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# **The European External Action Service and National Diplomacies**

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By Rosa Balfour and Kristi Raik (eds.)

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EUROPE IN THE WORLD  
PROGRAMME

## **The EPC's Programme on Europe in the World**

*Building EU foreign policy over the past twenty years has been one of the most challenging and difficult aspects of the process of integration and, despite the innovations introduced by the Lisbon Treaty, the policy is still far from meeting the expectations of European citizens and the rest of the world. At the same time, the EU's role in international politics is being challenged both politically and economically. The rise of new powers, an increasingly fluid system of global governance, and the growing internationalisation of domestic politics and policies are all putting the EU under the spotlight to deliver.*

*The EPC's Europe in the World Programme takes a dual approach. EU capabilities in foreign policy and its political will to play a role as a global actor are essential to understand the ways in which the Union engages with the world, by analysing the External Action Service, the use of the EU's foreign policy tool box, and political dynamics in Europe. Through seminars, public events and special projects, the Programme also examines the EU's 'performance' in certain parts of the world (especially in the Balkans and in the EU's neighbourhood, but also in Asia) while addressing thematic and cross-cutting issues, such as foreign policy and international migration, international justice and human rights, crisis management and peacebuilding.*

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## Abbreviations

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|         |   |
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| CCA     | Consultative Committee on Appointments  |
| CFSP    | Common Foreign and Security Policy  |
| COREPER | Committee of Permanent Representatives  |
| COREU   | CORrespondance EUropéenne   |
| CSDP    | Common Security and Defence Policy (previously ESDP)  |
| DG      | Directorate-General   |
| EDA     | European Defence Agency   |
| EEAS    | European External Action Service  |
| EEC     | European Economic Community   |
| EGS     | European Global Strategy  |
| ENP     | European Neighbourhood Policy   |
| ESDP    | European Security and Defence Policy (now CSDP)   |
| ESS     | European Security Strategy  |
| EU      | European Union  |
| EUSR    | European Union Special Representative   |
| FAC     | Foreign Affairs Council   |
| FCO     | Foreign and Commonwealth Office (of the UK)   |
| HoM     | Head of Mission   |
| HR/VP   | High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission |
| IGO     | Intergovernmental Organisation  |
| IMF     | International Monetary Fund   |
| INTCEN  | EU Intelligence Analysis Centre (previously SITCEN)   |
| MFA     | Ministry of Foreign Affairs   |
| NATO    | North Atlantic Treaty Organization  |
| OECD    | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development  |
| OSCE    | Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  |
| PSC     | Political and Security Committee  |
| QMV     | Qualified Majority Voting   |
| RELEX   | External Relations (former DG of the European Commission)   |
| SITCEN  | Joint Situation Centre (now INTCEN)   |
| SNE     | Seconded National Expert  |
| UK      | United Kingdom  |
| UN      | United Nations  |
| UNESCO  | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization                                      |
| UNRWA   | United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees   |
| US      | United States   |
| WEU     | Western European Union  |



# Introduction

*By Rosa Balfour and Kristi Raik*

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- 1.1 A new stage for EU foreign policy
  - 1.2 Patterns of change in the nexus of national and EU foreign policy
  - 1.3 Methodology of the study
  - 1.4 The EEAS and national diplomacies: Key findings
  - 1.5 Fast-forward to 2014: How to make the EU foreign policy system work
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## 1.1 A NEW STAGE FOR EU FOREIGN POLICY

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The Lisbon Treaty and the creation of the European External Action Service (EEAS) set the stage for a new architecture of European Union (EU) foreign policymaking. How the various actors involved would respond to this new setting has since become one of the most important questions about EU foreign policy, highlighting how much institutional matters are interconnected with the performance, effectiveness and legitimacy of the EU as a global player.

The debut of the EEAS has not overshadowed the other institutions. The European Commission continues to play a leading role. Much (but not all) of the Commission's external relations staff and competences have been moved to the EEAS, making coordination with the Commission on the other external policies (such as trade, development) and on the external dimension of internal policies (such as energy and migration) essential. This is necessary if the EU is to deliver on the objectives of the Lisbon Treaty, which were to bring to an end the conceptual and practical dualism between the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the old Community's external action tools. The travails of working together during the past two years have proven to be one of the most serious setbacks to the first steps of the EEAS's existence.

The European Parliament has gained a front-stage position by making sure it would be involved in key decisions about the EEAS, from holding regular sessions with high-level representatives of the EEAS, starting from the High Representative who has taken her time to consult frequently with the elected representatives of European citizens. Even if it remains excluded from CFSP matters, the Parliament has powers over the budget for external relations and the administrative budget of the EEAS, and has shown a new ability to maximise its influence in order to contribute to shaping foreign policy. In the upcoming review of the EEAS, it promises to play an important role in pushing the other institutions to make the EU more effective internationally and more politically accountable internally.

One group of actors which has been forced to the back of the stage in the EU machinery is national diplomacies and their representatives, the foreign ministers. To be sure, this is not just a consequence of the Lisbon Treaty having given the coordination of the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) to the High Representative rather than to the rotating presidency of the EU. Since the 1990s international issues had made their way up to the meetings of the Heads of State or Government, who used to be accompanied to European Council meetings by their foreign ministers. More recently, largely as a consequence of the economic crisis, foreign affairs in general have taken a secondary role to economic and financial ones. Not only have foreign ministers seen their roles being reduced to guest appearances on the EU stage at European Council meetings, but international issues have played a minor role in EU policymaking.

In some ways, this is a paradoxical development. Foreign policy remains firmly in the hands of the member states notwithstanding the changes introduced by Lisbon and, as the findings of this report suggest, this is not about to change. Intergovernmentalism will remain the main mode of decision-making. At the same time, all policy is increasingly global. In an interdependent world there is a strong need for a capillary presence around the globe. The barriers between internal and external policies are redundant and diplomacy needs to adapt and contribute to shaping policies which are decided cooperatively and in conjunction with actors working at local, national, European and international levels. Changing patterns of global power undermine the outreach of individual member states, strengthening the logic for cooperation at the EU level. At a time of austerity, the budgetary cuts that member states are introducing suggest that the EU's foreign policy and global outreach could be greatly enhanced if these were accompanied by a strengthening of the EEAS's capabilities and functions.

So even though the member states and their diplomacies might have moved to the back of the stage in EU policy processes, the developments occurring in the shadow of the leading actors are crucial to EU foreign policy as a whole. This study focuses precisely on this group of actors: national diplomacies.

## **1.2 PATTERNS OF CHANGE IN THE NEXUS OF NATIONAL AND EU FOREIGN POLICY**

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How are national diplomacies adapting to the post-Lisbon architecture? The synthesis of intergovernmental and supranational approaches offered through the creation of the EEAS defies the traditional dichotomy in interpretations of EU integration. The neofunctionalist logic of integration would have expected the new structures to lead to further transfer of power (both formal and informal) to Brussels, for instance by giving the EEAS the central role in agenda-setting and in the preparation of joint decisions, and in diplomatic representation. In the process, *national control* of foreign policy was bound to weaken, possibly leading to national diplomacies eventually becoming obsolete or developing into local offices of the EEAS. This would be in line with the Haasian vision of integration, whereby national actors accommodate and shift their loyalties, expectations and activities to common structures.<sup>1</sup>

The first two years of the EEAS have shown that the process of adaptation has not taken shape in this way. The member states have maintained their pre-eminence, and the EEAS has been seen more as a secretariat for national foreign ministries than as a *primus inter pares* actor shaping the policy agenda. 'Complementarity' between Brussels and the capitals has been the key aim of most of the

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<sup>1</sup> Niemann, A. and Schmitter, P.C. (2009), 'Neofunctionalism', in Wiener, A. and Diez, T. (eds.) *European Integration Theory*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

member states.<sup>2</sup> Yet this does not mean that change has not taken place. On the contrary, the trend of working together has continued, despite the centrifugal forces unleashed by the economic crisis. There are fewer areas of international affairs in which the member states really ‘go it alone’.

This study provides a systematic account of these processes of change by tracing three parallel trends. Firstly, it asks whether the establishment of the EEAS has contributed to Europeanisation, defined as the top-down process of *national adaptation* that reorients national institutional structures and policymaking processes to the degree that EU dynamics “become part of the organisational logic of national politics and policy making”.<sup>3</sup> This type of adaptation contributes to policy convergence, with the common European agenda and objectives taking priority over national ones. The ‘downloading’ from the EU shapes organisational structures, policy processes and substance.<sup>4</sup>

At the same time, the member states promote and project their interests, preferences and policy ideas to the EU institutions through bottom-up processes, thus playing a proactive rather than adaptive role<sup>5</sup> by ‘uploading’ policy preferences. According to intergovernmental logic, states use the EU as an *instrument of national power* to the extent that it preserves or strengthens rather than undermines national executive capacity. At the same time, states continue to defend their foreign policy independence and to some degree see the EEAS as a competitor of national Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MFAs).

Yet, thirdly, bottom-up processes may also lead to elite socialisation and policy convergence as a (intended or accidental) consequence of participation in EU decision-making structures. Close diplomatic interaction through common institutions generates a habit of cooperation and makes an EU coordination reflex more likely.<sup>6</sup> Intense contacts and regular coordination make it increasingly difficult to separate the national and European levels. Foreign policy cultures and identities become more similar and national and European interests converge.<sup>7</sup> The CFSP institutions have already socialised European foreign policy elites to a considerable extent. The design of the EEAS – and especially the principle that one third of its staff should consist of seconded national diplomats – is conducive to further elite socialisation.

Another question posed in the study was whether the EEAS, contrary to prior expectations, will fail to bring about further Europeanisation. The transition towards the new system raised concerns in the European Commission, the European Parliament and some smaller member states regarding the “re-nationalisation” and “de-communautarisation” of European foreign policy. The new structures have been seen to strengthen intergovernmentalism to the detriment of the Community method – perhaps not so much because of institutional design, but due to political trends and personalities.

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<sup>2</sup> Balfour, R. and Raik, K. (2013), ‘Equipping the European Union for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. National diplomacies, the European External Action Service and the Making of EU foreign policy’, Finnish Institute of International Affairs, Helsinki.

<sup>3</sup> Ladrech, R. (1994), ‘Europeanization of Domestic Politics and Institutions: The Case of France’, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 1, pp. 69-88.

<sup>4</sup> Wong, R. (2011), ‘The Europeanization of Foreign Policy’, in Hill, C. and Smith, M. (eds.), *International Relations and the European Union*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

<sup>5</sup> Börzel, T. A. (2002), ‘Member State Responses to Europeanization’, *Journal of Common Market Studies* 40:2, pp. 193-214.

<sup>6</sup> Glarbo, K. (1999), ‘Wide-awake diplomacy: reconstructing the common foreign and security policy of the European Union’, *Journal of European Public Policy* 6:4, pp. 634-51; Wallace, H. (2000), ‘Analysing and Explaining Policies’, in Wallace, H. and Wallace, W. (2000) (eds.), *Policy-Making in the European Union*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 65-81.

<sup>7</sup> Aggestam, L. (2004), ‘Role identity and the Europeanisation of foreign policy’, in Tonra, B. and Christiansen, T. (eds.), *Rethinking European Union foreign policy*, Manchester University Press, Manchester; Rieker, P. (2006), ‘Europeanization of National Security Identity: The EU and the changing security identities of the Nordic states’, Routledge, Abingdon and New York.

Many smaller member states are concerned about the increased influence of big member states on EU foreign policy and by the weakness of leadership at the centre, making the EEAS vulnerable to the influence of the larger member states. Alternatively, rather than patterns of leadership from the most influential member states, new patterns of alliance-building between EU member states are also becoming visible; how these may interact with and influence the EEAS can represent new forms of foreign policymaking for the EU.

### 1.3 METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

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Against this background, there is a need for systematic research on the interplay between the new European foreign policy structures and national diplomacies. This study makes an original contribution on the basis of case studies conducted in fourteen member states, selected so as to ensure a balanced representation of different types of member state: large and small, old and new, and covering all parts of Europe. The case studies examine the adaptation of national diplomacies on the basis of a common conceptual and methodological approach, serving as a basis to analyse the broader dynamics of European foreign policy integration, assess the success of the EEAS in bringing added value to the organisation and conduct of European diplomacy, and consider future prospects of national diplomacies in the context of common EU structures.

