The Impact of the Lisbon Strategy on the National Coordination of EU Policy

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Abstract:

How far have the models of national EU policy coordination changed as a result of the effect of the Lisbon Strategy? Comparing 5 different EU member states (Denmark, the UK, Austria, Slovenia and Spain), the paper investigates three central aspects of that possible impact. The study finds that the Lisbon Strategy has a more pervasive administrative effect than initially expected, since virtually all models of national EU policy coordination have become more centralised and have strengthened their patterns of political leadership. This is the result both of the governments’ attempts to improve their coordination capacity in EU policy matters and of specific ideational and organisational frameworks at the national level. Furthermore, the assumed bureaucratic nature of the Lisbon Strategy implementation seems to be more dependent on the specific politico-administrative context at each national level than on the overall design of the Strategy’s implementation structure as such.
1.- Introduction

The transformative thrust of the Lisbon Strategy as a new governance architecture in the EU relates as much to its substantive and ideational aspects (policy goals, targets and overall discourses) as to its procedural and organisational novelties (new processes and new governance instruments). The Strategy’s ambitious goals to improve European competitiveness in the globalised economy are based on an ideational repertoire of cognitive and normative frameworks that define the course of EU and member state coordinated public action. These new substantive and ideational aspects of the Lisbon agenda have gone hand in hand with fundamental procedural and organisational novelties. Since the Lisbon Strategy does not entail a transfer of legal powers to the EU, or a re-distribution of economic resources, the fulfilment of the ambitious goals relies on new instruments, most notably, the Open Method of Coordination (OMC). This is a voluntary process by which member states coordinate with each other by following a series of commonly defined EU guidelines. National Reform Programmes define national-specific goals on the basis of the common guidelines in macro-economic, micro-economic (research, innovation, ICT, etc.) and employment policies, monitored regularly by the Commission. The process is cyclical, since new EU guidelines and new national programmes are defined every three years.

The current literature dedicated to the Lisbon Strategy has pointed at the difficulties of achieving ambitious (and perhaps wrong) goals in short time frames (Pisani-Ferry and Sapir 2006), at the incomplete use of the possibilities offered by the OMC as an instrument (Kaiser and Prange 2005), at its intrinsic design problems (Radaelli 2008), at the guidelines’ disregard to historically entrenched policy models (Zeitlin 2005), and at the problems associated with the underdeveloped democratic anchorage of the OMC (Büchs 2008). The result of all this is a generalised claim that the impact of the Lisbon Strategy on national policies and policy-making has been limited, executive-dominated, and with little democratic legitimacy. While not willing to contest these findings, it is worth underlining here that this literature has focused on individual policies and policy-making processes. This means that the fundamental transformative potential of the entire Lisbon Strategy on the political and administrative organisation at national level more generally, in contrast to concrete national policies and policy-making processes, has gone largely unnoticed.

Likewise, the Europeanisation literature focused on the impact of the EU on national political and administrative systems has remained silent about the Lisbon Strategy (Goetz and Meyer-Sahling 2008). Most importantly perhaps, it has remained silent on the importance of cognitive and
ideational aspects at EU level in the understanding of differential impact on national administrations. The strength of the Lisbon Strategy’s substantive and ideational aspects as well as its procedural and organisational novelties constitute a useful case at hand for examining the national impact of EU governance. Furthermore, taking seriously the notion that the Lisbon Strategy is one of the most fundamental governance architectures in recent EU history, an additional case for moving away from policy-only oriented analysis and into national administration oriented analysis is provided.

This paper focuses on the impact of the Lisbon Strategy in one particular aspect of national politico-administrative systems, namely, the national coordination of EU Policy. The interest in looking at changes in precisely this area is threefold. Firstly, national coordination of EU policy is of paramount importance for securing the consistency and effectiveness of a member state’s position in EU affairs. It is at the interface between the EU level and the national level. And since the Lisbon Strategy is largely based on instruments without formal transfer of powers to Brussels, the borderline of this interface is becoming blurred. Secondly, the horizontal coordination of EU-related policies at the national level has been a long-standing and important administrative matter for member states in their explicit efforts to avoid redundancy or incoherent governmental action (Kassim, Peters et al. 2000). If the national coordination of conventional EU policy has traditionally been an administrative challenge for member states in terms of coping with multiple policy areas cutting across different organisational boundaries at the national level, the Lisbon Strategy’s expanded policy realm increases significantly that challenge. Thirdly, the voluntary nature of the OMC used in the Lisbon Strategy defies some of the traditional Weberian principles of modern public administration, particularly that of coordination through hierarchical authority. The post-Weberian nature of the Lisbon Strategy poses administrative challenges at the national level in a general sense, particularly in states with Napoleonic traditions of public administration.

