

# Holding International Governance to Account: Do Civil Society Organizations Have a Chance to Exert Accountability?

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*In a growing number of domains, international organizations shape the daily life of citizens, but how can citizens make sure that decisions are made in their interest? Civil society organizations have come into focus as intermediaries holding international organizations accountable. Accountability is widely considered to be a key element in international good governance, making sure an international organization carries out its mission to the best advantage of all stakeholders. This paper explores whether the necessary prerequisites for exerting accountability are met: Do international organizations provide the necessary information and are they open to evaluations and dialogue so that civil society organizations may review their activities and pass judgment? Our findings are based on an empirical survey comparing twenty-eight international organizations and twenty-one directorates-general of the EU. The results are mixed. While international organizations and the EU are in principle and in practice ready to provide information, to undergo evaluations, and to engage in dialogue, the overall constellation is frequently such that an effective review of their activities is difficult.*

## **Introduction: Civil Society Organizations as Creators and Facilitators of Accountability**

The spread of global governance and the deepening of European integration have increasingly raised concerns over an erosion of democracy. Theories of associational and deliberative democracy presented convincing arguments that civil society, embodied in civil society organizations (CSOs), can make a decisive contribution to render international governance more democratic (Bohman 1999; Kuper 2004). Whereas research on global governance was early on interested in the role of CSOs in public accountability (Scholte 2004), the focus in EU studies has been mainly on CSO participation (Della Sala and Ruzza 2007; Steffek and Nanz 2008). Empirical research has provided ample evidence that CSO participation falls short of democratizing international governance (Tällberg and Uhlin 2012; Kohler-Koch and Quittkat 2013). So is it more realistic to expect that CSOs will be successful in improving at least the accountability of international organizations (IOs), which is regarded as a main pillar for democratic governance? This paper presents a first evaluation based on empirical findings using a large-N comparative study.

The paper does not delve into the vast literature on accountability debating the many manifestations of accountability, the variations in purpose, and in form and substance (Lindberg 2013; Bovens, Goodin, and Schillemans 2014) but rather starts from the parsimonious concept of accountability suggested by Bovens (2007) and the widely shared opinion that information and evaluation are essential to clarify responsibilities. The paper explicates the potential role of CSOs in public accountability and draws attention to the necessary organizational preconditions. It develops criteria and indicators to test empirically whether or not these preconditions are met by scrutinizing the statutory provisions and respective policies of

IOs. Findings are based on a comparative evaluation of forty-nine organizations with functional specific competences. About half of these IOs belong to the UN family; the other half is constituted by EU directorates-general (DGs) in charge of corresponding policy domains. We want to know when and how IOs provide information and communicate with CSOs in a way to enable CSOs to exert accountability.

### *Accountability in International Governance*

International governance is highly valued as an effective response to problems transcending national borders, but it creates problems of accountability that undermine democratic legitimacy. The pooling of decisions at the international level is spreading responsibilities, and the delegation of powers to international organizations is tantamount to the delegation of decision making to actors, who are neither elected (and thus cannot be voted out of office) nor are under public scrutiny (Vibert 2007). In international governance, the (electoral) chain of delegation from citizens to decision-makers is longer than in any other political setting and both the incentives for and the capacities of citizens to get informed and take action are less pronounced. All this raises the question of how to assure that institutions of international governance, and notably the IOs' bureaucracy, act in line with citizens' preferences, given the well-known fact that agents more often than not tend to follow their own agenda (Le Grand 2003).

The democratic accountability of IOs is a persistent subject of international relations studies. Goodhart (2011:45) distinguishes three approaches. The "pessimists," as he calls them, follow Dahl (1999), arguing that in the absence of a taken-for-granted demos, democratic accountability beyond the state is impossible; "cosmopolitans" imagine a new kind of demos constituted by all stakeholders affected by international policy decisions that ought to be empowered through cosmopolitan institutions (Held 2004; Held and Koenig-Archibugi 2004; Koenig-Archibugi 2010); "pluralists" (Keohane and Nye 2003; Grant and Keohane 2005) agree with the pessimists that the familiar notions of democratic accountability do not work in the international arena but argue that we can design mechanisms that can effectively curb the abuse of power. Accordingly, accountability is a constant theme in the organizational design of IOs (see Koremenos, Lipson, and Snidal 2001; Koppell 2010), and a multitude of approaches have been developed and tested to render international governance more accountable. They range from mechanisms of managerial accountability (Kingsbury and Stewart 2008; Kuyama and Fowler 2009; Koppell 2010; Wouters, Hachez, and Schmitt 2011) to arrangements that are more promising in terms of reaching out to the public (Goodhart 2014: 296–300). Further, the deficiencies and the dilemmas of accountability, in particular at the international level, have been widely addressed (see for many Buchanan and Keohane 2006; Ebrahim and Weisband 2007; Ferejohn 2007).

In contrast to many studies on principal-agent relations in private or national public governance, the emphasis in international accountability studies is not on hard sanctions like disciplinary measures. Rather, the international accountability approach pays special attention to the social dimension of control. It has been convincingly argued that accountable behavior in international governance is not (and cannot be) induced by threats and pressure. Rather, the idea is that it has to be achieved by creating a social relationship between the agent and the principal and by establishing a normative disposition, a soft constraint on the agent inducing compliance. The agent's behavior is not only about avoiding sanctions, which in no way would be sufficient to achieve optimal outcomes on behalf of the principal, but also about "pro-social behavior" (see Le Grand 2003). Accountability, in terms of an agent perceiving himself as accountable to some other actor, so the argument goes, improves the quality of decisions and actions, in that the agent identifies himself with the principal, anticipates possible reservations, and critique of the latter (Tetlock 2002: 455). Accountability, conceptualized as social phenomenon (Weisband and Ebrahim 2007: 2) is still consistent with the basic concept of accountability, but it is blurring the line between participation and accountability and makes an empirical assessment difficult. Even though we acknowledge that the "social-

behavior approach” is providing new valuable insights, we follow Goodin (2003: 361) and opt for assuming a critical distance between the actors who exert accountability and those who are held accountable.

The promises and pitfalls of CSOs as agents of public accountability and democratizing international governance has attracted wide scholarly attention both in global (for many see Bexell, Tallberg, and Uhlin 2010) and in EU governance (Kohler-Koch and Quittkat 2013). They have been conceptualized as “transmission belts” (Steffek and Nanz 2008) or as key actors in “surrogate accountability” (Rubenstein 2007). Whereas many authors have lauded the democratic potential of CSOs (for many see Macdonald 2008), critics have raised concern especially on the ground that *they* lack accountability and are susceptible to being used strategically in an IO’s accountability management (see Kohler-Koch 2010).