The analysis draws on extensive interviews conducted in national capitals and in Brussels with over 120 key national and EU officials in the course of 2012. The semi-structured interviews explored a wide range of issues:

- interaction between national foreign policy priorities and EU foreign policy – patterns of downloading, uploading and convergence;
- possible changes in the structure and resources of Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MFAs) ; possible links of such changes to the EEAS;
- national views on the functions of the EEAS including EU Delegations, possible transfer of functions from the national to EU level, and potential for burden-sharing;
- contacts, working relations, information sharing between the EEAS and MFAs;
- recruitment of national diplomats to the EEAS; views on the rotation system;
- the EEAS and the prospects of a European diplomatic culture;
- European foreign policy leadership: the role of foreign ministers, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission (HR/VP), rotating presidency.

The case studies follow a largely similar structure, including a brief introduction to the foreign policy and EU policy of the country in question and an analysis of the above-listed issues as illuminated by the interviews. They explore the extent to which the EEAS has contributed to the Europeanisation of MFAs and national foreign policy, and trace possible signs and perceptions of strengthening intergovernmentalism and the re-nationalisation of European foreign policy. The case study findings provide a basis to assess future prospects for a division of labour between the EEAS and MFAs, and the potential for further elite socialisation and the formation of a European diplomatic culture.

The order of presentation of the case studies is roughly based on the research findings regarding each country's degree of commitment to the EU institutions and their support for further Europeanisation of foreign policy.

The study also gathered a database with fresh information on the structure (number of missions abroad) and resources (administrative budget and staff) of MFAs. The quantitative data covers not only the 14 cases, but all 27 member states. An analysis of recent changes in the resources and outreach of MFAs reveals an overall trend of re-focusing and decline in European diplomacy (with few exceptions), which points to an increased need for burden-sharing and common European representation.

#### **1.4 THE EEAS AND NATIONAL DIPLOMACIES: KEY FINDINGS**

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It is hard to make generalisations about fourteen countries, which differ greatly between each other as regards size, geographical position, attitudes towards European integration, duration of EU membership, and foreign policy tradition. Yet some common features in the perceptions of foreign affairs officials emerge. These suggest that a more common EU foreign policy remains a difficult objective despite the innovations of the Lisbon Treaty, but that the ‘habit of cooperation’<sup>8</sup> is consolidating. An awareness of the need for a more common European purpose is widely shared, but fits uneasily with continued strong attachment to national sovereignty, coupled with the bureaucratic self-survival instinct of national foreign services. Opportunities and challenges are there for policymakers to seize.

##### ***Interaction between EU and national foreign policy: shades of intergovernmentalism***

Intergovernmentalism remains the preferred decision-making framework for EU foreign policy, even if it is rarely resorted to formally. It is crucial for member states to feel that they are in the driving seat and that they are able in principle to control the speed, turn the wheel and pull the brake if needed. From the point of view of institutional structures and functions, the preference is for complementarity characterising the relationship between the EEAS and MFAs. Even if there is dissatisfaction with the low level of ambition inherent in this relationship, throughout 2012 few member states would have taken the risk of questioning that relationship.

Germany, Italy and Sweden are the countries most favourable to a further deepening of foreign policy integration, with Finland, Poland and a few others willing to support such a development. Of all the EU member states, German foreign affairs officials are amongst those who see EU and national (German) foreign policy as most intertwined. Even Italy, traditionally one of the most pro-integrationist countries, highlights some of the limits of EU foreign policy, despite generally supporting a strong common approach. Shades of difference between the member states reveal varying perceptions of the relationship between national and EU foreign policies. Swedish officials see much ‘compatibility’ between them, as opposed to the integration underlined by their German and Italian colleagues.

Sweden, alongside many other countries (including Poland, Portugal and Finland) emphasise the role of the EU as a power multiplier (when it serves national priorities) and as a vehicle for uploading national interests. The (relatively) new member states like Poland, being new actors on the foreign policy scene, see the EU as a way to ‘de-provincialise’ national foreign policy – an implicit two-way vision of Europeanisation. Some countries have also shifted: while Finland and the Netherlands have moved towards a more cautious approach to integration in general, Estonia and Greece have become more fervent supporters of a strong common foreign policy (even if they continue to have red lines on issues they deem vital).

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<sup>8</sup> Wallace, H. and Wallace, W. (2000), *ibidem*.

French national diplomacy places a strong emphasis on national interest but does not see this being to the detriment of a more common EU foreign policy. The key issue is the drive to make EU foreign policy as close as possible to French policy. France therefore considers its role to be that of a crucial policy shaper and it sees the EU as its power multiplier.

For all its questioning of EU integration, the UK has a pragmatic approach to EU foreign policy which does not necessarily undermine more joined-up global action, but limits it to selected fields and clings to a strict interpretation of intergovernmentalism. London pursues pragmatic cherry-picking to suit its interests, but that cherry-picking involves an increasing number of areas. While the clear preference is for the EU to stick to niche areas of international affairs, the UK does support the EEAS where it sees its added value, for instance in sanctions, diplomatic coordination and civilian crisis management.

This makes the Czech Republic the country with the most restrictive – or in the view of Czech officials, “pragmatic” – attitude towards the EEAS, whereby the EU is seen to boost national foreign policy and give it more global outreach, but further integration is deemed unwelcome. As in many other countries, domestic cleavages influence attitudes towards the EU, with the Czech right having been influenced by the years of Vaclav Klaus’s Eurosceptic presidency.

When it comes to foreign policy adaptation, member states downplay the role of the EEAS in stimulating change and highlight national adaptation in the broader framework of the Europeanisation of foreign policy which has been taking place for decades. The Southern, Northern and Eastern enlargements have all been followed by a considerable degree of foreign policy adaptation in the new member states (though with important variation between countries). The founding members tend to see EU foreign policy as intertwined with the national one. Member states do point to a number of policy areas seen as particularly resistant to Europeanisation, including disarmament, arms export control, defence industry cooperation, intelligence and commercial diplomacy. Yet in most areas, there is no question of an either-or choice or a zero-sum logic as to doing things at the EU or national level; both are deemed necessary.

Whenever national priorities are uploaded to EU level, they continue to be national priorities, be it Africa for France, human rights for Sweden, or Ukraine for Poland. Uploading follows national imperatives and boosts national foreign policy, while it also increases the importance of the EU. There is thus a tension between the national motivation that drives uploading on the one hand, and the subsequent strengthening of EU foreign policy on the other. Yet overall, member states see uploading as a positive contribution to the EU’s external action and role. A crucial question for the EU is whether uploading national pet projects is accompanied by a broadly constructive approach to EU policymaking, with regular consultation and coordination across the board and a commitment to common positions and actions (where they exist), so that national foreign policy does not undermine, contradict or ignore the European one in a given area. The reality is more mixed.

### ***The structure and resources of national ministries have changed, but not due to the EEAS<sup>9</sup>***

The restructuring, rationalising and downsizing of MFAs that has taken place in many member states in recent years has not taken place as a consequence of the EEAS – even taking into account the opportunities for cost-saving that the EEAS could provide. The economic crisis has implied budget cuts for the foreign services of most EU member states. In some countries the change has been rather dramatic: for instance Italy cut the administrative budget of its MFA from 991 million euros in 2010 to 919 million in 2012; Greece from 423 million in 2010 to 308 million in 2012; and Estonia

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<sup>9</sup> The authors would like to thank Teemu Rantanen for his contribution to this section.



(where the crisis landed a bit earlier) from 38 million in 2008 to 32 million in 2011. Many MFAs, including in the Netherlands, the Czech Republic and Estonia, have significantly reduced their personnel. Besides the reductions already made, many member states – including the Netherlands and Finland – have decided to undertake more significant budgetary cuts in the foreign policy field in the coming years. An exception to the trend of decline is Germany, which has slightly increased both the budget and personnel of its foreign service. The other two largest member states, France and the UK, are maintaining an extensive global presence, but have had to cut spending on staff and other administrative costs.

The reductions have often been accompanied by significant re-allocations that also result from the economic crisis and the changing global distribution of power. European networks of diplomatic missions abroad have been slimmed down and re-focused. Many MFAs have closed some embassies and consulates due to financial constraints and/or are planning to do so in the near future. In many cases, including Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Latvia and Portugal, the number of national diplomatic missions has significantly decreased.

However, many other MFAs have maintained approximately the same number of embassies abroad in spite of the budget cuts. This is linked to the rise of economic diplomacy: most European countries have opened new missions and strengthened their presence in emerging economies in an effort to promote national economic interests, while cutting their networks in other parts of the world. As the need to increase exports has become a national imperative, foreign policy has been harnessed to boost trade. Enhanced competition among European countries for trade opportunities makes it at times more difficult to pursue common foreign policy. Even the most pro-integrationist countries, Germany and Italy, are bolstering national commercial diplomacy in ways that are not always conducive to the EU's unity.

Some MFAs have also introduced organisational changes in the headquarters, but again with no linkage to the EEAS. In France, the introduction of an EU Directorate in charge of coordinating all external aspects of EU policy (and not just the CFSP) can be seen as a form of top-down Europeanisation. This, however, was created in 2009, before the EEAS came into being.

One area where national ministries have had to adapt to the launch of the EEAS is human resources management. Member states have taken different approaches to the promotion and lobbying of their candidates, but posting national diplomats to senior positions in the EEAS has been a priority for all. The MFAs claim to maintain active contact with their diplomats in the EEAS and see them as important sources of information. Career-wise, secondment to the EEAS is generally seen to be at least on par with national service in the MFA. Notably the large member states (Germany, France, the UK) encourage their officials to apply by regarding service in the EEAS as beneficial with a view to furthering their career in the MFA. In other countries, it is more common to consider EEAS experience as being on a par with the 'field jobs' of the Ministry. Especially in the Eastern member states (the Czech Republic, Poland, Estonia), but also Greece, the higher salaries of the EEAS are a strong incentive. Some MFAs expressed concern about their best diplomats leaving for the EEAS, and in the case of Greece, applications to the EEAS were even discouraged.

Many diplomats saw potential for rotation between the MFAs and the EEAS to contribute to elite socialisation and the development of a European diplomatic culture, but at this stage one can only speak about expectations. At the same time, many member states, such as France, Britain, the Czech Republic, Finland and Estonia, reiterate the continued primacy of national foreign policy identity and interests, despite the fact that among these are countries which have seen a significant process of Europeanisation, such as Finland and Estonia.

### ***Demands for added value, regular contacts and leadership***

The emphasis on the part of virtually all national foreign ministries on the concept of the EEAS as playing a complementary role is justified above all by a desire to avoid duplication. In some countries, notably the UK and the Czech Republic, there is also real concern to ensure that there is no creeping 'take-over' of tasks and functions. But many other MFAs share the view that the EEAS cannot and should not take over functions from national diplomacy – a position that is also underlined by the EEAS itself. Both sides prefer to speak about added value.

From that perspective, the most important contribution of the EEAS comes from its 141 Delegations across the world. Overall, member states see the Delegations, their performance so far, and their future potential in a positive light. The transition period towards the coordinating role on the ground played by the Delegations, as foreseen by the Lisbon Treaty, went better than expected, even if there was variation depending on personalities and locations. Many national ministries call for Delegations to become more 'political' and less 'technocratic', which is supported by the recruitment of national diplomats to the Delegations. Smaller member states in particular want to strengthen reporting by EU Delegations, which is already acknowledged as an important added value.

Many member states have started to show an interest in the possibility of co-locating embassies with EU Delegations, which saves practical costs and facilitates coordinated action, as does the placement of national so-called laptop-diplomats in EU Delegations. Interestingly, even the countries that are most reserved about further foreign policy integration, such as the Czech Republic and the UK, are interested in this kind of practical burden-sharing. Another example of burden-sharing that is broadly supported by the member states is strengthening the role of the EEAS in crisis coordination, in situations such as the conflict in Syria or the tsunami in Japan in 2011.

A more divisive issue is the ability of the member states to contribute to shaping EU foreign policy. Here the findings reveal a significant cleavage between the large and smaller member states. Britain, France, Germany and even Italy and Poland are satisfied with their level of contact with and influence over policy processes managed in Brussels and, as a consequence, with the EEAS's role in shaping the agenda. Diplomats of the larger member states report to have very active and regular contacts with their counterparts in the EEAS. The other capitals expressed concern over what they perceived as the overly strong influence of the 'big three', with the notable exception of Czech diplomats, who were more worried about leadership by the EEAS and the HR/VP than by the influence of the large member states. Many smaller member states complained about receiving too little information, and too late. These concerns have undermined trust in the EEAS among countries that are in principle supportive of a more unified foreign policy, but suspicious of a *directoire* of large states. At the same time a coordination reflex is increasing, according to many interviewees, as a consequence of increased contacts and consultation, but not in all countries.

