medium staff size (1-4 full-time staff members) and high resources (more than 5 staff members working on public affairs). For all polities, we see a similar pattern.

While based on subjective assessment of impact, this pattern might be a cause for concern if policy was, indeed, shaped mainly by resourceful organisations. Our work will address this potential pattern further in the future.

### 3.6 What lessons can we draw about advocacy in the future?

Finally, we were interested in probing changes that might be underway in advocacy practices. A first insight in this regard is the **relative ease with which organisations moved their advocacy efforts online**. On a scale from 0 to 10, **Figure 16** shows the level of agreement with different statements about how the respondents perceived political advocacy under social distancing. While across countries, there is high agreement (mean: ~8) regarding the statement that the organisation moved all its political work online and to the phone, agreement is also high on the statement that the organisation experienced this as easy (means ranging between 6.5 and 8.5 in all countries). Notably, however, organisations agree somewhat that there are difficulties in reaching target audiences because one could not meet (means between 4 and 5). At the same time, there is only a low mean agreement on the statement that emails and phone calls were ineffective under social distancing rules (mean between 2, for example in Austria and 3.7 in the Netherlands). Lastly, Figure 16 shows that the agreement to the statement that the organisation kept having physical meetings with elected officials and civil servants varies quite markedly between countries (means between 0.3 (UK) and 4.4 (Italy)), possibly because of different lockdown rules in place or institutional practices.

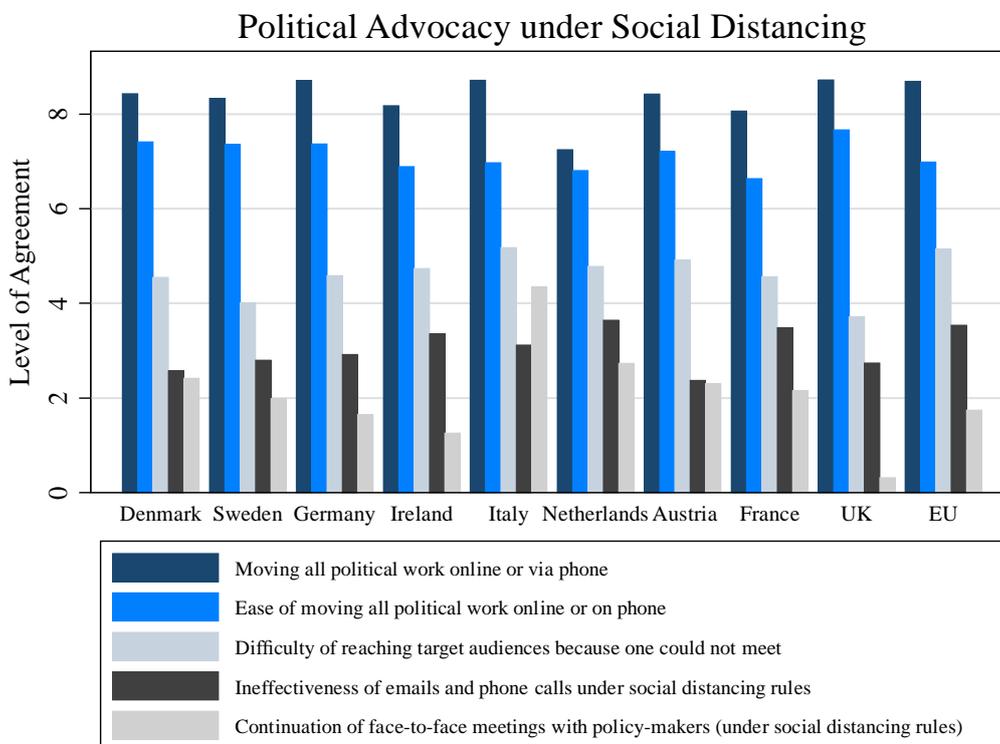
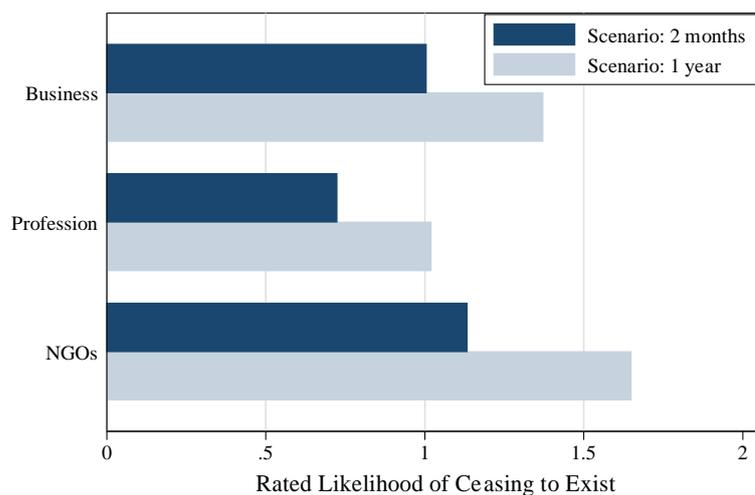