For years accountability was “an ever-expanding concept” (Mulgan 2000), and a recent meta-analysis of empirical studies reaches the conclusion that “considerable variation remains in conceptualizations and measurement strategies of accountability” (Biela forthcoming). Nevertheless, authors agree that a “minimal conceptual consensus” has emerged (Bovens, Schillemans, and Goodin 2014). It corresponds to the concept originally developed by Bovens (2007: 450) and is expressed in the definition of accountability as “a relationship between an actor and a forum, in which the actor has an obligation to explain and to justify his or her conduct, the forum can pose questions and pass judgement, and the actor may face consequences” (Bovens, Curtin, and t’Hart 2010: 35). Based on this definition, Bovens, Curtin, and t’Hart have developed a parsimonious analytical framework that we used as guideline for our empirical research.

### *CSOs as Guardians of Accountability?*

Accountability exerted by intermediaries is of highest importance when public scrutiny is at its lowest. Even in domestic politics, governmental routine politics, and decision making are below the radar of public scrutiny. This is true even for most of the day-to-day activities of IOs, which explains the demand for societal actors tracking IOs on a more permanent basis. From this perspective, we ask: What can be the contribution of CSOs to holding institutions, bodies, and actors of international governance accountable?

Accountability in international governance is about keeping governing in line with people’s preferences. We suggest differentiating two objectives: 1) linking governance to the people in terms of assuring that governance institutions do what citizens want and refrain from doing what citizens do not want, and 2) that the institutions pursue their remits with success. According to a parsimonious model, international democratic governance is achieved by political delegation, an electoral chain reaching from citizens, via parliaments/governments, to the IO. However, with amalgamating levels of governance and the multiplication of actors, accountability is usually no longer assured by hierarchical chains of delegation (see Agné 2007 or Hupe and Edwards 2012).

CSOs are seen to have two supplementing roles in this setting, complementing the formal chain of control and accountability running via the political route of elected governments:

First, CSOs provide input to international governance, they pass on information from citizens to decision-makers about what citizens want, and they also inform citizens about the IO and its activities in order to allow them to form preferences, as suggested by the transmission belt concept by Steffek and Nanz (2008). A wealth of research, typically under the label of lobbying studies, has been accumulated that, both theoretically and empirically, deals with how CSOs try to influence IOs, what instruments CSOs use, and how successful CSOs are in having an impact (see Price 2003; Dür 2008; Tallberg 2010; Fries and Walkenhorst 2011; Klüver 2013).

Second, the focus of our paper, CSOs may also hold IOs accountable for their decisions or lack thereof, enhancing the formal “accountability” through the conventional chain of elec-

toral delegation. In this function, CSOs contribute to keep agents of international governance in line with their remit and induce them to make every effort to achieve their aims. The potential role of CSOs arises here from the fact that while citizens are “far away” and rationally uninformed, CSOs are closer, more persistent, and better informed to evaluate the actions of the IO. The idea underlying the disciplining impact of CSOs is that they make IOs aware that someone knowledgeable is watching, someone who might alert the public or other actors, which in turn might have a formal control and the option for sanctioning the IO (see Le Grand 2003). Apart from formal or implicit threats of “whistleblowing,” there is a notable peer group effect arising from CSO involvement. The idea is that the very fact of being watched, of having to explain and justify decisions, activities (or inactivity), in front of an informed audience, increases effort and quality of the actions by an agent. Arguably, this is of particular relevance when the IO bureaucracy engages in a continuous dialogue with CSOs. To summarize our conception: CSOs have a strong role in holding IOs accountable 1) when the CSOs are informed about what the IO does, either because the IO gives the information or because the CSOs can demand and receive the information and 2) when the CSOs may pass judgment on the IO, either because the CSOs are engaged in an established dialogue with the IO or the CSOs have other means to pass judgment, such as addressing the public or whistleblowing to member states.

This conception of the role of CSOs does not assign them a formal role in the chain of accountability linking IOs and citizens. Nor do we presume that CSOs are per se democratically or morally legitimized. CSOs may play a dubious role in instances of stakeholder management and population shaping (see Cullen 2005; Tallberg 2010; Liese 2010), where IOs foster a population of co-opted, even dependent CSOs, to manufacture the appearance of civic involvement. Our aim is not to scrutinize the quality of accountability or its effect on IO policy or performance, which is hard to assess even in case studies based on thick description and process tracing. Nor do we aim at a general evaluation of CSOs’ contribution to democratizing international governance or try to assess the democratic legitimacy of the CSOs themselves on this subject (see Collingwood and Logister 2005). Rather, we look for evidence that CSOs can fulfill this role, while keeping in mind that their ability depends on certain preconditions. Accordingly, we concentrate on the preconditions enabling CSOs to hold IOs accountable in the way outlined above. Given that we aim at comparing a larger sample of IOs, we focus on preconditions embodied in organizational features that are relatively easy to survey: 1) the provision of information, which can be used by any CSO, critical as well as co-opted ones, and 2) the establishment of a dialogue with CSOs. Based on information provided by IOs and their own permanent scrutiny, CSOs, in particular when they are engaged in an established dialogue with the IO, make the IOs aware that they are scrutinized, and thus create a “climate of accountability” (Chouinard 2013).

We begin by presenting factors that we expect to affect the organizational preconditions on the part of the IOs and the organizational features of CSOs that set the terms for being successful in demanding accountability. The following section gives the operationalizations and empirical data on the levels and factors influencing the preconditions granted by IOs, and the last section concludes.

### **Factors Having an Impact on the Preconditions for Accountability**

IOs have a strong position in shaping accountability relations and their transparency (see Gri-gorescu 2007 for an empirical study on IO transparency and its causes). Their primary obligation is giving account and information to member states. Many other actors may also pressure an IO to give account, but the degree to which an IO accounts for its activities (or inactivity), engages in explanations and justifications, and in relation to whom, is largely up to the IO. One assumption underlying both the agency approach and the accountability approach is that the IO staff is self-interested, striving for autonomy, and does not want to be held accountable or

be scrutinized. IO staff will always prefer to act independently, and thus, will give an account only if and when deemed appropriate and useful or considered to be unavoidable. Giving account is something that comes neither natural nor easy to IOs (see Le Grand 2003; Zweifel 2006; Vibert 2007). Accordingly, our question is: what factors may explain the readiness of a specific IO to be open to the scrutiny of a third party? Based on the broader literature on cooperation of CSOs and IOs (see Martens 2005; Liese 2010; Steffek 2010, 2013; Tallberg 2010) and factors explaining IO transparency (Grigorescu 2007). We propose to distinguish factors originating in (a) The Institutional Setting of the IO, (b) The Distinct Properties of the Policy Field, (c) The Tasks and Activities of the IO, (d) The Properties of the CSOs, and (e) The Structure of the CSO Population Tracking the IO.