An issue where national positions are perhaps most contradictory is foreign policy leadership. There is a demand for more leadership on part of the EEAS and the HR/VP, and each country would like to see it in its preferred areas (e.g.: France for Africa, security and defence; Finland on EU-Russia and EU-Arctic; Poland on Ukraine and Eastern Europe; the Netherlands, Slovenia and Sweden on human rights). However, this is accompanied by other, contradictory demands for continued national control. At the same time, many smaller countries emphasise that leadership by the HR/VP must not mean leadership by London, Paris and Berlin. In particular, the suspicion that the HR/VP is excessively influenced by Britain is very frequent in different countries. Finally, the Czech Republic does not want more leadership from the EEAS – which it considers could potentially destroy the CFSP and its intergovernmental nature.

To sum up:

- intergovernmentalism continues to dominate member states' approach to common foreign policy;
- policy adaptation happened earlier: the EEAS made no difference in this regard;
- there are few early signs of organisational adaptation to the existence of the EEAS (making use of EU Delegations; human resources management);
- more significant adaptation can be observed in the working processes of MFAs; and
- the EEAS is expected to have an important socialising effect in longer term.

## **1.5 FAST-FORWARD TO 2014: HOW TO MAKE THE EU FOREIGN POLICY SYSTEM WORK**

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EU foreign policy is facing contradicting pressures. A number of factors are pushing the member states closer together and underscoring the need for a stronger common voice and action on a global scale. At the same time, internal and outside forces are threatening to tear apart the EU in general and its foreign policy in particular. National diplomacy as such is also going through significant changes, largely irrespective of the EU, in order to respond to new demands and adjust to global and national; political, economic and technological shifts.

### ***Europe being pushed together...***

In the face of Europe's relative global decline, no member state denies the need for more European unity in global affairs. Some outsiders are also pushing Europe towards increased coherence. As Europe's relative weight is shrinking, its over-representation in global structures is less justified in the eyes of others. And when EU member states compete with each other for posts in the UN Security Council or ask for larger representation in the G20, to name just some examples, they should be reminded that, were they not members of the EU, their access and leverage, and the interest of outsiders in hearing them, would most likely be even more limited. In recent years, the US – more than any other global player – has consistently expressed its preference to speak to one Europe rather than many, at times ridiculing the efforts of European national leaders to highlight their special transatlantic relationships. There is no reason to expect these trends to vanish; quite the contrary. Either the EU must take measures to adjust its global representation to a more unified presence that also reflects the changing balance of power, or it is in danger of being side-lined.

On the domestic level, one of the effects of the economic crisis has been the need to trim public spending across the EU. Even without the crisis, and even in those countries that have not experienced major economic shocks, European public administrations are facing cuts. This has created the need for burden-sharing, or 'smart diplomacy'.<sup>10</sup> The EEAS and EU Delegations are likely to become more attractive partners for national ministries looking for ways to rationalise their activity.

### ***... and torn apart***

These same shifts in the global balance of power are not only pushing Europe together, but are also creating or deepening cracks in European unity. In just one of many examples, economic competition between member states has become more intense, and commercial diplomacy has become a new priority of national foreign affairs ministries. The rise of Asia is broadly reflected in national diplomatic networks, as member states strengthen their presence in China and elsewhere in the region, even if this requires cutting down representation in other parts of the world. While member

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<sup>10</sup> The authors owe this definition to Richard Whitman.

states rush after emerging trade opportunities, the EU is criticised for making little progress on strategic partnerships with rising powers. The emphasis on economic competition makes political unity harder to reach and does not encourage strategic thinking from a broader European perspective. Partners like Russia and China which have used divide-and-rule tactics when dealing with Europe continue to be successful. Even the EU member states that are the most committed to a common foreign policy fall into the trap of competing national priorities.

Yet there is scope for a division of labour that serves everyone: the EU's ability as a trade power to promote a level playing field in the markets is indispensable for the member states and supports the trade promotion efforts of the latter. Competition for trade deals should not come at the cost of coordination of national activities and commitment to developing a true foreign policy strategy, which is still lacking.

### ***The EEAS Review process***

The 2013 EEAS Review process provides an opportunity to take stock of the experience of the past two years and make adjustments, so that by the time the next institutional representatives are appointed in 2014, the HR/VP can rely on a well-oiled and functioning service for an improved foreign policy. The opportunity is there and must not be missed, though few member states have actually thought through the details.

Germany has been the country leading this process by tabling some concrete ideas on how to improve the EEAS, and has discussed moving further functions from the Commission to the EEAS (Neighbourhood and External Assistance). The Netherlands too would like to see more coordination on development assistance, and is interested in reporting – including political and more sensitive material – and in consular cooperation. With Britain carrying out a competence review in view of its review of its membership in the EU, it is possible that more concrete positions will also emerge once the first stage of the review of external policies is completed in early 2013.

Yet, overall, very little has so far emerged from the member states in terms of identifying constructive solutions to the challenges that have emerged during these first, difficult 24 months. Member states should start demonstrating that they are committed to EU foreign policy and not just to giving top jobs to their national diplomats.

There are many areas that could contribute to improving not just relations between the EEAS and national diplomacies, but also to the EU foreign policy system as a whole. Some are high level and may require some political horse trading; others would benefit from improving existing practices. Three key priorities can be highlighted on the basis of this study:<sup>11</sup>

- The member states should be constructive in finding solutions to the heavy international agenda of the HR/VP and the EEAS by proposing solutions for deputisation. Some could include the involvement on a more systematic basis of national foreign ministers, especially but not only the rotating presidency.
- If information exchange and communication between the national ministries and the EEAS and vice versa were improved, the whole foreign policy system would benefit greatly. In addition, this would also satisfy smaller member states which often complain of being excluded.
- Most member states have expressed satisfaction with the work of the Delegations; but there is still scope for improvement by focusing on staffing, administrative rules, resources, and the

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<sup>11</sup> See more detailed policy recommendations in Balfour, R. and Raik, K. (2013).

degree of involvement of the Delegations in policy shaping at the level of the headquarters in Brussels so as to allow the Delegations to play their part, not just by representing the EU through its global network, but also by feeding information, knowledge and analysis into the policy-shaping process.

The EEAS Review process provides an opportunity to think about these changes in order to equip the EU with a foreign policy capable of addressing the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.



# The ‘Good Europeans’: Germany and the European External Action Service

By **Cornelius Adebahr**<sup>12</sup>

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## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

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Germany considers itself to be one of the strongest supporters of the EEAS, both in its creation and in its current operation. The German Foreign Office does not see – for the moment, at least – a strong EEAS as a threat to its own responsibilities. Rather, it would have wished for a more all-encompassing foreign service, for instance including responsibilities for the Neighbourhood Policy and for external assistance and project programming, both of which have remained in the European Commission, which shares responsibility with the EEAS for strategic guidelines. Consequently, it would like to use the 2013 Review to renegotiate these Commission competences into the EEAS. Even if strengthened, the EEAS is not seen as an alternative to the national diplomatic network. As a large country with a variety of established interests and structures abroad, including consular support for its citizens, Germany’s assumption is that there will always be enough work for a national diplomatic service to do.

Some processes of Europeanisation are increasingly visible, in the sense that the structures and procedures of the Foreign Office take into account the existence of the new Brussels foreign policy machinery. With regard to the substance of the country’s Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) policy, however, officials claim that nothing has changed. If only in their perception, German and European interests usually overlap. That said, there is also a tangible dose of intergovernmentalism when officials claim that, naturally, they would try to channel national views on a certain policy

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through the EEAS. However, this argument is usually toned down by pointing to the more obvious use of EU policies by other (big) member states.

Finally, while it is too early to detect policy convergence through socialisation, interviews have shown that many officials actually expect a common diplomatic culture to evolve over time. Again, this is not considered as a threat to the existing national diplomatic identity, as German diplomats are considered to be good Europeans anyway.

## **2.2 EUROPE: A MEANS AND AN END OF GERMAN FOREIGN POLICY**

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In a nutshell, the key features of Germany's foreign policy are its focus on Europe and the EU, its commitment to the United Nations system and effective multilateralism, and engagement with emerging players to manage globalisation. Its reach is potentially global, especially under the EU's umbrella, although its main strength is in regions like the Middle East, the Commonwealth of Independent States, Central Asia, and – though with some reservations – China.

Europe, and thus the EU and good relations with its fellow 26 member states, has been the foundation of Germany's foreign policy. Germany is considered as and considers itself to be a strong supporter of European integration, including many areas of the CFSP. Especially with regard to the latter, however, Germany has – despite good intentions – at times become more of a brake than an engine, due to its reluctance to contribute hard security elements to joint (EU or UN) missions. This 'pacifist' element of German foreign policy is unlikely to subside any time soon.

### ***Unchanged priorities, but with room for more tangible support***

There have been no organisational changes recently in the German Foreign Office that pertain to the establishment of the EEAS. The only exception is a small EEAS unit which was created within the personnel department. Furthermore for the near future, no major changes to adapt to the existence of the European foreign service are envisaged. An increase in personnel was granted for 2013 (after years of staff cuts), but interestingly this has nothing to do with the EEAS – after all, instead of reducing numbers, one could argue that heightened demand for coordination necessitates more people. Instead, the staff addition is justified by the demands of consular affairs, i.e. a continuously growing number of visa applications plus the issuing of new electronic identity cards at German embassies worldwide – all issues of national competence. The Office's budget has remained steady at around three billion euros with slight increases. Again, no impact of the newly-created EEAS is discernible.

Germany's CFSP policy has not seen significant changes in recent years either. The country has always been a strong supporter of European foreign policy, and this position has not changed; its positions on foreign policy by and large reflect the middle ground among EU countries.

Rather, the EEAS is considered as an important pull factor for positions on CFSP policies that Germany has long held. Therefore Berlin would even go beyond fully implementing the Lisbon Treaty and would support the introduction of majority voting in some areas of the CFSP, e.g. sanctions decisions. If anything, Germany has become even more CFSP-friendly and pro-European. Whether this potential openness to Qualified Majority Voting (QMV), both displayed in official policy statements<sup>13</sup> and mirrored in the interviews, is followed by actual delivery remains to be seen. Yet

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<sup>13</sup> The Future of Europe Group, 'Final Report of the Foreign Ministers of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Italy, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal and Spain', 17 September 2012.



one can note a sporadic discrepancy between ‘words’, i.e. commitment in principle, and ‘deeds’, for instance participation (or lack of it) in Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions.

When it comes to discerning the three different processes of EEAS influence – Europeanisation, the promotion of national interests, or convergence – generally all three mechanisms are at work, although they vary from one policy field to another. In fact, Europeanisation is what many German diplomats had wished for – and continue to do so, expecting it to be generated *inter alia* by greater initiative on behalf of the High Representative (cf. below). After all, this is what the HR/VP’s new right of initiative – plus the whole machinery of the EEAS working for her – is thought to be good for. In addition, now that all CSDP missions – mostly civilian, but also military – are directed by the EEAS, this contains an important element of convergence.

On issues that are very dear to only a few (big) member states, interviewees detected attempts to upload national foreign policy priorities – be it the UK’s policy on Burma/Myanmar or French post-colonial policy on Africa. Germany has made efforts to upload its policy on Russia, but its positions have been toned down considerably because of the strong views that other member states have on the EU’s Russia policy. In the end, such ‘selective uploading’ need not be a bad thing and could even be in the European interest, because it helps to draw the EEAS’s attention to problems that ultimately concern the EU directly (as is the case throughout the MENA region and Central Africa, for example). Moreover, member states need the EEAS as much as Catherine Ashton needs national support – one can no longer do without the other. However, all these initiatives need to be seen against the background of the other changes brought about by the Lisbon Treaty, namely, the European Council’s competence to define foreign policy guidelines. Due to this, foreign ministers in general have lost much of the decision-making power in foreign policy to presidents and prime ministers, including in the domestic arena.

With regard to issue areas or regions that are particularly resistant to Europeanisation, intelligence gathering and analysis is the most obvious one from the German viewpoint. Not surprisingly, this is one field where the EEAS does not have its own capacities. Instead, member states share their findings via the EU Situation Centre (SITCEN, now the EU Intelligence Analysis Centre - INTCEN); here again, Germany claims to be quite willing to contribute its intelligence (gathered by the foreign intelligence agency). Some (large) member states are thought to be less willing to do so, whereas other (smaller) member states simply do not have the capacity to contribute a lot. Another issue area that remains especially resistant to Europeanisation is security policy. Here, Germany was engaged in discussions regarding the 2011 ‘Weimar proposal’ of France, Poland and Germany on enhanced cooperation, but little has come out of it.