In the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy as a whole, the EU has defined at least three clear procedural requirements at the national level. These are: the requirements of European Spring Council preparations, the national multi-annual policy programming and reporting to the EU on a periodical basis, and the appointment of a national Lisbon coordinator. These procedural requirements differ to the traditional requirements related to the legal-political logic of regulatory EU policy instruments where member states are subject to binding rules and to legal action in case of non-compliance. The Lisbon-related requirements are based on a political rather than legal or economic commitment on the part of the member states.
This paper presents a comparative analysis of the administrative impact of the Lisbon Strategy in five EU member states, namely, Denmark, the UK, Austria, Slovenia and Spain. The sample was selected to cover most of the important dimensions of variation among the member states: unitary and federal, large and small, old and new, North-South-East-West, etc. Taking the national patterns of EU-policy coordination as the dependent variable, this paper follows generally the ‘Europeanisation’ approach to EU governance, and addresses important analytical blind spots that complement and refine previous findings. The paper proceeds as follows. The next section defines the framework for the analysis from the perspective of Europeanisation literature. The following sections analyse one by one each of the three aspects of change that are related to the specific requirements of the Lisbon Strategy. These are: the separation or internalisation of Lisbon-related procedures in conventional EU policy coordination, the centralisation of coordination patterns and the political leadership in national coordination processes. The findings show that the Lisbon Strategy has a more pervasive administrative effect than initially expected, since virtually all models of national EU policy coordination have become more centralised and have strengthened their patterns of political leadership, and some of them have created Lisbon-only related coordination procedures. This is the result of governments’ attempts to improve their coordination capacity in EU policy matters, the rather high political stakes of the Lisbon agenda in the national political context (explicitly or implicitly), and the political-administrative traditions regarding coordination processes. These findings underpin the observation that most ministers and their political cabinets tend to hold a tight grip on Lisbon matters at the national level, putting question marks to assumptions about the bureaucratic nature of the Lisbon Strategy.

2.- National Coordination of EU policy, Europeanisation and bureaucratisation

The horizontal coordination of national policies and programmes has been an enduring problem for national public administration ever since the creation of a modern and functionally diversified state. Further to this, coordination issues have been exacerbated since the 1990s in relation to at least three remarkable trends typically associated with the move ‘from government to governance’ (Frederickson 2005), namely, the functional decentralisation to executive and regulatory independent agencies (Pollitt, Talbot et al. 2004), the involvement of social actors and civil society in the co-production of public goods (Ansell and Gash 2008), and the gradual but notable expansion

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1 See methodological section below.
of public action to new areas where the government has defined output-oriented forms of public intervention of long-term complex problems (i.e. preventive health campaigns, reduction of CO² emissions, or reduction of youth long-term unemployment) (Peters and Pierre 1998). Moreover, the increasing global interdependency associated with the current trends of social, economic and political globalisation has created higher demands for horizontal coordination of national policies. Essentially, governments need to coordinate horizontally in order to give appropriate responses in a rapidly changing international context. This is to say that the need for designing procedures and for enforcing effective mechanisms for horizontal coordination at the national level are fundamental issues for most contemporary governments. This is particularly the case for EU member states, given that the rapid pace of European integration since the 1980s has increased exponentially the number of EU policy related issues ‘entering’ the national politico-administrative system.

