

### **Description for the general public**

The aim of this project is to examine how grassroots lobbying influences political behavior of the members of the lower houses of parliament in Germany (Bundestag), Poland (Sejm) and the United Kingdom (House of Commons). The activity of members from the previous and present terms of parliament will be examined (in the case of Germany and the United Kingdom it means the period between 2017-2022, whereas in the case of Poland between 2015-2022). These countries were selected purposely. They constitute the most extreme cases in terms of the electoral system functioning in these countries, i.a., the first past the post system in the UK, the proportional representation system in Poland and the unique one on a world scale, personalized, proportional representation system in Germany.

The term grassroots lobbying should be understood as all forms of activity of the citizens, non-governmental organizations, enterprises and professional lobbyists that pursue to indirectly exert influence on public authorities, i.a., through shaping the public opinion and mobilizing as many citizens as it is possible to undertake actions, (e.g., submitting petitions, mass mailing or taking part in demonstrations), which affect the decision-makers' political behavior (e.g., councilors, members of parliament (MPs), senators, ministers, a prime minister, etc.).

The following scientific activities will be undertaken as part of the project:

1) Desk research. The following materials will be analyzed: a) petitions submitted to the parliaments of the examined countries; b) the protocols of the MPs' voting records of the petitioned matters; c) programs of the political parties that entered the parliament. The data gathered at this stage will be used to prepare interview questionnaires (see activity 2).

2) Semi-structured interviews. Interviews will be conducted with 15 MPs and 10 organizers/co-organizers of grassroots lobbying activities from each analyzed country. The information gathered during the interviews will be used to prepare surveys (see activity 3).

3) Survey research. All MPs from the present term of the parliament in the United Kingdom, Germany and Poland will be invited to participate in the study. The surveys will be designed with the usage of the special software (Qualtrics CustomerXM), which will guarantee anonymity of the respondents. The research will allow us to obtain specific information regarding factors determining the effectiveness of grassroots lobbying.

4) Operationalization of data with the usage of special software (SPSS Statistics).

The activity no 2 – i.a., semi-structured interviews – will be carried out in Berlin, London and Warsaw. The parliaments of the analyzed countries are located in these cities. The remaining activities will be conducted from the workplace of the project manager (Wrocław).

More and more grassroots lobbying activities are organized in the examined countries than 20-30 years ago. Furthermore, they have become more widely attended (e.g., "Black Protest" in Poland, climate strike in Germany, the campaign for the second referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union). Despite the fact that problem of the effectiveness of grassroots lobbying has gained importance nowadays, we still cannot pinpoint the reason why some grassroots lobbying actions end successfully, whereas others fail. This project allows us to cover this research gap.

The results of the project will enable us to identify factors exerting positive as well as negative impact on the effectiveness of grassroots lobbying. In particular, they will allow us to answer the question whether the effectiveness of grassroots lobbying in the United Kingdom, Germany and Poland depends on:

- a) the number of people influencing the MP;
- b) the salience of an issue (whether an issue is more or less relevant for a MP);
- c) the status of the MP's political party in the political system (whether it belongs to the parties that constitute the government or is in the opposition);
- d) the electoral system functioning in the country;
- e) the condition of the country (whether the Covid-19 pandemic influenced the effectiveness of grassroots lobbying).

Furthermore, this project will allow us to determine similarities and differences between the MPs of the parliament in the United Kingdom, Germany and Poland regarding their reactions to grassroots lobbying.

The results of the research will be presented during the international academic conference and in the articles published in the prestigious, international scientific journals.