### **2.3 THE EEAS AS A COMPLEMENT TO NATIONAL FOREIGN SERVICES**

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The EEAS in general is seen in Berlin as very much a ‘German idea’. The rationale for establishing the EEAS was that if the EU wanted to go beyond the existing CFSP without losing the intergovernmental character, it needed to have an apparatus for the new High Representative. The EU could not grow strong with “crisis management by travel agency,” in the words of one interviewee, referring to the limited capacities of CFSP and CSDP during the years of Javier Solana.

Germany is dissatisfied with the limited competences of the EEAS *vis-à-vis* the External Relations parts of the Commission, and is willing to use the EEAS review in 2013 to renegotiate this division of labour and bring some additional competences to the EEAS. While the overall negotiations in this process are open-ended and Germany is in consultation with a group of like-minded countries, the

MFA considers that the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and programme financing in particular are areas that would strengthen the EU's external relations if and when they were moved to the EEAS. However, the current priority lies in actually making the Service work.

Germany is in principle open to a further transfer tasks in a number of areas:

- It would like to move forward on joint representation in international organisations, despite the political hurdles to this – mainly the positions of France and the UK.
- Reporting and analysis could be shared more frequently, as is already the case on some issues (cf. below).
- A transfer of consular services is not on the table for Germany, but it would concur if other (smaller) member states wanted the EEAS to take over such responsibilities on a voluntary basis.

In principle, the EEAS is seen as complementary to the MFA. The Lisbon Treaty did not abolish the nation state, so the EEAS cannot take over everything. Germany's bilateral relations are considered too complex to be simply merged under a European roof. This holds especially true for economic and commercial relations, where member states have their own interests – and where the 27 more often than not compete with each other. Moreover, the interviews showed that the less a diplomat has to do with the EEAS on a daily basis, the less enthusiastic they are about further transfer of responsibilities.

Due to the importance of having German embassies in almost every country in the world for commercial and consular representation, no cutting down of the national network of diplomatic missions is envisaged. The issue of consular services is not so much a concern of the MFA, but rather for the Ministry of the Interior and its legislative concerns. While German diplomats declare that they could live with a voluntary transfer of consular competences to the EU from those (presumably smaller) member states that wish to do so, they do not fail to mention Germany's interest in keeping the related budgetary expenses at European level in check.

As for cooperation with EU Delegations in third countries, an internal poll (organised by the Foreign Office's EU Division) showed that 95% of German diplomats assess it positively. This is despite the fact that, given that the EEAS is an organisation in the process of being formed, an esprit de corps is yet to be created. At the same time, personality plays a role: a Head of EU Delegation (HoM) may simply not have the strongest personality to bring together member states effectively. Ambassadors from member states may also not want to be coordinated. Finally, the weight of an EU Delegation also depends on the authorities in the host state, as it is up to them to decide which Delegation they see as their primary counterpart.

Burden-sharing is mostly envisaged in the area of reporting, with the regular HoM reports and joint human rights reporting cited as existing examples. In addition, press reviews or reports on the economic outlook of third countries might be done by EU Delegations. However, in areas that touch upon the economic interests of member states, burden-sharing was hardly thought to be possible.

The working relations of German diplomats with their colleagues in the EEAS are generally good and intense. Because the EEAS is considered to be an autonomous external service, delivering not only technical support but also developing its own initiatives, cooperation of the Foreign Office with the EEAS has significantly intensified.

The very high frequency of contacts on all working levels is considered to be good. Many German diplomats report that they regularly call their counterparts, at least on a weekly, if not daily basis. This holds true from the working level to the higher-ranking envoys, and includes all colleagues (and

not only co-nationals) within the EEAS. While this is probably seen as merely natural for individual diplomats working with the EEAS, in a structural sense it opens the door to national influence over policies that not all member states share equally. However, whether this informal influence ultimately results in – potentially unintended – uploading of national preferences is open to further research. What is clear is that, overall, there is no other national foreign service with which Germany has closer relations than the EEAS.

One discernible change in working relations is that most European policy initiatives now come from the EEAS. While the Service does ask member states for their input, it can just as well ignore what it does not want to hear depending on the issue, even if it comes from a large member state like Germany. Thus, the EEAS steers the CFSP much more from the centre than was the case with the Council Secretariat and the rotating Presidencies.

Here, too, relations strongly depend on how people get along with each other. German diplomats still benefit from good contacts in Brussels dating back to the time of the 2007 presidency.

To sum up, the German Foreign Office is satisfied with the scope, frequency, and intensity of its contacts with the EEAS. What did take place, however, is a sobering of expectations, which were too high at the beginning with regard to having a functioning EEAS early on. There is still room for improvement when it comes to the Council meetings being more strategic, or the High Representative showing more initiative (cf. below).

Germany's initial strategy to fill senior posts in the EEAS was not very successful. The Ministry has tried to learn from this experience and has changed the strategy. Initially, only selected persons applied for certain positions, with the whole process being largely navigated by the Ministry. This 'targeted approach' did not yield satisfactory results. Some other countries (such as France) successfully used an 'inflationary approach', with various people applying for different positions at the same time, even targeting the same position. Now, the Ministry also favours a broader approach – successfully, as recent appointments to the EEAS have shown.

The MFA has identified the general problem that good personnel are in short supply everywhere. Therefore, it must strike a balance and not send too many high-flyers to the EEAS at once. Instead, it would be useful to send young people so that they get a background in working at the EEAS and can return later to fill high-ranking positions.

As for the incentives to apply for posts in the EEAS, the Ministry offers a comprehensive preparation package: including a 1.5-day seminar with interview simulations, self-presentation training and experience-sharing with (German) EEAS officials. In addition, a letter from the foreign minister accompanies all applications.

Moreover, simple as it sounds, the Ministry stresses that it considers participation in the application process as a positive, regardless of the actual outcome. It is also possible to receive a promotion while serving in the EEAS. The human resources department was opposed to this approach in the beginning, because it was afraid that relatively low-level applicants would apply, in effect rewarding people who wanted to leave anyway. But advocates of the incentive scheme prevailed.

Thus there are clear internal instructions that secondment to the EEAS should pay off career-wise. Those further away from the personnel department, however, tend to be more critical as to whether the optimum in terms of incentives has been reached. Some call for a change in mentality and an

understanding that people going to Brussels or to EU Delegations abroad are doing hard work – all the more so given that the EEAS is not yet fully functioning.

This, however, might also be one disincentive that lies outside the Ministry's competence: the EEAS does not have the aura of a respectable, 'must-work-for' institution, as one interviewee put it. This notwithstanding, the October issue of the monthly internal magazine *internAA* ran a feature with about a dozen articles on the EEAS, ranging from the Service's institutional background and the actual work environment of seconded German diplomats to the tricky questions of personnel selection and career planning (with quite a number of articles written by officials interviewed for this paper).

The Ministry is in close contact with diplomats seconded to the EEAS. All those seconded have a direct connection with one of the working units inside the Ministry. In addition, they can continue to use their official email addresses, sometimes even including laptops.

Still, compared with other member states, German diplomats see some room for improvement in this regard, for instance a more structured approach to keeping in touch with seconded personnel, rather than the current one which is based mainly on personal contacts. In addition, there could be closer contact with permanent EU officials in the Commission, Council and EEAS who happen to have a German passport. These only seem to appear on the Foreign Office's radar once they have reached a certain level (e.g. Head of Delegation).

It is premature to speak of the Europeanisation of seconded staff. Yet, in principle, German diplomats do not see such a process as a threat. Rather, spending some time in Brussels was seen as a means of broadening horizons. People get a better insight into what community-building and consensus-finding means, including the opportunities and limitations that come with it. On the one hand, German diplomats should bring their own (German) perspectives to EU policymaking, and people who have served in the Foreign Office for some time will not let go of their socialisation there easily. On the other, by getting accustomed to taking a European perspective when formulating EU policies, they contribute to the Europeanisation of policies. In addition, there is a perception that German diplomats who apply for posts in the EEAS already think in a European way.

In the long run, many German diplomats expect the emergence of a European diplomatic culture. One concrete example where a common culture needs to be developed is EEAS reporting, where the quality currently ranges from excellent to rather poor. Thus, best practices should be established in the medium term and a unique diplomatic culture would emerge.

From the viewpoint of the German Foreign Office, the role of staff from the 27 foreign ministries is not meant to be that of 'national submarines' promoting national interests while posted to Brussels. Instead, national diplomats contribute to a successful EEAS with their way of working that differs from the Commission method. They have added value when developing crisis management concepts, for example, or when considering public opinion in the actions to be taken. Staff members from the Commission, in contrast, are better trained in working in a budget-oriented way. Thus, it is hoped that, over time, mutual penetration of working practices and mind-sets will lead to a common European diplomatic culture.

## **2.4 EUROPEAN FOREIGN POLICY LEADERSHIP**

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The relationship and division of labour between the German foreign minister and the HR/VP can be generally described as fairly close and well-functioning. To an extent, it seems that Foreign Minister

Guido Westerwelle and HR/VP Ashton complement each other. How much this has to do with the fact that Westerwelle – like Ashton – was a complete novice in the field of foreign policy is difficult to say. Except for his 2012 initiative to form a ‘Reflection Group’ among eleven foreign ministers, which some people in Brussels considered to have undermined the High Representative (who would have been welcome to participate but could not do so for reasons of neutrality), there are few instances where he seems to have taken the limelight from her.

Thus a division of labour seems to have emerged between the two. Lady Ashton is the trouble-shooter of the 27; she is the unquestioned EU representative in a number of multilateral forums, including the UN General Assembly, the Middle East Quartet and the nuclear negotiations with Iran. Minister Westerwelle, in contrast, represents German interests in order to make them heard on the EU level.

In general, Westerwelle is seen to support Ashton and her efforts to represent the EU as a foreign policy actor. This does not, however, mean that travel schedules are synchronised to the minutest detail, which sometimes leaves the impression of a lack of coordination when Ashton and several foreign ministers appear in one place shortly one after another.

The rotating presidency, in contrast, is losing its importance, as foreseen in the Lisbon Treaty. Practically, it has lost political importance and merely takes over some organisational tasks. The exception is the more limited area of the CSDP, where Lady Ashton has so far kept a rather low profile, thus giving some room for a (willing) presidency to pursue its own policies.

Only a few big and medium-sized member states might preserve their claim to shape EU foreign policy in the way they did during the rotating presidency. Yet there is also one very practical but often overlooked aspect to the abolition of the presidency: there is no one to take over the day-to-day organisational work for which fresh personnel poured in every half a year. The EEAS brought together ‘only’ the offices of Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner and HR/VP Solana, but not the manpower coming from member states for a six-month workout.

While there is a general willingness on the side of foreign ministers to step back for the sake of a clearer EU voice, the ultimate problem with accepting reduced visibility lies in the nature of (domestic) politics. Because foreign ministers are first of all politicians, they have to be visible to their electorate. That is why they need good press coverage of their trips abroad, while the work of Lady Ashton is hardly covered by national media. It is less difficult when it comes to multilateral issues such as the Iran negotiations, where the EU is more visible by default. Yet on other issues, some foreign ministers really want to be at the forefront more than others.

Germany sees a greater problem in attempts by the UK in particular to ‘de-Europeanise’ (if not ‘re-nationalise’) parts of the EU’s foreign policy by insisting on policy statements being made on behalf of the 27 member states – rather than on behalf of the EU. In this respect, wording is important, and German diplomats would consider it a major setback if European foreign policy could only be regarded as the sum of 27 national foreign policies, rather than as a value (and policy) in itself.

Nonetheless, it should be stressed again that the HR/VP does not replace the work of the 27 foreign ministers. Member states do not lose visibility only because Ashton appears in a third country two weeks before the foreign minister arrives. Moreover, with Germany being a large member state, its foreign minister is important enough to claim visibility in many capitals around the world. In addition, given that the country has a broadly CFSP-friendly line, there is maybe less of a need to highlight differing national positions so often.