The relatively limited literature devoted to the study of horizontal coordination of EU-related policies at the national level has focused on issues of capacity and effectiveness. In his comparative study of the horizontal coordination in the 12 EU Member States, Metcalfe focuses on the management capacities that coordination problems require rather than on the institutions responsible for coordination (Metcalfe 1994). Offering a 9-value scale of policy coordination (ranging from ‘independent decision-making by ministries’ to the higher level of ‘government strategy’) he measures and compares the coordination capacities of the 12 member states, finding that while no government reaches the top level, old member states have well-developed systems, whereas the southern members have more limited coordination capacities. Capacity-building was therefore a major leitmotiv (particularly on the part of the European Commission) in the EU’s accession policy of the Central and Eastern European Countries all through the 1990s and early 2000s (Dimitrova 2004). The effectiveness of different models of EU policy national coordination has been comparatively analysed from a more contextual perspective in relation to the administrative traditions of member states (Kassim 2000). In this regard, effectiveness has been mainly conceptualised as the internal coherence of the administration and its degree of addressing complex issues across organisational borders within the same administrative system. It is worth pointing that the stress on internal coherence emphasises that coordination is not only a process: it is essentially an outcome (Boston 1992) (Peters 1998).

Concerned with studying systematically the impact of EU dynamics in the national political systems, the Europeanisation school has broken new ground in European integration studies by considering the national political and administrative systems as the dependent variable in the cross-field between comparative politics and international relations (Goetz and Hix 2001; Radaelli 2004).
Of particular interest has been the impact of the EU on national public administration, for which much of the literature has identified important national ‘path dependency’ in the adaptation of national administrative structures to European integration and the importance of national mediating factors to understand cross-country variation (Featherstone and Radaelli 2003). The strong empirical presence of national path dependence indicates clearly that Europeanisation does not imply a homogenisation of public administrative structures, nor a ‘single European administration’ (Jacobsson, Lagreid et al. 2004). It is also argued that national executives have gained the upper hand in the national coordination of EU policies vis-à-vis national parliaments. This is believed to be related to the increasing role of the European Council at the EU decision-making level (Goetz 2006) and to the increasing use of soft modes of governance (Borrás and Conzelmann 2007). Another interesting finding is that, in the case of Economic and Monetary Union, finance ministries seem to have strengthened their power position in national policy-making vis-à-vis other ministries (Dyson 2000), emphasising the growing importance of core executives in national EU policy coordination. Yet, in relation to the domination of the executive, Europeanisation has also been associated with bureaucratisation, namely, a situation where civil servants are more prominent than their ministers and their political advisers in the definition of the content and form of the EU-related matters nationally (Goetz 2003).

The governance architecture embedded in the Lisbon Strategy has the potential of an encompassing Europeanisation effect in the organisation of public administration at the national level, due to its widespread ideational and organisational-structural aspects. Taking the first, namely, the ideational dimension, the high political stakes of the Lisbon Strategy in terms of political visibility, articulation of new ideational repertoires, an overall discourse and meta-goals for the European integration project, might have provided a clear basis for changes not only in the content of national policies, but most importantly, in the organisation of public administration at the national level. The cognitive and normative dimensions of these ideational aspects, and in particular, the open-ended nature of the meta-goal of competitiveness bring forward political processes at the national level which aim to come to grips administratively with this encompassing notion and the subsequent politics of defining it. This is highly related to the organisational-structural aspects of the Lisbon Strategy. Taken as a whole, the open method of coordination upon which most part of the Lisbon goals and targets are implemented, has put forward a series of specific procedural requirements on member states that are likely to have importantly affected the degrees and forms of EU-policy coordination at the national level. There are three particular requirements: the preparations for the Spring Councils, the multi-annual programming and cyclical reporting requirements, and the appointment of a national Mr. Lisbon coordinator. These have major significance for member states’
internal coordination of new EU-issues within their national administrative systems. Hence, the open-ended and macro-level goals, together with the organisational requirements of the Lisbon Strategy, have likely had an impact on the models of national EU policy coordination. The question is exactly how much and how.

Therefore, an examination of the impact of the Lisbon Strategy on the national coordination of EU policy needs to give special attention to the way in which ideational and organisational processes at the national level have ‘translated’ these meta-goals and ideational repertoires, and the specific procedural requirements into the existing administrative model. The ‘translation’ of these three specific requirements in the national context is a political process of normative and cognitive interpretation. We are going to examine these political processes of translation in each of the three requirement-related changes identified previously by looking at the degree of separation of Lisbon-related procedures in conventional EU-policy coordination, the degree of centralisation of coordination patterns, and the degree of political leadership. These three dimensions will also be able to indicate the degree of bureaucratisation in national EU-policy coordination models.