### *Institutional Setting of the IO*

The first argument is that the institutional structure and the context of an IO influences the setting of accountability relations. The legal framework and statutes constitute internal systems of checks and balances and also determine the tension between autonomy and accountability in relation to external actors. The formal legal framework may force the IO to render account, i.e., to give information and explain its activities to members and maybe also to CSOs. Equally important are rules governing the practical implementation of information provision.

Institutional rules may encourage and legitimize CSOs to demand an account although accountability may not be formally institutionalized in the IO's constitution. This holds true, for example, in the case of the EU. The new provisions of the Lisbon Treaty (Title II, Art. 11) do not formally obligate EU institutions to render account to CSOs, but the requirement that EU institutions ought to engage in an open dialogue with representative associations and civil society gives CSOs a strong leverage to ask for accountability. CSOs may also profit from provisions for internal checks as it provides opportunities to bring transgressions to the attention of controlling institutions and in some highly institutionalized settings, typically at the national level, CSOs may resort to legal action (see Hilson 2002).

Our first hypothesis is that—*ceteris paribus*—EU institutions are more open to granting necessary preconditions for accountability because of the EU's denser regulatory network of rules on CSO participation and in particular the legal entitlements for societal actors.

### *The Policy Field of the IO*

The conventional wisdom that “policies determine politics” (Lowi 1972) and recent research has confirmed that policy-related factors are strong determinants for IO–CSO interaction (Klüver, Braun, and Beyers 2015). IOs are in charge of policy issues that differ significantly in terms of public relevance, international visibility, and political controversies. However, even issues of high political relevance do not necessarily attract public attention. Rather, the international visibility of an IO arises from the polarization of an issue. Policy fields are subject to attention and media cycles and are thus under changing public scrutiny. CSOs can benefit from high levels of awareness when calling an IO to be accountable, and they can also strive for raising publicity by engaging in international public campaigns (De Bruycker and Beyers 2015). It is interesting to note that IOs are increasingly sensitive to their public appearance, which makes them vulnerable to public contestation especially when it draws intense media coverage. This induces pro-active behavior in the provision of information, albeit only in policy fields where there is a public audience. In some policy fields the activities of an IO are shielded from the public eye by the technical complexity of its work; this is particularly true in the case of economic regulation concerning standard setting or market access.

Our second hypothesis is that IOs are less inclined to fulfill preconditions for accountability when active in economic policies than in policy fields more visible to the public and the media. As policy fields, we compared economics, environment, social issues, and development, and we hypothesized that the level of accountability granted is lower in the domain of economic policy.

### *Tasks of the IO*

IOs are, irrespective of their specific policy field, entrusted with quite different tasks. Dependent on the nature of the task, an IO benefits to varying extents from the input and cooperation of CSOs. IOs and CSOs are typically in an exchange relation that sometimes is so close that the IO regards CSO participation as a matter of “working together” with corresponding consequences for their accountability relation (Wolff 2013: 235pp). Accordingly, the readiness of an IO to create favorable conditions for accountability should differ with its tasks. We selected tasks that differ in profile and put the focus on those that are, in our sample, the most frequent ones, namely regulating (19 IOs), monitoring (5), implementing (17), and coordinating (4) (for a similar though slightly deviating typology, see Koppell 2014: 372). Even though we run the risk of oversimplification, we attributed only one task to each IO choosing the one that is most characteristic for its profile.

Regulatory IOs typically affect a range of societal and public actors with their policies. Even where the ultimate decision remains with the states, IOs have a role in informing decisions, providing information, problem analysis, and impact assessment. Thus, regulatory IOs are in need of information, usually from those subjected to the regulations, i.e., most often societal actors. This makes IOs more information-friendly and open to communication, paving the way for intensive accountability relations.

IOs in charge of monitoring agreements also require information but of a different kind and on a different footing. As most infringements of agreements hurt some actor directly, it is in the interest of the latter to bring the infringement to the IO’s notice. The IO does not need to give information in exchange for receiving a complaint. Consequently, the preconditions for accountability are more restricted.

When the main task of an IO is implementing projects, the relationship with and the reliance on external, societal actors may be higher for two complementing reasons. First, implementation on the ground makes IOs dependent on societal actors for project execution as the IO usually does not have the staff to do so. Dependence on CSOs is high, and we would expect an IO to maintain close communication, which then furthers accountability. Second, project implementation is closely linked to the distribution of funds and one can expect that all potential recipients and their CSO advocates have an interest in watching the IO closely and pressure for relevant information and evaluation. In particular, the argument on the IOs need of information also applies for regulatory IOs, which we would expect to be similar to implementing ones.

IOs that are primarily coordinating the activities of states are less dependent on CSOs as the predominant actors are the states and the functions of the IO are that of a forum. The actors actually in charge of policies are the member states, lowering the requirement for the IO to provide information and evaluation to a broader public.

Our third hypothesis is that IOs with the task of monitoring or coordinating are more restrictive in handing out information and engaging in dialogue, so the preconditions for accountability are not as good as in the case of IOs tasked with regulatory or implementing functions.

### *Properties of CSOs*

Holding decision-makers in international politics accountable is a matter of interest and capacity, be the latter formal or informal. CSOs act in the interest of their members and/or have a mission they want to pursue. While some “cause groups” are directly committed to issues of international accountability and public responsibility of IOs, most CSOs engage in holding an IO accountable, because inadequate performance would harm their own or their constituents’ interests (see Kellow 2002; Martens 2005; Willetts 2011, for typologies and systematizations of NGO by their properties and activities at the international level). CSOs’ capacity to do so depends both on their resources and on the provision of information and explanation on the part of the IO (Steffek 2013). Drawing from theories of international interest interme-

diation (Bouwen 2004), we can assume that properties of the CSO have a strong impact on IO–CSO accountability relations. CSOs differ in their capacity to build up pressure and their ability to evaluate and judge the performance of an IO. They dispose of different organizational resources, levels of expert knowledge, influence on constituencies in society and overall political weight and last, but not least, their capacity to harm the IO by interrupting the mutually beneficial cooperation. We are well aware from our own empirical research that the equation of strong CSOs with groups representing focused economic interests, a group we denote for lack of a better word as “business,” and weak CSOs with NGOs of the norms- and value-based type is an oversimplification. Nevertheless, it is a fair though rough approximation to reality.

Our fourth hypothesis is that IOs dealing with CSO populations dominated by well-organized and resourceful CSOs, representing focused material interests, “business” will be more open to provide the necessary preconditions for accountability than IOs dealing with CSO populations dominated by NGOs of the norms- and value-based type.