That said, according to German diplomats the HR/VP should be more active in taking initiative as a foreign policy leader rather than merely finding a common denominator among the national positions around the table. In fact, she should do both, i.e. pull together and coordinate ideas from member states and promote her own policy initiatives. Ultimately, the role of the HR/VP is to develop concepts, and to trigger and channel debates. Instead, Lady Ashton is seen as an observer, trying to distil the mainstream of member states views rather than shaping it.

The institutional part of the problem is inherent to her job description: she simply has too many hats to wear. She is the High Representative of the EU for Foreign and Security Policy, a Vice-President of the European Commission, and the Chair of the Foreign Affairs Council as well as of Defence Ministers' meetings. At the same time, she is the supreme crisis manager of the EU. All this is too much for one person to handle, which is why she needs 27 foreign ministries to offer her support.

At least some support – maybe not so much for her personally but rather for whoever is to follow her in the job – is discernible in the proposals of the Westerwelle group of foreign ministers. For one, the Eleven propose to substantially revise the Council decision on the EEAS, *inter alia* by rendering the High Representative responsible for key external action areas such as the European Neighbourhood Policy. Moreover, the introduction of both deputy HRs who could take over some of her work and 'junior commissioners' for the other RELEX portfolios in the Commission, who would clearly be subordinate to the Vice-President, should help to strengthen the foreign policy chief's role. Together with a more widespread – and more credible – push by member states for a more unified EU foreign policy approach, these proposals can help to solve some of the teething troubles of the still very young European foreign service.

## Quantitative data - Germany

### MFA budget

Year **2012**: Total budget: 3,323 mln €, of which:

- Ministry costs: 241.7 mln €
- Representations abroad (including personnel and other costs): 714 mln €
- General grants (e.g. to international organisations): 1,431 mln €
- Cultural relations (including Goethe Institutes): 784.7 mln €
- German Archaeological Institute: 33.6 mln €
- Pension payments: 117.6 mln €

The overall budget amounts to a little less than 1% of the federal budget (306.2 bn €).

Year **2011**: Total budget: 3,133 mln €

Year **2010**: Total budget: 3,233 mln €

Year **2009**: Total budget: 2,966 mln €

### Number of missions

Total: 229, of which:

- Embassies: 152
- Consulates General: 55
- Consulates: 6
- Representations to international organisations: 12
- Other diplomatic missions: 4

In addition: unofficial representations: 1

Outside Europe: 184

Inside Europe: 45

### Number of staff employed by the MFA

Total: 11,138, of which:

- Staff in missions: 3,022
- Staff in the Ministry: 2,835
- Local staff: 5,281

### Number of staff seconded to the EEAS

Total: 17, of which 4 at level of directors

### Number of arrangements of cooperation/burden-sharing with diplomatic missions of other member states (sharing premises, consular services etc.)

None.

#### Sources:

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# Allegro Ma Non Troppo: The European External Action Service and Italian Diplomacy

**By Andrea Frontini**<sup>14</sup>

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## 3.1 ITALIAN FOREIGN POLICY: A SHORT OVERVIEW

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Since the end of the Second World War, Italian foreign policy has been conducted on the basis of four overarching priorities: the European integration process, which was considered as an unparalleled vehicle of socio-economic modernisation; the transatlantic link, offered by both membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and strong bilateral relations with the United States, which was viewed as the ultimate guarantee of national security; constant support for the United Nations (UN) as the dominant forum for cooperation on issues of global peace, security and economic development; and the promotion of Italy's political, security and economic interests in its neighbourhood, notably the Mediterranean region, both at bilateral and multilateral level. In this wider framework, Italy's commitment to Euro-Atlantic integration was generally perceived by its diplomatic elite as a vital external bond against a polarised and often volatile domestic political situation.<sup>15</sup>

The end of the Cold War and the progressive yet still uncertain transition in world politics led to an adaptation of, rather than a reversal in, the country's traditional foreign policy guidelines, in order to tackle a number of challenges affecting its international posture, including political marginalisation

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<sup>14</sup> The author would like to thank sincerely Dr Rosa Balfour and Dr Kristi Raik for their kind support as well as for their invaluable comments on an earlier draft of this chapter.

<sup>15</sup> See, among others: Gruppo di Riflessione Strategica (2008), 'Rapporto 2020: Le Scelte di Politica Estera', Unità di Analisi e Programmazione del Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Rome.

within Euro-Atlantic institutions, risks of instability stemming from both the Balkans and the broader Middle East, increased geo-economic competition in progressively globalised international markets, and the potential decline of multilateral, rules-based *fora* of global governance.<sup>16</sup>

After a further step in the country's commitment to European integration in the 1990s (especially due to Italy's adherence to Economic and Monetary Union and the subsequent macroeconomic reforms required to adopt the euro), the events of 9/11 and the new security-focused foreign policy agenda of the US Administration pushed Italy to stress its transatlantic inclination as the main tool to secure its national interests, also in the context of a highly polarised Europe, notably following the US intervention in Iraq in 2003. Moreover, a stronger focus on bilateralism also emerged, notably in relations with Russia. A sense of political disengagement from the EU was, indeed, considered by several observers as a general feature of the centre-right coalition governing Italy and its foreign policy in 2001-2005 and 2008-2011<sup>17</sup>, and one strongly criticised by many within the *Farnesina*, i.e. the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

### **3.2 CHANGES IN NATIONAL STRUCTURES, RESOURCES AND PRIORITIES**

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#### ***Italian foreign policy and the European Union***

Despite these fluctuations, Italian foreign policy *vis-à-vis* the European integration process in general and the Common Foreign and Security Policy in particular is characterised by overall continuity. Support for the European Union in general is perceived by Italian diplomats as a virtually constant guideline in Italy's foreign policy for a number of reasons, including both the political and image-related incentives to preserve its fully-fledged status of founding member state, traditionally pro-European domestic public opinion, and an underlying imperative to compensate for certain traditionally structural deficiencies affecting its external projection. These include an often inward-looking political leadership, declining budgetary resources devoted to the Foreign Ministry, and geographical exposure to risks and challenges stemming from Europe's neighbours, particularly the Balkans and the Mediterranean.

Moreover, both the wider impacts of globalisation on national sovereignty and post-Lisbon institutional innovations, including the establishment of the EEAS, seem to have strengthened the inclination of Italian diplomacy to resort to the EU's external policies as an overarching framework for effectively pursuing Italy's interests and values in priority geographical areas (particularly the Western Balkans and the Mediterranean, but also *vis-à-vis* Russia, despite the personality-based drift of past bilateral relations) and thematic issues (notably international security, development assistance and human rights), based on the political added value, the financial scale and the technical expertise of EU initiatives.

#### ***Changes in national structures and resources and the role of the EEAS***

The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs underwent a two-fold reform in 2010, which affected both its internal organisation and its diplomatic and consular network abroad.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> On the history of Italian foreign policy, both before and after the end of the Cold War, see also: Varsori, A. (1998), 'L'Italia nelle Relazioni Internazionali dal 1943 al 1992', Laterza, Bari-Rome and Saiu, L. (2005), 'La Politica Estera Italiana dall'Unità a Oggi', Laterza, Bari-Rome.

<sup>17</sup> See, among others: Colombo, A. and Greco, E. (2011), 'L'Italia e la Trasformazione dello Scenario Internazionale: Rapporto Introduttivo', in Bonvicini, G. and Colombo, A. (eds.), *La Politica Estera dell'Italia*, Il Mulino, Bologna.

<sup>18</sup> See, among others: Senato della Repubblica-Commissione Affari Esteri ed Emigrazione (2011), 'Indagine Conoscitiva sulla Riorganizzazione della Rete Diplomatico-Consolare e sull'Adeguatezza e sull'Utilizzo delle Dotazioni Organiche e di Bilancio del Ministero degli Affari Esteri', Rome.

The reform replaced the pre-existing geographical Directorates General (DGs) in charge of substantial foreign policy issues with thematic ones, reducing the total number of DGs from 13 to eight and reallocating staff and responsibilities. Among the most relevant developments, a new DG for the European Union was created, covering both EU affairs and bilateral relations with European countries, while an empowered DG for Political Affairs and Security Policy has regained supremacy within the Ministry's institutional architecture. Moreover, the importance increasingly attached to the promotion of Italy's commercial interests, cultural heritage and scientific expertise abroad was reflected in the creation of an *ad hoc* DG.

The reform also entailed progressive rationalisation of Italian consular representation through either the abolition or unification of branches (notably in European countries and Switzerland, but also in the USA and Australia), the 'digitalisation' of a number of consular services to be provided to Italian communities abroad, and an increase in budgetary autonomy for Italian missions in third countries and international organisations. This process feeds into a more general effort to reduce the Ministry's operative costs, which also includes a reformulation of the allowance scheme for personnel posted abroad, aimed at freeing up resources to strengthen Italy's diplomatic and consular presence in a number of priority areas, including Eastern Europe and Russia, Northern and Eastern Africa, and South-East Asia.

Streamlining the Italian public administration was the primary driver of the 2010 reform, which sought to narrow the country's public debt and tackle the fiscal impact of the international economic crisis, also in view of reaching a balanced state budget by 2014. However, a two-fold impact of the EEAS on the on-going restructuring of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs can be identified. In terms of internal structure, an *ad hoc* Unit in the DG for the European Union was created to deal with the institutional aspects of EU foreign policy, while a Unit for the CFSP and CSDP was transferred from the pre-existing DG in charge of EU affairs to the DG for Political Affairs and Security Policy.<sup>19</sup> Also, the new Service is seen by Italy as a catalyst of cost-effectiveness, especially by encouraging arrangements of cooperation and burden-sharing in the field of external representation. In this regard, the Ministry is particularly interested in forms of co-location of premises, notably with other EU member states but also with the EEAS itself, possibly starting with a pilot project in Mogadishu (Somalia), as well as in the possibility of sharing costs for logistics, informatics, security and local staff in other posts abroad.

### ***Possible impacts of the EEAS on Italian foreign policy***

Italy tends to pursue an overall strategy based on a two-fold and bidirectional process of adaptation to ('downloading') and influence of ('uploading') the EEAS agenda in all areas of national interest. Indeed, Italy tends to present its foreign policy priorities as fully compatible and complementary to the CFSP and tries to maximise synergies between the two agendas, making regular reference to the European Union in virtually all its diplomatic *dossiers*, while taking advantage of EU foreign policy initiatives in a number of regions (e.g. Task Forces in Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan or the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance in the Western Balkans) to channel and upgrade its specific political, security and economic interests. At the same time, however, Italy remains convinced of the role of member states in giving an impetus to EU foreign policy, especially in geographical areas of particular importance for Europe's security and prosperity, such as North Africa, the Middle East, the Horn of

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<sup>19</sup> The overall objective of these developments should be strengthening the 'Europeanisation' of Italy's foreign policymaking. However, some interviewees highlighted the risks of persisting compartmentalisation and isolation between policy areas, which demand increased coordination habits among the officials in charge of the respective *dossiers*.

Africa and the Sahel. In this sense, Italy sees the new Service as a tool of inter-institutional coordination and unbiased mediation of competing national interests in a number of still divisive geographical (e.g. Turkey's EU membership) or thematic (e.g. the EU's role in the UN Security Council) issues.

Italy generally seems to welcome the 'Europeanisation' perspective in areas that are less of a priority for its foreign policy, especially regarding regions that are geographically distant from Europe, such as Southern and Eastern Asia. The growing internationalisation process of Italy's economy<sup>20</sup> is also making the country more demanding about the added value of EU foreign policy *vis-à-vis* non-Western emerging economies, including by making smarter and more ambitious use of strategic partnerships.

### **3.3 NATIONAL VIEWS ON THE FUNCTIONS OF THE EEAS**

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#### ***Positions and negotiation strategies in the creation of the EEAS***

Italy pursued three main goals in negotiations over Council Decision 427 establishing the organisation and functioning of the EEAS: firstly, it supported the idea of a politically strong Service, which should be given autonomy of action and originality of identity *vis-à-vis* member states and the EU institutions; secondly, it favoured the principles of a mixed, 'multi-source' staff composition and rotating secondment of national diplomatic personnel in the new Service, in order to encourage information-sharing and cross-fertilisation among the different actors in charge of EU foreign policy; thirdly, it insisted on the imperative of strengthening the EEAS's role in multilateral *fora* and, more generally, in tackling global issues, ensuring the proper coordination of EU member states' positions in the related policy dossiers.

#### ***Views on possible transfers of tasks and functions to the EEAS***

Italy generally supports the empowerment of the EEAS's role, based on the underlying assumption of its complementarity with – rather than substitution for – national tasks and functions in diplomatic and consular matters, where Italy is willing to preserve its substantial autonomy in a number of specific areas.