3.- To separate or not to separate

The creation of the Lisbon Strategy in the year 2000 posed interesting administrative structural issues to the member states. One of the most pressing questions that they had to decide on right from the beginning was whether the Strategy matters were to have their own separated and differentiated processes of coordination at the national level, or whether these were to be dealt within the existing processes for conventional EU-policy coordination. This decision is at the core of understanding the impact of the Lisbon agenda on national political-administrative systems.

Our five case studies present interesting differences in this regard. Spain and Austria have introduced separated procedures for Lisbon-related coordination and conventional EU policy coordination. In Spain, the coordination functions of the Lisbon Strategy are located at the Prime Minister’s Economic Bureau, but the task of coordinating conventional EU policy is based at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In spite of several formalised meeting points, both procedures follow their own path. Something similar happens in Austria, where the Lisbon strategy policy matters are coordinated jointly by the Federal Chancellery and the Ministry of Economics and Labour, whereas conventional EU policy dossiers are coordinated jointly from the Federal Chancellery and the

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2 For example: CIAUE, Comisión interministerial para Asuntos de la Unión Europea, or the national permanent representation office.
Foreign Ministry. Just as in Spain, both coordination procedures have common meeting points, but tend to follow their own separate dynamics.

At the opposite side of the continuum are the UK, Slovenia and Denmark, because their mechanisms for Lisbon Strategy coordination have been subsumed under existing EU policy coordination procedures. In the UK, responsibility for coordination of both is placed mainly at the European Secretariat of the Cabinet Office, a small, high-level unit addressing strategic coordination problems when they arise. The responsible officials have taken care of Lisbon matters alongside their previous coordinating responsibilities on conventional EU policy matters. In Slovenia, important changes have occurred since the elections of November 2008, but the previous internalised mode has remained. The Governmental Office for European Affairs is responsible for coordinating the Lisbon Strategy as well as Pillars 1 and 3 of EU policies, and is in charge of organising weekly inter-ministerial meetings. In Denmark the coordination responsibility for both the Lisbon Strategy and conventional EU policy matters is formally in the hands of the Foreign Ministry and follows the same specialised committee-system procedure as conventional EU policy coordination. For this purpose, a special Lisbon Strategy committee has been added to the list of other specialised committees.

The separation vs. internalisation response is an interesting difference among our sampled countries for the reason that it indicates vividly that the political perceptions about the high stakes of the Lisbon Strategy and the self-perceptions about the effectiveness of the pre-existing coordination procedures have affected that decision. As to the first, the national-specific contexts regarding the views about the high-level profile of the Lisbon Strategy seem to have played an important role. Danish and British respondents stress the political commitment of their governments to the agenda, but make an effort to underline as well the rather superficial and unnecessary nature of those EU-level goals for their respective levels of socio-economic development and national-only ongoing reforms. This lukewarm relation to the agenda is arguably behind the politico-administrative choice to treat Lisbon Strategy matters as one among many other EU-related policy matters, the internalisation response. Regarding the second, the self-perception of effectiveness was particularly clear in the context of those countries that have chosen separation rather than internalisation. Hence, arguments related to effectiveness, control and the different nature of coordination content were put forward by Austrian and Spanish respondents when asked about the rationale for their respective separation solutions. This was also combined with a more positive political understanding about what the Lisbon EU-level goals could offer to the political processes at the national level.
4.- The degree of centralisation

The relative centralisation or decentralisation of the mechanisms of coordination at the national level is another important aspect to look at when examining the changing patterns of national EU policy coordination. Confronted with an increasing complexity of EU-related topics, national governments have to make explicit decisions regarding the overall goals of coordination and the appropriate mechanisms with which to fulfil these goals, including the relative allocation of responsibilities within their administrative structures, while respecting the constituent principles of the national political system. One such important decision regarding coordination is the centralised or decentralised nature of the mechanisms for coordination. This refers as much to the horizontal processes of inter-ministerial coordination as to the vertical processes of national/regional coordination. Obviously, large cross-country variations are expected according to the nature of the political system and the traditions of public administration in terms of previous centralised or decentralised horizontal EU-policy coordination procedures.