### *The Structure of the CSO Population*

IOs face a different structural constellation of the CSO population, and this may have an impact on their readiness to engage in a well-functioning accountability relation and to provide the necessary prerequisites.

The population of CSOs tracking an IO may be fragmented, representing a wide range of interests and views, unable to take a unitary stance vis-à-vis the IO. The position of the CSOs may also be concentrated given that the CSOs engaging with the IO are more or less having the same concerns, confronting the IO with a unified position. Notably in labor policy and social policy, and also in environmental policy, the CSO population engaging with the IO has a bipolar structure with opposing coalitions. Also other policy fields are characterized by cleavage structures and, more often than not, contested issues will relate to long-standing political cleavages entrenched in well-organized interests. When opposing interests are highly organized and, above all, make for a bipolar structure of conflict constellation it is more likely that IOs are exposed to stringent scrutiny. This obviously is the case in labor relations, but also concerning conflicts about environmental issues and, more recently, about public health. The situation is quite different when the IO’s activities affect diffuse general interests and when these interests are hardly organized and at best are represented in pluralist, overlapping structures.

Our fifth hypothesis states that IOs dealing with bipolar or concentrated interests will provide more information than IOs dealing with diffuse, fragmented interests.

### *Explanatory Variables*

Having identified factors with varying impacts on the preconditions of accountability, we now proceed to operationalize our explanatory variables. It entails features of the IO as the actor having to give an account and features of the CSOs as the actors demanding an account. To capture the effect of variations in the substance of policies, the scope of activities, and the Institutional setting, we compared EU institutions across specific policy areas with those of UN institutions operating in the same policy fields:

- a) The Institutional Setting of the IO. As to the institutional setting of the IO, we distinguish primarily EU and UN institutions, arguing that in the EU context, the roles and rights of CSOs are stronger in substance and more firmly institutionalized thanks to the more participatory governance regime of the European Commission and the most recent revision of the EU treaty (Title II, Art. 11 EU Treaty of Lisbon). Nonetheless, the factual usage of the entitlements differs greatly among DGs. In the UN context and in most of its special organizations, the role of the CSOs is, at least formally, much less institutionalized and much less substantive. The variable institutional setting is coded as UN, EU, or stand-alone IOs.

- b) The Distinct Properties of the Policy Field. Regarding the tasks of the IOs, the IOs in our sample are classified according to their main function: coordinating, implementing, regulative, or monitoring. Though we are well aware that IOs mostly have several tasks, we treat them as if they were unitary actors. Otherwise, the attempt to cover the activities of each issue specific unit of the IO would multiply the required data collection, effectively rendering our effort unfeasible.
- c) The Tasks and Activities of the IO. The policy field was assigned according to the predominant theme of the IO: environment, development, social issues, or economics.

Regarding CSOs as the actors demanding accountability, we use the following features to describe the constellation:

- d) The Properties of the CSOs. Properties of CSOs and stakeholder type—we distinguish between groups defending the economic interests of their members, such as trade associations, professional associations, and trade unions which we labeled “business,” and CSOs which claim to be rights- and value-based and to defend the concerns of “weak interests” we labeled “NGO.” The classification was based on the declared purpose of the CSO.
- e) The Structure of the CSO Population Tracking the IO. This refers to the cleavages among societal actors in the field of the IO’s main activities. Societal actors engaging with the IO may be motivated by the same interest and speak to the IO with one voice or have overlapping or even opposing interests. We distinguish the following three constellations:
- Concentrated interests denotes a constellation where, despite different organizations, the demands of the core actors add up to a consistent policy request.
  - Diffuse interests is when different organizations demand a mix of at times overlapping but at times also differing and opposing policies from the IO.
  - Bipolar interest structure is when two coalitions of interest confront each other, as is mostly the case between employers and trade unions in the field of labor policy or between environmental organizations and industry in environmental policy.

The empirical differentiation is based on the analysis of conflict constellations in EU consultations in an earlier project (*Democratic Legitimacy via Civil Society Involvement?*, see Kohler-Koch and Quittkat 2013).

### *Case Selection*

Given the multitude of IOs a full sample is beyond the reach of a comparative study. For this reason, the sample was chosen in a way that allows statements about the explanatory factors, by making sure there is sufficient variation in the sample regarding these factors (see for the underlying research design King, Keohane, and Verba 1994: 134pp). Starting from the EU as a template of organizations, which share a common legal framework but highly different structures and processes in the policy fields covered, we supplemented the EU directorates with the thematically corresponding UN organizations. This way we could analyze the potential effect of the UN and the EU setting and of the various policy fields and tasks associated with the IOs. The selection was complemented by three stand-alone IOs, NATO, OECD, and OSCE, serving as a reference group. Our quantitative comparative study covers in total forty-nine international organizations: twenty-one operative DGs of the EU, twenty-five special organizations of the UN system with a similar thematic profile, and three stand-alone organizations (see appendix for the IOs covered).

### **Measuring Preconditions of Accountability**

How can we measure whether favorable conditions for an effective accountability relation are in place? For our operationalization, we start out from the conception of Mark Bovens (2007) and focus on the organizational preconditions of accountability. As stated above, the first



and most basic precondition for accountability is the **provision of information** (Lord and Pollak 2010). The second is **evaluation**, which implies, above all, open access to the IO's internal and external evaluations, which usually provide the kind of information that is of utmost importance to pass judgment on the IO's activities. The third is the **establishment of a dialogue** where CSOs can pose questions to the IO, utter critique, and pass judgment directly, a setting where the IO engages in a communication with CSOs about its activities, performance, and achievements.

While these organizational preconditions do not guarantee accountability, their absence deprives CSOs, especially those critical and at distance to the IO, of their chance to exert accountability. When lacking information and the possibility to engage with the IO, CSOs cannot hold an IO accountable. Hence, it is unnecessary to expand our analysis to the other key element in Bovens' definition of accountability, namely whether or not an actor may face consequences. For the purpose of this paper, the preconditions of accountability are measured by the degree to which the IO:

- a) informs about decisions and actions, and how these relate to the IO's aims,
- b) provides evaluations concerning the degree to which the IO has achieved its aims, and
- c) installs settings and procedures bringing the IO and CSOs into dialogue.

How can the organizational pre-conditions of accountability be operationalized in a way to distinguish degrees across a larger and heterogeneous sample of IOs?