On representation abroad, Italy believes that EU Delegations should flank, and not replace, its missions abroad, maximising the political boost of post-Lisbon EU foreign policy thanks to full coordination between the CFSP and the external dimensions of the European Commission's policies and instruments. As for representation in international organisations, the Ministry tends to view the EEAS as a tool to coordinate and merge member states' positions in international *fora* on the basis of agreed policy guidelines. The need to reach consensus between national capitals on virtually any aspect of the EU's multilateral initiatives is viewed by Italy as an unavoidable necessity in light of the legal constraints of the Treaty of Lisbon in this area and the often unconstructive political attitude of a number of other national capitals, notably the United Kingdom, towards the EU's representation in the UN.

The EEAS is also considered by Italy to provide genuine added value in reporting and analysis. According to the Ministry, the role of the new Service in this area should aim to increase the plurality of information at the disposal of national capitals by favouring sharing of reports and analysis both

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<sup>20</sup> See, among others: Dassù, M. (2012), 'Farnesina, Rete Diplomatica e Imprese per la Crescita del Sistema Paese – Intervento alla Conferenza degli Ambasciatori', Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Rome.

between the EEAS and member states and among member states through *ad hoc* meetings in Brussels-based institutions and local coordination mechanisms in third countries and international organisations. Once again, the very idea of the EEAS simply replacing national diplomacy in this area is deemed by the *Farnesina* as strongly undesirable.

The absence of a clear EU legal basis, persisting divergence in national citizenship-related and consular legislations, a lack of expertise and resources in EU Delegations as well as the political importance attached to consular assistance to a still significant number of foreign residents of Italian ancestry are all viewed by Italy as compelling reasons to avoid EEAS involvement in consular affairs, including the evacuation of EU citizens in the event of a political crisis or natural disaster. In this area, Italy sees the only possible role for the EEAS to be one of supporting consultation and coordination between EU Delegations and member states' consular missions in third countries through regular meetings of national consular staff, to be chaired by senior EEAS officials.

Italy is also very reluctant to allow the transfer of commercial diplomacy tasks to the EEAS, given the growing political imperative of supporting the internationalisation of national businesses against the background of the crisis, the specificities of the structure of its national exports and the established presence of *ad hoc* bodies at the European (e.g. Business Europe), national (i.e. the new *Agenzia per la Promozione all'Estero e l'Internazionalizzazione delle Imprese Italiane*) and regional (i.e. the relevant *bureaux* of Italian regions) levels. As such, Italy instead favours the involvement of the new Service in the creation of an international level playing field for European businesses by increasing the EU's political leverage in negotiations on bilateral trade agreements.

### ***Visions for the role of EU Delegations in foreign policy coordination and burden-sharing***

Italy considers the establishment of EU Delegations as a true game changer in post-Lisbon EU foreign policy, despite the many challenges affecting the current transitional phase. In this view, Italy supports the role of EU Delegations in coordinating member states' positions in both third countries and international organisations, though it believes that the main responsibility of policy formulation still lies in Brussels-based institutions, notably the Council of Foreign Affairs and its Working Groups.

The Ministry favours a stronger coordination role for the EEAS in multilateral *fora*, especially through common positions and written statements, whereas it attaches particular importance to the EEAS providing external representation in those countries where most member states, including Italy, cannot rely on accredited diplomatic representatives. In both cases, the creation of EU Delegations is considered by the Ministry as a significant opportunity to share political analysis and reporting both between the EEAS and member states and among member states – while retaining autonomous national capabilities in this area – as well as to split costs for shared premises.

More generally, the post-Lisbon upgrading of EU Delegations is viewed by Italy as a much needed 'diplomatisation' of the European Commission's technical programmes and instruments as well as of its very mind-set and working methods, increasing the EU's capacity to influence developments in areas and countries of priority for Italy's foreign policy through a potentially decisive combination of political clout, financial incentives and thematic expertise.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> In spite of this, interviewees also agreed that much of the success of EU Delegations in coordinating member states' positions in third countries and international organisations will still much depend on the very personality and sensitivity of EEAS Heads of Mission.

### 3.4 CONTACTS AND LINKS BETWEEN THE MINISTRY AND THE EEAS

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#### ***Recent changes in working relations with EU institutions under the CFSP***

Italian officials agree that the most significant changes to the post-Lisbon CFSP affected the agenda-setting and chairing of the Foreign Affairs Council meetings, which are now both assigned to the new Service and the HR/VP.

However, the assessment of this process varies among interviewees. Some welcomed this evolution as a guarantee of a more reactive and coherent EU foreign policy, especially thanks to both enhanced political continuity and increased inter-institutional coordination, though acknowledging that this comes at the expense of member states' influence in the CFSP. Others have highlighted a number of problematic habits in the EEAS's attitude towards member states, including un-transparent practices (e.g. last-minute circulation of revised agendas to member states) in order to keep its leading role in the formulation of EU foreign policy, as well as a general slowness in the management of relevant policy *dossiers*, due to a combination of an overload of work and the lack of short-term incentives and deadlines.

#### ***Formal and informal contacts with the EEAS***

Officials provided generally positive feedback on the scope, frequency and intensity of their contact with the EEAS. While interaction with seconded national diplomats to the EEAS is considered to be particularly fruitful, there is also satisfaction with the increasing constructiveness of EEAS officials from the EU institutions – particularly the Commission – *vis-à-vis* member-state diplomats. This attitude change can be explained as a progressive adaptation to the new Service's working methods and mind-set, but also as a reflex of the still relevant influence of member states' support for the career development of EEAS officials, independently of their source of origin. Officials in daily contact with the EEAS also noted an increase in the quality of reports from both EEAS Headquarters – including through the COREU network and the EU Intelligence Analysis Centre (EUINT, previously Joint Situation Centre, SITCEN) in the areas of emergency consultation and intelligence-sharing – and EU Delegations, especially in those countries where most member states, including Italy, lack diplomatic representation.

Some difficulties in this area nonetheless remain, including uneven access by the Ministry's offices to the EEAS, the risk of either ambiguous or softened analysis and reporting by the EEAS on issues where larger member states retain significant political leverage, the practical difficulty for the Ministry's offices to 'digest' in a timely manner reports and analysis from the EEAS due to lack of staff, as well as the need for more frequent and substantial contact between the Ministry and the top management of the EEAS, especially at the level of Directors-General and Heads of Cabinet.

#### ***Secondment of national diplomats to the EEAS: strategies, processes and outcomes***

Italy adopted a strategy aimed at seconding both diplomatic and non-diplomatic national officials to the EEAS, also without discriminating between seconded Italian national officials and non-seconded EU civil servants of Italian nationality when supporting applications to the Service.

In order to carry out this process, a specific section in charge of the administrative aspects of secondment of national personnel to the EEAS was created within the Office for Human Resources at DG Resources and Innovation in the Ministry, while the Desk of the Italian Permanent Representation

in Brussels in charge of monitoring Italian civil servants in the EU has been tasked with liaising with the EEAS in the preparation and follow-up of national candidacies.<sup>22</sup> In addition to that, in early 2012 the Diplomatic Institute of the Ministry, i.e. the body in charge of educating and training national diplomats, held the first edition of a two-day coaching session on secondment to the EEAS, including simulations of job interviews, which was opened to all national candidates independently of the status of their application to the Service. Further synergies are also planned between this initiative and the traditional educational and training courses for junior and mid-career diplomatic officials, in order to increase their interest in vacancies in the EEAS.<sup>23</sup>

As for secondment of national officials to some top positions in the EEAS, a first attempt by Italy to support a number of national candidates for the EEAS Management Board turned out to be unsuccessful. This was viewed by some as a consequence of a largely opaque selection procedure, the blame for which was more or less explicitly laid at the door of the HR/VP. In mid-2010, following the establishment of a proper system of vacancies and subsequent Commission-style job interviews (i.e. through the 'assessment centre' methodology), two Italian diplomatic officials were appointed as Director for Western Europe, Western Balkans and Turkey and Managing Director of the Crisis Response Department respectively. Moreover, another Italian diplomat was nominated as Head of the EEAS Strategic Planning Division. At the same time, a first round of nominations for Heads of Delegation took place, leading Italy to position two national diplomatic officials at the top of the EU Delegation to Albania and the EU Delegation to the United Nations and other International Organisations in Geneva. While later applications to the EU Delegation to UNESCO in Paris and to the Office of the European Union Representative to the West Bank, Gaza Strip and UNRWA in Gaza/Jerusalem did not succeed, a senior Italian diplomat was appointed as Director for South and South East Asia in November 2012.

Italy considers itself moderately satisfied with its current positioning in terms of total personnel of Italian nationality in the EEAS (including non-seconded staff), whose presence is perceived as a factor of constructive working relations with its national diplomats. In future, Rome would aim to pursue a more targeted secondment policy for Heads of EU Delegations, prioritising more countries and areas of strategic importance to Italian foreign policy. At the same time, however, interviewees were sceptical about the overall coherence of the EEAS's recruitment procedures, especially following the decision by the Consultative Committee on Appointments (CCA) of the EEAS to further modify the selection criteria<sup>24</sup>, giving rise to three different selection models in less than two years. Officials also criticised the constant involvement of the HR/VP in the selection of virtually all mid- and high-ranking EEAS officials: while Italy seems ready to accept some degree of discretion by the HR/VP in the appointment of the most senior EEAS officials, her role was perceived as far too intrusive, and sometimes even biased, in the case of nominations of both Directors and Heads of EU Delegations in relatively low-priority countries, harming trust and cooperation among member states.

Given the purely voluntary nature of secondment, the Ministry does not offer concrete incentives to national diplomats applying for positions in the Service, apart from the neutrality of secondment on

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<sup>22</sup> The functions of the Rome-based Office include: the publication of vacancies in the EEAS, the issuing of the relevant clearance for applications by national officials, the creation of a roster of candidates, and assistance for those selected with the bureaucratic steps of secondment to the EEAS.

<sup>23</sup> Some interviewees nonetheless criticised the current Italian approach to secondment to the EEAS, arguing that virtually no attention was being paid to putting in place proper 'pre-alert' mechanisms for potential national candidates.

<sup>24</sup> The CCA decided to modify the 'assessment centre' methodology in order to better tailor it to the specific skills required for EEAS officials in general, and Heads of EU Delegation in particular.

alternation of metropolitan and overseas postings<sup>25</sup>, nor has it already developed a formal plan for the return of its seconded staff. As a matter of fact, though the possibility for returned seconded staff to be employed in the DG for the European Union or re-seconded to higher level positions in the EEAS is being discussed informally, hyper-specialisation of diplomats is generally discouraged by the Ministry for both practical (i.e. lack of human resources) and deontological (i.e. need for cross-cutting expertise) reasons.

The impact of secondment to the EEAS on the 'Europeanisation' of the Italian diplomatic elite appears to be a rather controversial issue in the Ministry, and views vary among officials on the basis of different experiences and mind-sets. Some expressed substantial optimism about the likeliness of this process and welcomed its expected effect on the convergence of member states' foreign policy priorities. Others, however, resisted such positions by arguing that socialisation is inherent in diplomatic practice and has little to do with the long-term dynamics of EU foreign policy integration, and that the 'Europeanisation' of national diplomats is far less important, in the Ministry's view, than their ability to acquire the unique cooperation habits of the EU's working environment, which they are expected to bring back to Rome at the end of their secondment.

In this view, the rotating system is assessed differently, based on the prevalence of one of the two above-mentioned assumptions: while some considered it to be a major vehicle of convergence and cross-fertilisation in EU foreign policy<sup>26</sup>, others noted that since the career development of seconded national diplomats still depends on periodical evaluations by their ministries of origin, no real 'Europeanisation' of personal perspectives and political loyalties is ultimately possible.

### **3.5 EUROPEAN FOREIGN POLICY LEADERSHIP**

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#### ***National views on working relationship with and functions of HR/VP***

Italy's position is generally depicted as aiming to strengthen the HR/VP as a proactive EU foreign policy leader. However, a two-fold and rather ambiguous trend seems to have emerged in practice: while the foreign ministers of EU member states, including Italy, are constantly calling for a more active role for the HR/VP in the formulation and conduct of EU foreign policy and express a general readiness to grant more visibility to the HR/VP in order to let her speak in the name of the whole EU, they are also putting in place a number of parallel and potentially competitive exercises in the CFSP (such as in the case of the Middle East and Balkans Quintets or the current Reflection Group on the European Global Strategy) and sometimes give in to the temptation to publicly blame the HR/VP for most shortcomings of EU foreign policy.