The multi-annual programming and periodic reporting requirements are likely to have an impact on the organisational interdependencies between the ministries at the national level, and between these and their regional counterparts (particularly in federal or semi-federal systems). Whereas this has been the case since the creation of the Strategy in 2000, it has become more pressing since the relaunch of 2005, with the integration of macro- micro- and employment dimensions, and the requirement of a single and thematically wider National Reform Program.

A high degree of centralisation is visible in the UK and in Slovenia. This has traditionally been so for conventional EU policy matters, which in both countries are tied very closely to Prime Ministerial offices. In the case of the UK, this is highly related to an explicit will for a well-defined coordination ambition not just limited to avoiding mishaps but to an overall steering of UK policy towards the EU, as embodied in the European Secretariat (Kassim 2000). These centralised features are supported by a series of idiosyncrasies in the UK's public administration tradition, such as, for example, the unified political executive and the tradition for single party government. In Slovenia the centralisation tradition dates back to its independence in 1991 and is highly related to its political strategy towards the EU ever since. Just as in many other Central and Eastern European countries, during the membership negotiations the central executive of Slovenia played a central role (Lippert, Umbach et al. 2001), one that has remained central in the post-accession administrative reform in the country, particularly in EU policy coordination (Fink-Hafner 2007).
Since in the UK and Slovenia the Lisbon coordination responsibilities regarding programming and reporting have been internalised to existing conventional EU policy coordination, the pre-existing centralised coordination mechanisms in both countries remain unchanged.

In contrast to this, Spain has traditionally had a decentralised form of EU policy coordination. The State secretariat for the European Union within the Foreign Ministry has been entrusted to coordinate conventional EU policy through an inter-ministerial committee in which all ministries are represented. The real weakness of this coordination committee, however, has left the State Secretary with little authority to direct other departments (Molina 2000). Besides, the coordination function has never been close to the Prime Minister or his office, other than when concerned with preparations for European Councils. In addition, given its quasi-federal nature, the regional dimension has been gradually incorporated in the national coordination of EU policies over the past few years (mainly, but not only through the CARCE, a special committee), adding to the decentralised nature of coordination. However, the programming and reporting requirements of Lisbon have been performed in a centralised manner from the office of the Prime Minister’s Economic Bureau, which is formally separated for conventional EU policy coordination. For that reason, this decentralised model has been introducing some elements of centralisation in relation to the Lisbon Strategy, probably due to the explicit priority that the current government has put on this political agenda and the willingness to improve effectiveness of coordination.

Austria has a decentralised model as well. EU policy coordination responsibilities have traditionally been shared by the Foreign Ministry and the Federal Chancellery, largely related to the two government parties’ involvement in EU matters (traditionally SPÖ and ÖVP in charge of the Chancellery and the Foreign Ministry). Furthermore, the federal state structure, the grand coalition governments, the corporatist traditions and the consensus-seeking political culture have been also behind this decentralised form of coordination (Müller 2000). Formally speaking, the key coordination procedure takes place in a weekly meeting chaired alternately by the Foreign Ministry or the Chancellery, where a large number of civil servants are present. Lisbon Strategy coordination was the main responsibility of the Federal Chancellery from 2000-05, but during the Austrian presidency in 2006 it was transferred to the Ministry of Economy and Labour. In practice, today the Ministry of Economy coordinates issues related to the Lisbon Strategy’s national reform programmness and reporting, whereas the Federal Chancellery coordinates the overall political dimension of the Lisbon agenda (for example, the Austrian position regarding the future contents of the agenda after 2010) and the Spring Council issues. The Foreign Ministry, for its part, coordinates conventional EU policy matters, particularly downstream. This indicates that, whereas coordination
responsibilities remain decentralised in Austria, Lisbon Strategy matters have been considered more strategic and are placed within the turf of the Federal Chancellery in the upstream side of coordination.