- ad a) Information, the core element in effective accountability, can be measured by the detail and quality in which information is provided: Are aims and working plans, which can serve as a yardstick for achievement, published in advance? Does the IO report on the usage of funds? Even if such documents exist, they may be classified and only accessible to member states. For example, some IOs and some DGs in the EU publish little information about what they are currently doing, let alone what they want to do and how they intend to pursue their targets. An observer can hardly assess whether the IO is on track. By withholding information, these institutions prohibit the informational precondition of accountability.
- ad b) Accountability is also about reporting achievements (or the lack thereof) and evaluating how decisions and actions taken contribute to achieving the aims of the IO, be they operational or regulatory. Does the IO report on problems encountered during implementation and the degree to which it achieved its aims? Is achievement measured in a valid way, is the IO even evaluated by an independent third party? Does the IO refer to performance indicators and benchmarks?
- ad c) An accountability relation between IOs and CSOs differs from formal and legally binding accountability procedures as established in IO–member-state relations. Rather, it takes the form of peer pressure and public scrutiny; either with the CSO commenting on the IO from the outside, or, presumably more effective, by a dialogue between the IO and the CSO. This dialogue may range from a situation in which the IO retains unilateral control over the discourse, stating its views while avoiding critical questions, to a genuine discourse in which the IO calls for evaluations and comments and engages in explaining and justifying its decisions. It is important whether the CSOs can raise issues and ask questions and whether such a dialogue is a routine affair so that IO staff is aware that it will have to explain and justify its activities on a regular basis.

Based on these considerations, we used the following list of indicators to conduct an Internet search of the IO web sites, screening them for whether the information specified was available.

#### *Indicators of the Extent of Information Given*

The first set of indicators concerns information about substantive activities of the IO, e.g., policies and activities, money spent, and plans for future activities.

**Annual Reports**—Does the IO publish general or specific annual activity reports? Thus, providing information about past activities, which allows for detecting if the activities are in line with the remit of the IO.

**Working plans/Management plans**—Is the IO giving information about its future activities, how the IO wants to tackle the tasks at hand, how and for what purpose it wants to spend the money, so that the public and CSOs can check for the appropriateness and the plausibility of the working plans?

**Financial Information**—Does the IO inform about the sources and the use of financial resources available? For instance, by way of a detailed budget.

### *Indicators for Evaluation of Programs and Policies*

Evaluating activities is a critical source of information for holding actors accountable; therefore, we screened for whether there is an evaluation of the policies and decisions taken by the IO.

Evaluation may be organized internally, e.g., by a specialized department formally in charge of evaluating the activities of the other departments. Evaluation may also be outsourced to third parties (and is then typically performed by contractors, like universities or consultancies), while some IOs have both, EvaluationInternal and EvaluationExternal.

**EvaluationReports**—In order to hold an actor accountable, evaluation reports must be publicly available and should be easily accessible.

**PerformanceIndicators**—Passing judgment is easier when the IO does not just give a descriptive report but provides data and, if possible, refers to performance indicators for measuring progress or the lack thereof.

### *Indicators of a Dialogue between CSO and the IO*

The establishment of a dialogue is measured here by the following organizational features.

**EvaluationCSO**—Does the IO involve CSOs in the evaluation? For instance, by asking them how they evaluate the activities of the IO or where they see progress or problems.

**CSOInstitutionalized**—Is there a constitutional role for CSOs stated in the charta of the IO? Or is there a document stating that CSOs have a role and how the interaction between the IO and CSOs will be handled? This institutionalization varies. A case of strong institutionalization is given when CSOs are members of a committee and when the composition and recruitment are formally settled in an official document (for instance the Trade Contact Group of DG Trade), whereas less institutionalized forms are documents defining when and how CSOs might get a certain status enabling them to attend meetings or conferences.

**CSOConsultations**—Does the IO consult at all with CSOs? The ways to do so are manifold. At first, we just want to establish whether or not some regular consultation processes exist, whatever the form.

**CSOConferences and CSOWorkshops**—Does the IO hold conferences/workshops with CSOs to consult about activities (new programs, strategies, or evaluation of programs or policies)? Contrary to other forms of consultation where CSOs may only submit statements, the direct encounter allows for a dialogue where CSOs can utter critique and confront the IOs in a direct way.

**CSOAgendaQuestions**—Are CSOs in the course of consultation allowed to pose questions, and are CSOs also entitled to put items on the agenda? Or is the IO fully in control of the agenda and can thus avoid any mention of failings?

### **Preconditions of Accountability: Levels and Determinants**

Do the IOs of our sample differ in the degree to which they offer preconditions for accountability, and do the preconditions correspond in a meaningful way with the explanatory factors listed above? When screening IO web sites for relevant information, the first lesson is that even within a single organization the presentation is far from coherent and information some-

times is given in a rather haphazard way. Furthermore, the differences in how the IOs and even individual directorates-general (DG) of the EU handle their public appearance were found to be striking. As for the EU, there is no common format to present and organize the information. Not only is each DG different, but some DGs, notably the DG for Health and Consumers (DG SANCO), operate for all practical purposes as factually several organizations, each with a style of presenting information, a mode of interaction with sets of stakeholders, and degrees of comprehensiveness and detail in their presentation of information. As this applies to all types of information, including the labeling of documents and types of information, finding the relevant information by screening the web sites is time consuming and no easy job; it boils down to checking every page of the site. The analysis will proceed by looking at the levels and patterns in the organizational preconditions for accountability, then testing the proposed hypotheses.

### *Information about IO Activity*

What level of information do the IOs grant in their Internet presence? Table 1 reports the values of an index of information provision regarding the activity of the IO. The Information-Index summarizes whether or not the IO provides AnnualReports, WorkingPlans, and FinancialInformation (in particular on its budget). Accordingly, the InformationIndex has a range from 0 to 3, the latter indicating the most comprehensive provision of information. Regarding the level of information provided, the overall situation indicates that information is provided freely, at least with regard to availability without examining the quality. As for the components of the InformationIndex, 82% of IOs provide some kind of annual report; 92% publish working plans detailing how they want to tackle their tasks in the next period, but only 65% provide information about their available financial resources, how they plan to spend them, and how they allocate resources to each of their tasks.

**Table 1: Information Provision by IO Properties and CSO Structure**

	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N
<b>By Setting</b>	EU		stand alone		UN			
	1.90	21	2.67	3	2.76	25		
<b>By Theme</b>	development		economic		environment		social	
	2.63	8	2.19	21	2	4	2.50	6
<b>By Activity</b>	coordinating		regulatory		implementing		monitoring	
	2.75	4	1.83	18	2.82	17	2.60	5
<b>By Stakeholder Type</b>	business		business + NGOs		NGOs			
	2.13	15	2.08	12	2.77	18		
<b>By Interest Structure</b>	bipolar		concentrated		diffuse			
	2.18	11	2.13	15	2.68	19		

Remark: Mean of InformationIndex, ranging from 0 to 3, by category of IO; overall mean for all forty-nine cases is 2.39.