Italy's attitude can be described as a rather pragmatic reaction to a series of political and institutional realities in EU foreign policy. These include growing political divergence within the Council<sup>27</sup> and the consequent need to frame a 'multi-speed' EU foreign policy as an incubator of future CFSP policies,

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<sup>25</sup> In virtually all ministries of foreign affairs in Europe, diplomats serving in diplomatic or consular posts abroad are entitled to compensation based on a number of criteria (e.g. level of local prices and degree of political risk in the country of destination), thus receiving a higher salary compared to the years of service in their home country.

<sup>26</sup> These advantages were considered by interviewees as ultimately compensating for the main disadvantage of the rotation system, i.e. the periodical loss of skills and expertise due to the departure of experienced seconded diplomats. This is, in any case, a common feature of virtually all national diplomatic systems and it follows its own specific logic. On this point, see also: Berridge, G.R. (2010), 'Diplomacy: Theory and Practice', Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.

<sup>27</sup> Examples given by interviewees included the heterogeneity of views among 'northern' and 'southern' capitals on the EU's policy response to the Arab Spring as well as Germany's position during the Libyan crisis.



foreign ministers' current attempts to regain visibility after being 'legally forced' to abandon meetings of the European Council, the prevalence of national bilateral agendas in a number of thematic and geographical issues, and the persisting sluggishness of the HR/VP in taking the initiative in several policy areas (including the CSDP)<sup>28</sup>, as well as her apparent unwillingness to coordinate and streamline the Commission's external tools and policies through her 'second hat'. However, this approach also demonstrates further that Rome still tends to see member states as the major driving force in EU foreign policy, thus contributing to make functional coexistence between national capitals and HR/VP a highly demanding challenge for the future of the CFSP.

### ***Italian perceptions of other CFSP actors: the rotating presidency and the 'big three'***

Although it still retains some influence in a number of areas (including the preparation of meetings of the Political and Security Committee, EU neighbourhood policy, and external representation in countries and international organisations with no established EU Delegation), the overall impact of the rotating Presidency of the Council on the EU's foreign policy machinery is seen by Italy as limited to merely supporting the HR/VP's ideas and initiatives. Such a loss of political weight in the CFSP is perceived by Rome as a positive development in light of the need for more continuity and impartiality in EU foreign policy, though an essential countercheck of this position – as well as of the overall stability of this new institutional configuration – is likely to come when Italy itself holds the rotating Presidency in the second half of 2014.

When it comes to the issue of the role of the 'big three' (i.e. France, Germany and the United Kingdom) in the EEAS and EU foreign policy, there seems to be a widespread belief among Italian officials that, in the current consolidation phase of post-Lisbon EU foreign policy, it is virtually inevitable that a number of limited formats either led by or including only the 'big three' will still emerge, aiming at influencing specific bits of the CFSP's agenda, such as in the cases of talks with Iran and the peace process in the Middle East.

However, while both France and the United Kingdom are perceived by many in Rome as quite eager to either obstruct or exploit the EEAS to pursue their national interests, Germany is believed to be far more pro-European in its overall position on both substantial and institutional aspects of the CFSP. As a whole, interviewees dismissed the idea of the EEAS being monopolised by the 'big three', arguing that the existing system of checks and balances within the CFSP should largely neutralise the risks of a 'trilateral direction' of EU foreign policy. These include the prevalence of consensus-based mechanisms in the Council, and the ability of medium and small-sized member states to generate equal and opposite political critical mass with the support of the EEAS, as well as hopefully increasing policy entrepreneurship by the new Service.

## **3.6 CONCLUSIONS**

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The analysis so far conducted of the adaptation of Italian diplomacy to the EEAS provides four general findings, reflecting this paper's key areas of investigation.

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<sup>28</sup> When asked about the possible 'deputisation' of the HR/VP as a partial solution to this problem, most interviewees were quite doubtful about its legal viability, and they argued instead that a more functional and less personalistic organisational structure of the EEAS would greatly help the HR/VP to pursue her institutional agenda.

Italy considers the CFSP to be an indispensable dimension for pursuing and upgrading its national foreign policy directives on a wide array of geographic and thematic issues. In this view, Rome considers the EEAS to be a driver of policy coordination and political mediation in the CFSP, but also as a tool for achieving cost-effectiveness in external representation, notably in the context of the recent austerity-driven reform of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In spite of this, Italy still views the role of national capitals as the ultimate political engine of the CFSP.

Rome favours the empowerment of EEAS tasks and functions in the field of external representation as well as in reporting and analysis, notably through more politically-charged EU Delegations in international organisations and third countries. At the same time, however, it still sees the role of the new Service as essentially ancillary to the traditional competences of its national diplomacy, while drawing quite clear red lines in the areas of consular services and the promotion of commercial interests.

The *Farnesina* seems generally satisfied with its formal and informal contacts with the EEAS and on the whole it takes a constructive approach *vis-à-vis* the role of the new Service in the EU's foreign policy system, including in the overall management of the FAC. However, the Ministry still lacks a clear medium-term strategy on the secondment of national officials to the new Service and presents conflicting views regarding its impact on the transformation of national policy perspectives and political loyalties. This gives the impression that Italy might not be fully aware of the political and practical added value of secondment of its diplomatic personnel to the EEAS.

Italy has adopted a pragmatic attitude to the question of leadership in the CFSP by encouraging a member-state-led, bottom-up approach to EU foreign policy, especially via mini-lateral coalition-building exercises. Though this might prove to be a rather effective solution to the growing intricacy of EU foreign policymaking, on the condition that the EEAS is constantly involved in this process, it is nonetheless debatable whether such a stance will actually contribute to more constructive working relations between member states and the HR/VP.

Though the scope of this paper does not allow for in-depth analysis of such a complex and highly sensitive issue, the 'Europeanisation' of Italy's foreign policy through the EEAS can be considered as a fairly established process, which is ultimately seen by a significant component of the country's diplomatic elite as vital to fulfil three major interrelated objectives: securing Italy's tangible economic and security interests both in its close periphery and far from home; confirming its pro-European vocation both as a key component of its political self-representation and a valuable diplomatic asset in cross-cutting negotiations within the EU; dismissing winding domestic perceptions of structural decline, institutional crisis and geopolitical irrelevance, both in Europe and globally.<sup>29</sup>

Finally, two additional elements should be taken into consideration when discussing the 'Europeanisation' of Italian foreign policy through the EEAS. Firstly, Italy's general stance *vis-à-vis* the new Service clearly demonstrates that this process will hardly follow either a purely supranational or a merely intergovernmental path, but it will rather entail a hybrid model of progressive European foreign policy integration, based on continuous and sometimes competitive interaction between member states and the EEAS. Secondly, the degree to which Rome will commit to the convergence of member states' foreign policy priorities through the new Service will also depend on the actual evolution of its domestic political scene, whose persisting uncertainties – including the rise of populist and Eurosceptic forces in Italy's recent legislative elections – might still affect the credibility and the constructiveness of the country's international conduct, both within and outside the EU.

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<sup>29</sup> See, among others: Fagiolo, S. (2011), 'Italia al Punto di Rottura', *Affarinternazionali*, June, [www.affarinternazionali.it](http://www.affarinternazionali.it)

## Quantitative data - Italy

### MFA budget

Year **2012**: Total budget: 1,684 mln € (-10.5% compared to the previous year; 0.22% of 2012 national budget), of which:

- Operational costs: 919 mln € (-6.8% compared to the previous year; 54.6% of 2012 MFA budget)

Year **2011**: Total budget: 1,882 mln € (-9.3% compared to the previous year; 0.25% of 2011 national budget), of which:

- Operational costs: 986 mln € (-0.5% compared to the previous year; 52.4% of 2011 MFA budget)

Year **2010**: Total budget: 2,076 mln € (+1.5% compared to the previous year; 0.26% of 2010 national budget), of which:

- Operational costs: 991 mln € (+2.4% compared to the previous year; 47.7% of 2010 MFA budget)

### Number of missions

Total: 319, of which:

- Embassies: 127
- Permanent representations to international organisations: 9
- Special diplomatic delegations: 1
- Consulates: 92
- Italian Cultural Institutes: 90

Outside Europe: 228

Inside Europe: 91

### Number of staff employed by the MFA

Total: 4,333 (including 919 diplomatic officials) of which:

- Staff in missions: 2,400, including 514 diplomatic officials

### Number of staff seconded to the EEAS

Total: 43, of which:

- Seconded diplomats: 13
- Seconded national experts, SNEs: 30

### Number of arrangements of cooperation/burden-sharing with diplomatic missions of other member states (sharing premises, consular services etc.)

None.

*Sources: Ministero degli Affari Esteri (2011 and 2012), 'Annuario Statistico 2011' and 'Annuario Statistico 2012', Rome; European External Action Service (2012), 'Staffing in the EEAS', Brussels.*



# Sweden and the European External Action Service

**By Mark Rhinard, Jakob Lewander and Sara Norrevik**<sup>30</sup>

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## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

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For most of its history, Sweden and its foreign policy could be organised in terms of three sets of relations: with its Nordic neighbours, with Europe, and with the world. The same is true today and at each level Sweden can be broadly described as having an activist foreign policy. Foreign policy activism is partly the effect of being a rather small country in the world and a “small to medium” country in Europe – a structural reality that Sweden tries to counter through active engagement with neighbours and the rest of the world.<sup>31</sup> Sweden is a leading member of Nordic and Baltic Sea organisations, a committed member of the European Union, the Council of Europe, and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and an active participant in the United Nations. Acting multilaterally on foreign policy questions, one could say, is built into Sweden’s DNA.

From a security perspective, Swedish foreign policy has been historically based on the principle of non-alignment in peacetime and neutrality in wartime.<sup>32</sup> This principle still stands – although it has been criticised as outdated in an era of new global security challenges and anachronistic at a time when Sweden participates in NATO (through the Partnership for Peace programme for non-members) and UN missions in global hotspots ranging from Afghanistan to Libya. Sweden regards the UN as having

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<sup>30</sup> The authors are grateful to Mikaela Hedborg and Anna Takman, both of the Swedish Institute of International Affairs, for research assistance with this text.

<sup>31</sup> Goldmann, K. (1991), ‘The Swedish Model of Security Policy’, *West European Politics*, Vol. 14, No. 3, pp. 122-143.

<sup>32</sup> Bergman, A. (2007) ‘Co-Constitution of Domestic and International Welfare Obligations: The Case of Sweden’s Social Democratically Inspired Internationalism’, *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 42, No. 1, pp. 73-99.

overall responsibility for international peace and security, while the EU, the Council of Europe, and the OSCE are vehicles for promoting democracy and the rule of law. Sweden is very active in international peace efforts via the UN, crisis management missions via the EU, and observation missions in the OSCE (to name but a few examples). Sweden, together with Finland, is widely credited with spearheading the EU's drive towards a "civilian" component in crisis management.<sup>33</sup> In both civilian and military crisis management missions, Sweden has been quite active: at the time of writing, Sweden is involved in approximately 12 missions (a higher number than many other member states). Sweden also supported the Lisbon Treaty's reforms on the EU's foreign policy machinery and actively engaged with the phrasing of the Treaty's various security commitments.

Sweden's key areas of foreign policy more broadly focus on development assistance, conflict prevention, peacekeeping, the environment, refugees and trade policy.

With the arrival of the European External Action Service as part of the Lisbon Treaty reform, a number of questions arise as to how the operation, priorities, leadership profile, and European commitments of the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs might have changed. This brief case study presents the results of a series of interviews on those questions. Interviews were conducted with twelve members of the MFA, including officials at the head of department level, officials working on EU matters generally and CFSP-related matters specifically, officials working at geographical desks, and officials working in human resources, finances, and policy planning. The result was a wealth of information that, while not generalisable across the whole of the MFA, offered useful indications as to how the EEAS has affected the Swedish Foreign Ministry.

This case study proceeds as follows. The second section presents results of questions related to changes in national structures, resources and priorities. The third section covers questions on Swedish views of the role and function of the EEAS. The fourth section outlines questions concerning contacts and links between officials in the Swedish MFA and the EEAS. The fifth section addresses questions which speak to perceptions of European foreign policy leadership. The conclusion outlines the main findings of the study and summarises Sweden's generally supportive but 'wait and see' approach to the EEAS.