The process of EU policy coordination in Denmark is something in between a decentralised and centralised model. Nonetheless, it sees similar trends towards centralisation as a result of the Lisbon requirements. Danish EU policy coordination works in a ‘bottom-up’ manner (Olsen and Pedersen 2006) and is based on a series of special committees formed by civil servants and representatives of interest groups where most Danish positions are agreed consensually. The EC committee of inter-ministerial coordination, chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, serves to deal with problematic issues not solved at the special committee level, as well as to connect with the other elements of the coordination system, most importantly the Executive and the Parliament. On the top of this, the government’s foreign policy committee (formed by the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister and a selection of other relevant ministries) takes up the strategically more important issues, particularly ahead of the European Council. Clear centralisation trends have been growing during the 2000s in association with the increasing position of the Prime Minister’s office in EU matters, and the formal but relatively weak coordination role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Denmark (Pedersen 2000).

5.- The degree of political leadership

One of the most interesting aspects in the remake of the Lisbon strategy in 2005 was the introduction of a national Lisbon coordinator, also popularly known as “Mr. or Mrs. Lisbon”. Put forward in a timid manner by the Spring Council in 2005, the figures of Mr. Lisbon have gradually become a central piece in the interface between the EU level and the national levels on matters of the Lisbon agenda. Since then, the regular high-level meetings of national Lisbon coordinators with Barroso and other commissioners have been used to exchange general opinions and to keep the political momentum in the Strategy in the periods between Spring Councils. However, this says very little about the real profile of this figure in the national context. The requirement that member states should appoint one single person as coordinator might potentially have an impact at the national level in terms of the patterns of EU policy coordination, though mediated by organisational and ideational ‘translation’.

The political vs. the administrative nature of Mr. Lisbon has an influence on the practical exercise
of leadership within the national EU policy coordination context. Needless to say, member states have appointed their national Lisbon coordinators in different ways. Some countries have “political” Lisbon coordinators (ministers or deputy ministers) and others have “administrative” ones (high-level civil servants, typically heads of departments or directors of special units). Whereas in 2006 almost half of the 25 member states had administrative Lisbon coordinators (12 countries with administrative positions, 13 with political), by the end of 2008 the number of political coordinators had augmented significantly. Up to 18 countries now have political Lisbon coordinators in contrast to 7 countries with administrative\footnote{France, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and Slovenia are those countries who moved from administrative positions to political. Belgium and Italy had vacant positions regarding Mr. Lisbon at the time of writing.}.

In our sample, Spain, Denmark and the UK have always had administrative Lisbon coordinators; whereas Austria has always had a political one, and Slovenia has moved from administrative to political between 2006 and 2008. Appointing a minister as national Lisbon coordinator has invariably had a signalling device in the national context, especially if this is the Minister of Economy. The open question is whether the political or administrative nature of the position affects his/her real leverage in terms of horizontal coordination. We might assume that the appointment of a politically visible Mr. Lisbon induces real leverage in the process of horizontal EU policy coordination, because of his/her political visibility and because a political appointment might prima facie mean that that country considers coordination a fundamental issue to deal with (Kassim, Peters et al. 2000, p. 2).

Taking the UK, Spain and Denmark, the administrative position of their national Lisbon coordinators relates to several national traditions. Most significant is the UK Lisbon coordinator, who justifies his administrative profile in the following terms: “Since it is largely a bureaucratic strategy [Lisbon Strategy] we decided it would not make sense to have a minister responsible for that” (UK respondent 1). The UK choice for an administrative rather than a political profile reflects largely what Kassim underlined earlier, namely, that the UK’s co-ordination strategy is largely explained by its attitude towards European integration (Kassim 2000). Stressing the bureaucratic dimension of Lisbon contrasts sharply with the coordination procedures in the UK, which are highly integrated and centrally run from within the Prime Minister’s office with highly ranked senior civil servants. This indicates a tight political grip on EU and Lisbon policy matters, even if managed administratively. Hence, the choice of an administrative rather than a political Lisbon coordinator in the UK seems to be more a signalling device to the EU-level game (indicating that the UK does not prioritise the Lisbon Strategy to its EU counterparts) rather than a real internal coordination praxis.
Formally speaking, the Danish model is perhaps the weakest of our five cases when it comes to leverage and leadership, due to the fact that the Lisbon coordinator’s administrative position is held within a weakened Foreign Ministry vis-a-vis the increasing role of the Prime Minister’s office and the Ministry of Finance in EU policy and Lisbon-related issues. Informally, however, the situation is very different. Largely in parallel to the Lisbon Strategy, the Danish Prime Minister launched a series of initiatives defining the Danish “Globalisation strategy”, the content of which encompassed most Lisbon agenda items plus some others. This means that, in spite of being bureaucratically managed, the items in the Lisbon Strategy have been largely related to the political ideology of the executive, conveyed by the strong political leadership of the Prime Minister personally. This, together with the background of a widespread Euroscepticism, shows some similarities with the UK model.