Figure 16: Experiences with moving advocacy to the online space across countries

Other than these evaluations, our survey addressed different future scenarios, notably, reactions under a hypothetical second wave of Coronavirus-related restrictions. In the survey, we here randomly varied the duration of the restrictions in this hypothetical scenario to last, either a) two months, or b) one year. Subsequently, we asked respondents to rate the likelihood of different outcomes on a scale from ‘not likely at all’ (0) to ‘almost certain to happen’ (10) in the provided scenario.

**Figure 17** summarizes the mean rating for the outcome that the organisation would **cease to exist** in the respective scenario for three the organisation types. For all three organisation types, there is a difference in mean rating for these scenarios. The likelihood to cease to exist is rated higher under the longer restrictions, but notably low in general (between 0.7 and 1.6 on a scale from 0-10). Secondly, the mean for NGOs compared to the other two group types is higher across both scenarios. This suggests, in line with the earlier analyses, that NGOs seem more challenged by this crisis.



*Figure 17: Organisational survival under a second wave of Corona-related restrictions in two scenarios by group type.*

Still, it is worth noting that organisations, overall, seem optimistic about the future. Across all three types of organisations, at least 47% of respondent indicate that it is not likely at all that their organisation will cease to exist, even if restrictions under the next wave of the virus last one year (not shown in the figure). Only small shares of respondents rate this likelihood at 5 or higher on a scale from 0-10. Among NGO respondents, ca. 15% of respondents do so, whereas 9% of respondents from professional organisations and labour unions, as well as 11% from business organisations and firms see their survival threatened in this scenario (a rating of 5 or higher). Although these are relatively small shares, an important implication is that under potential next waves of the spread of Covid-19, the survival of some organisations might be at stake, and support programmes should arguably focus especially on these organisations in order to ensure stability in the interest representation system after the pandemic.

## 4. Conclusions and Next Steps

In the previous sections, we have summarized initial findings from our survey on the effect of the spread of Covid-19 on interest representation. We have pointed to variation in changes in **access, mobilisation problems, positions and perceived impact on Covid-19-related policies between different types of groups, sectors and countries**. This report offered insights into our first analyses of the short-term effects of this pandemic on systems of interest representation and the interactions between interest organisations and political decision-makers. In the future, we will write a series of academic articles on topics related to this report. Moreover, it is clear that this crisis continues to pose major new challenges for countries, organisations, and individuals. We will therefore develop the project further to assess these ongoing consequences. Importantly, we are considering running a **second wave of the survey** in 2021. In case you believe there are other questions or perspectives that you really think we should include in this next round, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. We would be happy to remain in contact with you. In case you would like to follow our output related to this project, please see several channels below, where we will disseminate this work.

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