Given the mean of 2.39 on a 0 to 3 scale, the level of information provision is, in a quantitative perspective, very high. Do the patterns in the information provision correspond with the arguments made above? As the findings reported in Table 1 indicate, contrary to hypothesis 1, the level of information granted is actually higher in the less institutionalized UN setting than in the EU, although the EU is formally more committed to transparency, and the role of CSOs is more institutionalized. The stand-alone IOs are more similar in their information policy to the UN than to the EU.

Regarding the societal actors the IOs are engaging with, IOs dealing primarily with organizations representing material interests, our “business” category, are less informative than those dealing mostly with NGOs. It is also noteworthy that information provision is lower

where the interests concerned are concentrated or bipolar and higher in cases of diffuse interests. Here, as in all following comparisons by categories referring to CSOs, we omitted the group of four IOs that do not have a population of CSOs they engage with in a meaningful way. The interpretation of both findings may be that IOs confronted with business CSOs are reporting to the organizations directly, in a non-public way, whereas the IOs confronted with a diffuse set of interests do communicate via the web, publicizing information more broadly.

Information provision of IOs covering social affairs and development policies is higher than that of IOs covering economic or environmental issues. From a more qualitative perspective, the sheer quantity of information differs, measured by the length of the reports. For example, the DGs EuropeAid and Social Affairs stand out with much more encompassing reports. Information provision is roughly similar for IOs tasked with monitoring, implementing, and coordinating. The lowest level of information provision is actually found in regulatory IOs. This runs counter to the argument made above in hypothesis 3, that regulatory IOs affect a larger set of actors, while coordinating IOs are more or less a forum for member states, which then bear responsibility for implementation, so that holding IOs accountable would not be addressing the right target. With regard to these differences, only the lower level of information provided by EU institutions (compared to their UN equivalents) and by regulatory IOs is statistically significant (significance level of 5% or lower).

#### *Evaluation of Programs and Activities*

When holding an IO accountable, one important aspect is whether or not the IO subjects itself to scrutiny, in particular by having its activities evaluated and by reporting the results of these evaluations. Some IOs are evaluating their activities, policies, and projects and are reporting the findings. These reports, as well as the reports of the IOs to their member states, constitute an opportunity for critical observers, such as the CSOs tracking the IOs, to check the facts presented by the IO and holding them accountable regarding their achievements and performance.

Evaluation can be organized differently. Some IOs evaluate themselves, having a separate department, usually assigned to the organization's top leadership in charge of evaluating policies adopted or the activities of the operative departments. Some IOs commission external evaluation reports, which are then conducted by academics, experts, or commercial consultants. While evaluations are often mentioned, evaluation reports are not published in all cases. Another aspect is if the IO refers to indicators of performance when evaluating its activities. IOs do have defined tasks, and one aspect of accountability is to report the degree to which these tasks are achieved, ideally with reference to performance indicators, be it quantitative, such as trade statistics, or qualitative, each of which helps to define the achievement clearly. The availability of performance indicators differs among areas as some tasks are easier to translate into performance indicators. Interestingly, the factual usage of performance indicators does not vary correspondingly. Some IOs, even those with little quantitative information at hand, still report some kind of indicator, while other IOs, where statistics would be quite easy to come up with, do not.

The EvaluationIndex presented below covers the evaluation activity of IOs and the provision of information related to the evaluation. The elements of the index, ranging from 0 to 4, are the occurrence of an internal evaluation (conducted by the IO, typically by a separate department of the IO), an external evaluation, the publications of the evaluation reports delivered by the evaluators, be they internal or external, and last, the use of some kind of qualitative or quantitative performance indicator.

Regarding the use of evaluation, 63% of the IOs conduct internal evaluations and to the same extent they commission external evaluations. Eighteen IOs in our sample conduct both internal and external evaluations; five conduct no evaluation at all; thirteen only conduct an external; and thirteen only an internal evaluation. Evaluation reports are published in 82% of the cases, which is to say that if evaluations are conducted, the reports are usually published,

too. Only four of the 44 IOs conducting evaluations in some form or other do not provide the reports; 88% of IOs reporting on their activities refer to some kind of performance indicator. The use of evaluation is similarly frequent in both the EU and the UN, and this sharply contrasts with the three stand-alone IOs, which hardly engage in evaluating their work.

**Table 2: Usage and Documentation of Evaluation**

	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N
<b>By Setting</b>	EU		stand alone		UN			
	3.05	21	1.33	3	3.08	25		
<b>By Theme</b>	development		economic		environment		social	
	3.25	8	2.86	21	2.75	4	3.67	6
<b>By Activity</b>	coordinating		regulatory		implementing		monitoring	
	2.75	4	2.72	18	3.35	17	2.20	5
<b>By Stakeholder Type</b>	business		business + NGOs		NGOs			
	2.53	15	3.08	12	3.39	18		
<b>By Interest Structure</b>	bipolar		concentrated		diffuse			
	3.00	11	2.40	15	3.53	19		

Remark: Mean of EvaluationIndex, ranging from 0 to 4, by IO category. Overall mean for all forty-nine cases is 2.96.

Evaluation is frequent and well organized in IOs covering social affairs and development, less so in the economic and environmental domains. In the field of environment, evaluation is used least often, despite the high impact and the amenability of activities to a critical evaluation of their impact. IOs implementing projects are typically evaluating their work, IOs with other functions much less so, a finding in line with the argument of hypothesis 3 above.

IOs dealing predominantly with NGOs are evaluating and reporting the evaluations more frequently than IOs interacting predominantly with business organizations, an indication that the presence of NGOs actually increases the likelihood of accountability.

Interestingly, the evaluation is less developed among those IOs where the constituencies are championing the same positions and have similar demands (concentrated interests). One might presume that in this situation, the IO and its constituency are so much in line regarding what will be done that they regard an evaluation of the IO's performance and the actual impact of its activities as superfluous.

Again, only few differences are statistically significant: evaluation is better organized in IOs dealing with social issues and in IOs dealing with NGOs (i.e., dealing predominantly with NGOs or also with NGOs) and where the interests represented are diffuse.

### *Dialogue between CSOs and the IO*

The key question here concerns the forms and the degree to which a dialogue between the IO and the CSOs is institutionalized. The status granted to CSOs differs among the IOs covered in our sample and so do the forms of involvement and the degree of institutionalization. Our assessment is based on the charta of the IO, i.e., whether or not it mentions CSOs and gives them a defined role. While in the case of the EU the latest treaty revision assigns CSOs a role in EU governance that formally applies to all DGs, the factual handling of the relations between the DG and CSOs differs substantially. Some DGs have institutionalized advisory committees, which predefine, and in some cases, factually set policy, and also have a formal document defining the relationship with CSOs. For others, consultation with civil society is nothing more than taking note of the Eurobarometer opinion surveys (see Quittkat and Kohler-Koch 2013: 52).