In Spain the Lisbon coordinator is equally strong in terms of leverage and leadership in spite of being an administrative position. Mr. Lisbon’s unit operates as a satellite of the core executive committee for economic policy coordination and is structurally located under the wing of the Prime Minister’s Office. Both dimensions render the real position of the Lisbon coordinator rather strong in terms of leadership vis-à-vis the other ministries and actors. Furthermore, the ideological engagement of the core executive in the contents of the Lisbon Strategy (promoting for example traditionally disregarded issues like ‘innovation policy’ or ‘knowledge-based economic growth’) has further supported this leadership role internally.

Austria and Slovenia have political Lisbon coordinators, the Minister of Economy and Labour, and the Minister of European Affairs and Development, respectively. In both cases, however, the real work is performed by highly positioned administrative officials in corresponding general directions or specialised units. This means that their political leadership might vary according to their actual leverage capacity in relation to the other organisations inside the public administration. In Austria the move of the coordinator from the Federal Chancellery to the Minister of Economy in 2006 has not represented a diminishing of the political leadership features of the national coordinator. On the contrary, it might have enhanced it since it has directly acquired a political profile, while remaining in the hands of the core executive. For its part, until the country’s November 2008 elections, Slovenia’s Mr. Lisbon was the Minister Without Portfolio leader of the Governmental Office for Growth. After that, a new Ministry of European Affairs and Development was created, taking over the responsibilities. It is therefore too early to assess whether this move has increased or decreased the traditionally strong leadership role of the previous coordinator.
6.- Concluding remarks: the organisational impact of the Lisbon Strategy

The procedural requirements of the Lisbon Strategy (Spring Council, multi-annual programming, Lisbon coordinator, etc) are arm’s length devices for the implementation at national level of the open-ended meta-goals of this agenda. The question in this paper has been, how far have the models of national EU policy coordination changed according to these requirements? As expected, the findings of our 5-country comparative analysis shows that the national political ‘interpretation’ and ‘translation’ of these procedural requirements, mediated by national ideational and organisational frameworks, have played an important role in leveraging specific forms of organisational-administrative changes at the national level. This corresponds to the previous findings within the Europeanisation literature, which have stressed the diversified forms of national responses to EU-level changes, and their historically embedded path dependence.

Less expectedly, however, this study finds that the Lisbon Strategy has a more pervasive administrative effect than initially assumed, since some national models of EU policy coordination have created separated coordination procedures for Lisbon-related matters only, and since most national models have become more centralised and have strengthened their patterns of political leadership in national EU policy coordination. We argue that these changes are largely the result of national combinations of a series of interlinked ideational and organisational frameworks. Firstly, some of the governments’ explicit attempts to improve the effectiveness of EU policy coordination explain many of the changes at the national level. In Spain and Austria, where procedures were relatively decentralised, the centralisation trends and creation of new Lisbon-only procedures are the result of efforts to improve coordination capacity. Effectiveness of coordination, however, was not much of a concern in Denmark, the UK or Slovenia, mainly because these three countries had rather stable and/or centralised models. The political stakes of the Lisbon agenda are a second important political-ideational dimension at the national level. The explicit as much as the implicit political endorsement of this agenda at the highest level of government has been crucial. Explicit endorsement refers to the way in which the Lisbon agenda is explicitly mentioned in the government’s own reform programmes. An example is Spain, where the explicit use of the Lisbon Strategy has served the current government in putting forward specific reforms, conveyed in the departments’ increasingly strong leadership in the national EU policy coordination procedures.
Implicit endorsement is perhaps more interesting, since it shows the way in which countries like the UK or Denmark tend to translate it nationally through national-only schemes, like the ‘Globalization strategy’ in Denmark where political leadership is very clear. For these two countries, as much as for the other three examined here, the political stakes of the Lisbon agenda (either explicitly or implicitly) have resulted in EU policy coordination models becoming more centralised and with more political leadership dimension than before, with the exception perhaps of the UK, which has remained constant. Thirdly, the national organisational frameworks regarding the relative position of inter-ministerial turf distribution has played a fundamental role for understanding the specific forms of the Lisbon Strategy impact on administrative processes. An example at hand is Austria, where the relative changes in EU policy coordination have broken new ground by moving the Lisbon-turf to the Ministry of Economics (rather than the Foreign Ministry), but have nonetheless followed the traditional dual distribution of powers with the Federal Chancellery in this consensus- and dual-party politico-administrative system.

On the basis of the above, we could reconsider whether the assumed bureaucratic nature of the Lisbon Strategy implementation holds true at the national level. As mentioned at the outset of this paper, the implementation of the Lisbon contents through the open method of coordination has been repeatedly criticised for not delivering and for being a bureaucratic reporting process with little anchorage in real politico-administrative processes at the national level. Similar criticisms have been related to the Europeanisation of national politico-administrative systems. The idea that Europeanisation implies a bureaucratisation is based on a two-step argument (Goetz 2006). Firstly, the understanding that the advancement of EU integration and its complex multi-level governance system has meant a strengthening of the executive power over the legislative power of national EU-policy coordination. Secondly, within the executive power, that the civil servants have gained more prominence vis-à-vis the ministers and their political cabinets. This is an increasing bureaucratisation of national EU policy coordination, which is largely based on the nature of EU decision-making procedures at the EU level and the disengagement of national political elites in EU matters more generally. The argument of this paper is that this second step in the argument can be partly refuted on the basis of our findings. If anything, the general increase of leadership and centralisation in the national models of EU policy coordination show little dominance of the civil servants’ roles over the political elite. On the contrary, most governments’ efforts to centralise and to appoint politically capable coordination leaders indicate more a move towards a high-level politicisation of the Lisbon agenda at the top ranks of the national executives, rather than its bureaucratisation. Naturally, this is not entirely homogeneous throughout the countries. In fact, the degree of high-level politicisation vs. bureaucratisation depends very much on the specific politico-
administrative context of each country, since differences between the UK or Slovenia are, for example, quite significant (the former being deliberately more bureaucratic than the latter). At the end of the day, national idiosyncrasies determine the degree of politicisation rather than the procedural requirements and overall design of the Strategy as such.
List of interviewees

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<td>1</td>
<td>Head of Department</td>
<td>Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour</td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>7/6/2006</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Lisbon Coordinator</td>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>15/6/2006</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Head of Secretariat</td>
<td>Cabinet Office of Prime Minister</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>21/6/2006</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Head of Unit</td>
<td>Prime Minister’s Office</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>22/6/2006</td>
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<td>6</td>
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Short methodological remarks

The material in this paper is based on desk-top material and interviews. Regarding the latter, we have undertaken 28 extensive individual interviews with high-level civil servants in these countries, which were performed in 2006 and 2008-9. Total interviews per country: Spain 4, Denmark 6, Austria 7, Slovenia 6 and the UK 5. The interviews were conducted in two rounds. The first round was conducted in 2006 and used to identify interesting country cases, and to define our sample (6 interviews in the preliminary phase). The second was conducted in 2008-09 and used to gather factual information about how coordination has been arranged in the respective countries, and qualified opinions regarding that (22 interviews). All respondents were directly involved in EU policy and Lisbon strategy coordination at the time of the interview. Interviewers are to be kept anonymous, but the authors of this paper are happy to share the material with other EU researchers, upon an explicit agreement on confidentiality.

Acknowledgements

Previous to the ECPR workshop, an earlier version of this paper was presented at the “work in progress” seminar at the Center for Business and Politics at the Copenhagen Business School, Denmark. Our CBP colleagues’ constructive comments helped us to improve this paper. Our sincere gratitude goes to them.
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