The establishment of a dialogue with CSOs is measured by a DialogueIndex, constituted by the existence of the following six organizational features: The involvement of the CSOs in the evaluation process, the consultations with CSOs, in whatever form, conferences and workshops with CSOs participation, the possibility for the CSOs to raise questions and to bring items on the agenda of the IO, and last, but not least, if the IO has granted CSOs a role in its activities.

Regarding the six individual components of the DialogueIndex, 39% of the IOs involve the CSOs in their evaluation, 84% of the IO consult in one way or other with CSOs, the most frequent forms being online consultations (a typical but not exclusive feature of the EU), conferences, or workshops. When interacting with CSOs in some form, only 65% of the IOs allow for the CSO to ask questions or to put items on the agenda, in the other instances, IOs retain full control over the interaction, using forums to present the IO's positions and views, rather than to open up for input from societal actors. Only half of the IOs surveyed grant some form of institutionalized status to CSOs, either by giving them a role in the charta, or by setting out the terms of the interaction in a terms of reference document. In the other half of the cases, CSO involvement is subject to the discretion of the IO's administration.

**Table 3: Establishment of Dialogue**

	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N
<b>By Setting</b>	EU		stand alone		UN			
	4.14	21	2.67	3	3.60	25		
<b>By Theme</b>	development		economic		environment		social	
	2.63	8	4.43	21	5	4	4.33	6
<b>By Activity</b>	coordinating		regulatory		implementing		monitoring	
	2.50	4	4.22	18	3.65	17	4.00	5
<b>By Stakeholder Type</b>	business		business + NGOs		NGOs			
	4.60	15	3.67	12	3.67	18		
<b>By Interest Structure</b>	bipolar		concentrated		diffuse			
	4.09	11	4.53	15	3.47	19		

Remark: Mean of DialogueIndex, ranging from 0 to 6, by category of IO. Overall mean for all forty-nine cases is 3.78.

Dialogue with CSOs is established somewhat stronger in the EU than in the UN organizations; in both, it is far better developed than in stand-alone IOs. Still, on average, dialogue falls short of the achievements of some of the IOs, where the dialogue is highly established.

Dialogues are well established in the domain of environmental policy, also in the field of economics and social affairs. It is noticeable that IOs in charge of development are less inclined to engage in dialogue. When taking into account the various tasks of the IOs, types of stakeholders, and interest structures, a coherent pattern appears: entertaining a dialogue with stakeholders is a characteristic feature of IOs in charge of regulation and monitoring. The dialogue is more intense with business than with NGOs or mixed constituencies, and it is most frequent when an IO is faced with concentrated interests. The data suggest that regulating and monitoring IOs pay particular attention to the economic effects of their decisions and want to draw on CSOs' practical knowledge. This interpretation sounds plausible, but it needs to be borne in mind that only the differences relating to policy areas have statistical significance.

#### *Organizational Preconditions of Accountability: Overall Situation*

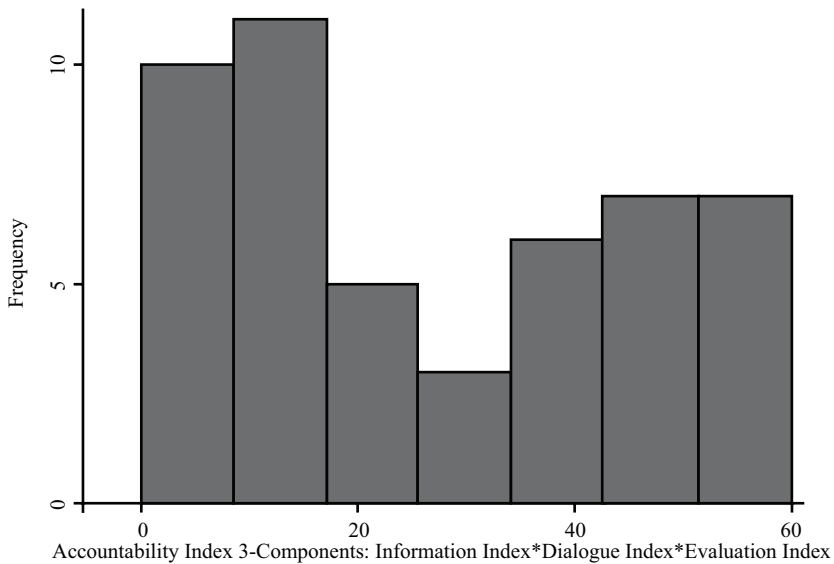
Our argument is that the chances of CSOs to hold IOs accountable will be highest when substantial information is available and CSOs can engage in a critical dialogue with the IO, which enables them to pass judgment. If CSOs have access to information but have no opportunity

to engage with the IO in order to pass judgment, the level of accountability is still low. The same is true for the inverse situation when CSOs can participate in a dialogue but lack relevant information to make use of the opportunity. Crucial are not the levels of information available and dialogue per se, but the combination.

Accordingly, we measured the degree to which IOs simultaneously fulfill all three preconditions of accountability: offering information, evaluation, and dialogue. The constitutive components were combined, not in an additive, but in a multiplicative way, which implies that each element is a necessary condition for overall accountability.

By way of an illustration Figure 1 shows the distribution of overall accountability across the forty-nine IOs. High numbers indicate a situation, where all three necessary conditions of accountability are given to a large extent.

**Figure 1: Overall Accountability—Provision of Information and Establishment of Dialogue**



As Figure 1 illustrates, high levels of accountability are rare. Low or even very low levels are a frequent constellation. Interestingly there is a gap in the distribution, implying that at the level of accountability, defined in our sense of a combination of three quite independent features, IOs either go for high or low accountability.

When we analyze the factors influencing our measure of overall accountability, we find that it differs to some degree from the analysis of the components, i.e., when measuring dialogue, evaluation, and information individually (see Table 4). UN organizations provide the preconditions to a higher degree than EU or stand-alone IOs. The same is true for IOs dealing with social issues, tasked with implementing policies and dealing predominantly with NGOs and diffuse interests. Significant are two differences, the one concerning NGOs as a constituency and diffuse interests as the dominant feature of the CSO population.

## Conclusions

What do the findings tell us about the IO-related conditions enabling CSOs to hold institutions of international governance accountable? And what do they tell us about the factors driving IOs to enable CSOs to hold them accountable?

**Table 4: Preconditions for Accountability**

	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N
<b>By Setting</b>	EU		stand alone		UN			
	23.71	21	8.00	3	31.56	25		
<b>By Theme</b>	development		economic		environment		social	
	25.50	8	26.95	21	28.75	4	39.17	6
<b>By Activity</b>	coordinating		regulatory		implementing		monitoring	
	23.25	4	17.94	18	36.18	17	23.20	5
<b>By Stakeholder Type</b>	business		business + NGOs		NGOs			
	24.27	15	21.75	12	35.61	18		
<b>By Interest Structure</b>	bipolar		concentrated		diffuse			
	26.00	11	21.60	15	34.53	19		

Remark: Means of AccountabilityIndex, ranging from 0 to 60, by category of IO. Overall mean for all forty-nine cases is 26.76.

Prima facie, our screening gives the impression that IOs freely hand out information: the overwhelming majority publish working plans, annual reports, and provide financial reports. Furthermore, the evaluation of activities is well developed, results of evaluations are often reported, and, in addition, many IOs engage in a dialogue with CSOs. The first impression is that CSOs have the opportunity to hold IOs accountable. A more in-depth analysis, however, conveys a different message. The reason for this seemingly surprising and contradictory evaluation is that for accountability to work, all three conditions have to be met, and a high level in one condition alone is not sufficient. The detailed analysis reveals the degree to which information and evaluations are presented and the degrees to which IOs are ready to engage in a dialogue with CSOs vary considerably, and it exhibits important differences.

From a descriptive perspective, and this is essential in view of our research intention, the necessary preconditions for CSOs to hold IOs accountable seldom occur simultaneously. According to our findings, some IOs are exemplary in their openness and engagement, others are pretty much an inaccessible black box. Most are partly open but do not offer all components necessary for holding them accountable. Only some IOs combine openness in information with maintaining a meaningful dialogue with the public and CSOs. Even with respect to just one of the two relevant elements, namely information, by far the most frequent constellation is that an IO gives some type of information but rarely all types of information listed in our InformationIndex. The information required to assess IO’s activities in a comprehensive way is mostly not available. The same picture pertains to dialogue and evaluation. Some building blocks of an accountability relationship are nearly always missing.

Though the dialogue with CSOs is part of the standard repertoire of IOs, there are considerable variations in both form and quality. The same is true for evaluations, where reports are not always available and performance indicators are often dispensed with. Thus, when looking at the full picture, our main conclusion is that the real opportunities for CSOs to come to an informed opinion, to pass judgment about IO’s activities, and to confront the IO with this judgment in a dialogue are limited.

As for the factors, which we presumed to affect the existence of the preconditions for accountability, the analysis documents a high level of variation between IOs, particularly in relation to their tasks and fields of activity. Few of our hypotheses on structural factors could be confirmed. Most interesting are the differences between the UN and the EU. Despite the substantial difference in the institutional and legal setting, which would suggest that the EU is more ready, or indeed obliged, to grant CSOs the role of a critical observer, UN institutions



are actually more willing to grant CSOs such a role. One explanation is that in the context of the EU, the role of CSOs as legitimate agents of public accountability is contested. The European Parliament, despite its own close contacts to civil society, claims to be the only legitimate representative of the European public. The other explanation is that with the political upgrading of the European Parliament, since the Lisbon Treaty, it is more rewarding for the European Commission to forge an alliance with the parliament instead of seeking the support of CSOs. Another explanation could be that the European Commission is less committed to spread information to the broader public because EU directorates usually have direct and informal links to their constituencies, an interpretation that is confirmed by the patterns of contact between economic lobbyists and EU institutions (Kohler-Koch, Quittkat, and Kurczewska 2013). This explanation is also supported by the fact that IOs active in the domain of social policy and dealing primarily with NGOs representing diffused and fragmented interests are more information friendly.

By way of an outlook, we suggest to complement this quantitative comparative research by a qualitative approach. It goes without saying that the manifest organizational features do not provide sufficient information about the practice and the substance of implementing accountability. It is not sufficient to find out whether or not IOs are obliged to and actually provide information and explanations. Rather, the comprehensiveness, content, and frequency of reports and exchanges have to be investigated. When in the course of future research the quality of reporting and dialogue are taken into account, the present impression of a haphazard approach to public accountability may change.

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## APPENDIX

### List of IOs and EU DGs in the Sample

The dataset covers the following UN organizations: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), International Labour Organization (ILO), IMF, ITU, OCHA, UNAIDS, UNCDF, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFCCC, UNFPA, UN-HABITAT, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNISDR, UNRISD, WFP, WHO, WIPO, World Bank Group, and the WTO. The stand-alone organizations are NATO, OECD, and OSCE. The EU DGs (as of 2012, the time of conducting the survey): Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI), Climate Action (CLIMA), Communication (COMM), Communications Networks, Content and Technology (former DG CONNECT), Competition (COMP), Economic and Financial Affairs (ECFIN), Education and Culture (EAC), Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (EMPL), Energy (ENER), Enterprise and Industry (ENTR), Environment (ENV), EuropeAid Development & Cooperation (DEVCO), Health and Consumers (SANCO), Humanitarian Aid (ECHO), Internal Market and Services (MARKT), Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (MARE), Mobility and Transport (MOVE), Regional Policy (REGIO), Research and Innovation (RTD), Taxation and Customs Union (TAXUD), and Trade (TRADE).

### Classification of Interest Group Populations

IOs with no interest group population constantly tracking the IO: COMM, UNISDR, UNRISD, and NATO. We arrived at the following distribution when screening the available information about the CSOs the IO is mostly engaging with the following:

#### Stakeholder Type

IOs with predominantly business CSOs population: MARKT, RTD, TRADE, MARE, MOVE, ENTR, COMP, ECFIN, IMF, World Bank, WTO, IAEA, OECD, ENER, and AGRI.

IOs with a mixed business/NGO CSOs population: EMPL, SANCO, CONNECT, CLIMA, ENV, FAO, ILO, ITU, UNIDO, WHO, WIPO, and UNFCCC.

IOs with a CSO population constituted predominantly by NGOs: EAC, DEVCO, ECHO, REGIO, TAXUD, OCHA, UNAIDS, UNCDF, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNESCO, UNEP, UN-HABITAT, UNFPA, WFP, and OSCE.

#### Interest Structure

This relates to the predominant cleavage structures in the CSO population.

Cases with a bipolar population structure are: EMPL, CONNECT, CLIMA, ENV, ILO, WHO, WIPO, UNFCCC, World Bank, WTO, IMF.

Cases of concentrated interest structures: MARKT, ENER, RTD, TRADE, AGRI, MARE, MOVE, ENTR, COMP, ECFIN, ITU, UNEP, OSCE, IAEA, OECD.

Cases with diffuse interests: EAC, DEVCO, SANCO, ECHO, REGIO, TAXUD, FAO, OCHA, UNAIDS, UNCDF, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNESCO, UN-HABITAT, UNIDO, UNFPA, WFP.

For the criteria underlying the classification see section on explanatory variables.