## **4.2 CHANGES IN STRUCTURES, RESOURCES, PRIORITIES OF SWEDISH DIPLOMACY**

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In terms of policy priorities, most Swedish respondents argued that Sweden's position on the CFSP has not changed dramatically over the years: Sweden has long been, and continues to be, a supporter of the CFSP as a way to reflect both Swedish and European policy priorities. Indeed, most interviewees stressed the compatibility of Swedish and European foreign policy – even if some acknowledged that internal conflicts can and do arise. Keeping the 'big picture' in mind was a common refrain: the EU's internal disputes should not distract from improving the plight of developing countries or contributing to global security. Naturally, then, most respondents stated that the CFSP plays a role when contemplating, formulating, and 'uploading' Swedish foreign policy goals. European foreign policy is generally seen as a 'multiplier' for increasing the potency of Swedish foreign policy – a vehicle for improved foreign policy effectiveness.

Swedish respondents did not see a strong effect of the EEAS or the CFSP on questions of low foreign policy priority in Sweden. The historical precedent in Sweden's foreign policy is simply too strong in

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<sup>33</sup> Strömviik, M. (2006), 'Starting to "think big": the Nordic countries and EU peace-building', in Bailes, A., Herolf, G. and Sundelius, B. (eds.), *The Nordic Countries and the European Security and Defence Policy*, Oxford University Press/SIPRI, Oxford.

shaping priorities. However, on all issues, whether of immediate priority or not, Sweden puts a general emphasis on 'horizontal values' in foreign relations: fundamental rights, rule of law, democracy, etc., none of which is incompatible with European interests writ large. Where Swedish government officials become frustrated is when other member states 'offload' problems to the EU, so that they need not tackle them individually and can argue, in less-than-good-faith, that 'something is being done'.

Thematic and geographic issues may both cause friction amongst European partners. Some thematic issues near to a state's 'national interests' are particularly thorny. Swedish officials discussed how EU debates regarding disarmament and non-proliferation, arms export control, and arms trade reveal very little appetite amongst member states for a fully European approach. In the specific case of Sweden, the issue of defence industry cooperation raises concerns over Swedish versus European interests; Sweden will tread carefully when agreeing to cooperation in that area. Some geographical issues were pointed out as difficult to Europeanise, since some member states had close-knit (and sometimes problematic) historical ties with different geographical regions. North Africa and the Middle East were the recurring examples used to illustrate the difficulty of molding a European approach, since some of the larger EU member states have strong interests in those areas.

The role of the EEAS with regard to the pursuit of national interests evoked interesting responses. Although the CFSP per se is seen as influential in Swedish foreign policy, the EEAS itself was viewed with more scepticism. Most respondents agreed, in principle, that the EEAS could be a structural vehicle for the pursuit of national interests, with examples such as non-proliferation and disarmament being Swedish priorities that could be uploaded to the EEAS. In practice, however, perhaps because of the teething problems experienced by the EEAS, Sweden saw little immediate value in using the EEAS as part of Sweden's instrumental pursuit of national foreign policy. The EEAS, according to several interviewees, is "just a platform" – suggesting that the EEAS exerts no independent impact on national priorities in Sweden at the moment. Respondents returned again and again (suggesting overlaps in the questioning) to the CFSP as more established and more influential in Swedish foreign policymaking.

Any organisational changes prompted by the creation of the EEAS are not easy to identify. The MFA underwent reorganisation in 2008, but this was largely born of a desire to improve internal management and day-to-day work practices. One new position was added to the human resources department to manage recruitment to the EEAS, however. Organisational changes regarding the number and placement of Swedish embassies have been quite extensive. Several embassies were closed, some new ones opened up, and several others co-located together with other Nordic countries. Yet these changes were made by the "political leadership" and before the impact of the EEAS could have been anticipated, according to respondents. Regarding Sweden's cooperation or burden-sharing with other member states, there are now at least 16 embassies in which Sweden co-locates its operations with those of another Nordic country (including Norway and Iceland, but also EU members Denmark and Finland).

Finally, regarding changes in the Foreign Ministry budget that might be linked to the EEAS, the cause-effect relationship is again unclear. Facing deficits in past years, the Swedish MFA has made cuts in order to achieve a balanced budget: this resulted in personnel cuts of around 100 persons. But by 2011, the budget was balanced "for the first time in decades" – so no major changes or cuts are anticipated in the near future.

In summary, the impact of the EEAS on the Swedish MFA, in terms of structures, resources, and policies, is difficult to detect but appears limited. This is partially due to the 'newness' of the EEAS

but also because of the difficulties surrounding its start-up. Traditional Swedish policy priorities, foreign policy resources, and Swedish organisational structures have thus not changed a great deal, nor will they until the EEAS “sorts out its problems”. This suggests somewhat of a waiting game regarding the effects of Europeanization (see Conclusions below).

### **4.3 NATIONAL VIEWS ON THE FUNCTIONS OF THE EEAS**

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In terms of input to the establishment of the EEAS, Sweden was a late but relatively powerful player. In early discussions (circa 2003) Sweden played only a minor role by broadly supporting the creation of the EEAS and its potential to increase coherence. One issue frequently raised by Swedish Foreign Ministry officials was the EEAS’s potential to bring coherence to the civilian and military sides of the CSDP, a concern still shared by officials but seen as improving under the EEAS.

As Sweden assumed the Presidency of the EU (second half of 2009) the EEAS was taking shape — thus giving Sweden a unique opportunity for influence. Sweden issued a ‘non-paper’ spelling out the organisational, institutional, and political questions that needed to be answered in the early days of the EEAS. One such question was recruitment, on which Sweden reiterated the importance of national diplomats comprising one-third of EEAS officials. Another question related to policy, about which Sweden encouraged the creation of distinct organisational structures in the EEAS for human rights issues and international law questions. Finally, the non-paper emphasised the importance of preserving the power of the Political and Security Committee (PSC) in the EEAS — and thus the power of national diplomats. Indeed, if one observation can be made about Sweden’s input into the establishment of the EEAS, it is the intergovernmental character of that input. Sweden advocated more policy coherence (see improving links between the civilian and military CSDP) yet also sought to preserve intergovernmental input within the EEAS — a pattern of behaviour consistent with other Swedish initiatives and relevant to the theoretical approaches used in this project.

Sweden’s advocacy of a new European Security Strategy (ESS) to guide the EEAS should be mentioned here, since in the summer of 2012, Sweden’s reform-oriented position became official. Together with Poland, Italy and Spain, the Swedish Foreign Ministry launched a process of devising a ‘European Global Strategy’ (EGS) led by European think-tanks.

Regarding the transfer of tasks to the EEAS, Sweden is open-minded about the prospect of using EU Delegations as viaducts through which to conduct Swedish policy. This is obviously the case in places where Sweden has no delegations. However, where Swedish delegations sit alongside EU Delegations, coordination is currently limited and the EEAS acts as a ‘28<sup>th</sup> member state’. There are no plans currently in place to cut back the number of Swedish delegations in favour of EU Delegations. The EEAS will not obviate the need for Sweden to have its own, independent foreign service.

Sweden is also open-minded about the transfer of consular services, but sees major obstacles: (a) national legislation may forbid the use of EU Delegations for Swedish consular services, and (b) this issue touches at the heart of the notion of Swedish sovereignty. No official position has been taken at the time of writing. Swedish respondents imply that any transfer of consular tasks will take many years.

Sweden is pushing for the EEAS to take over a larger coordinating role in some international organisations (the Quartet, for instance) but sees major structural problems in most international organisations. The fact that the EU is not a proper member of the UN makes it problematic to hand-over too large a coordinating role. The lack of clarity in the Lisbon Treaty on this point is seen as a major problem.



Whether or not Sweden views the EEAS as taking a larger role in reporting elicited some interesting answers. For the most part, Sweden sees the advantage of the EEAS in collecting information to provide a “bird’s eye” view of international geopolitical situations. Thus, Sweden supports the growth of the SITCEN (now, INTCEN) within the EEAS, for instance. But there is little appetite for giving over all reporting, intake and analysis functions to the EEAS. Most respondents agreed that there will always be an important role for national-level reporting.

Regarding whether the Swedish Foreign Ministry sees a role for EU Delegations in terms of coordination in third countries: respondents noted that in some cases EU coordination in the field is quite good, while in other situations the situation is bad (Delegations in Middle East and North Africa) or non-existent (The Hague). Most respondents would like to see more coordination, but there is a basic unwillingness to be told what to do from the field. National capitals should remain strong, coordination should follow Brussels-based guidelines, and local delegations should act accordingly.

Finally, Swedish respondents are favourable to the notion, in principle, of burden-sharing and cooperation between national embassies and EU Delegations: respondents understand that it is efficient and rational. Especially where the treaties allow (or require) it, Sweden will actively participate in coordination. Other areas need to be acted upon on an *ad hoc* basis (Schengen cooperation, for instance) and pursued carefully, according to officials. When asked how Nordic embassy cooperation and co-location (an increasingly used strategy) affects Swedish willingness to cooperate with EU Delegations, most respondents saw no incompatibilities. One respondent offered the candid opinion that with Nordic cooperation working effectively, the value-added of additional cooperation with an EU Delegation would have to be quite high in order to generate anything resembling an energetic effort from Sweden.

Sweden is already doing so with fellow Nordic members, for example, in locations like Amman, Sarajevo, Jakarta and Washington (see below for a full list). Respondents also pointed to Geneva and New York, where coordination and burden-sharing within international organisations works well. But there is no shared opinion on what kinds of burden-sharing should take place.

To summarise, Sweden is taking a cautious, ‘wait and see’ attitude when it comes to delegating tasks and functions to the EEAS. Respondents complain about a lack of treaty clarity as to how this should take place, and defend national prerogatives quite strongly.

#### **4.4 RELATIONS BETWEEN STOCKHOLM AND BRUSSELS**

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Working relations between Swedish diplomats and the EU institutions have changed in some important ways. The most prominent change is that relations with the EEAS have increased while relations with the holder of the rotating presidency have decreased. This is partly due to increasing complexity: the EEAS is finding its footing and interlocutors can be hard to find. Documents arrive late, relevant EEAS experts are hard to find, and internal power struggles take time to navigate. All of this requires Swedish officials to devote extra time to the EEAS. Thus, more intensive relations between Sweden and the EEAS can signal dysfunction as much as success. Additional comments made by respondents accused the larger member states of having an “easier time” in navigating the EEAS — they get more attention and their phone calls are returned sooner. One interviewee thus argued that the EEAS has increased the power of the “big three” member states in CFSP issues rather than diminished their power. Sweden would like to see better planning of meetings, more structured consultation methods, greater transparency in the formulation of communiqués, and faster recruitment of national (read: Swedish) officials within the EEAS.

Sweden's strategy for getting staff in senior positions in the EEAS has been to work through both informal and formal channels. Informally, Sweden uses high-level contacts to push for more Swedish officials (as do all countries). 'Candidate coaching' takes place, to prepare candidates for interviews and to improve recruitment chances. At the very top levels, EEAS insiders claim Sweden has its fair share of posts. Olof Skoog, for instance, is now the permanent chair of the PSC. Swedish MFA officials are quick to note, however, that the claims of many Swedes in the EEAS are not accurate. There were many Swedes previously in the Commission or Council who were moved to the EEAS, but there were far fewer seconded as part of the national recruitments. Thus, the secondment of officials from Sweden to the EEAS has been slow and problematic.

In terms of incentives to join the EEAS from the Swedish MFA, there appears to be a favourable attitude towards moving from Stockholm to Brussels. Respondents implied that those who join the EEAS gain experience and learn a broader number of issues — and the salary package is better. Although the EEAS is still evolving, and characterised by turbulence, most respondents suggested there is a certain "excitement" surrounding the organisation. These are early days, however, and at least one respondent argued it would be better to send Swedes to the EEAS once matters have stabilised. Moreover, some respondents suggested that experience with the EEAS will be seen (by internal recruiters in the MFA) as equivalent to other "field jobs" within the Ministry — so nothing terribly special for officials' CVs.

As for utilising the expertise of seconded Swedish officials, respondents argued that some formal means of "learning" take place (e.g. via debriefings with human resources officials in the MFA) but informal connections provide the main vehicle for making use of EU expertise. Officials "have coffees" and "talk over lunch" about intricacies of the EU system that might be useful for MFA officials.

Regarding the issue of Swedes returning from the EEAS back home, and how they are received, only one MFA official has come back — so it is too early to tell. Most respondents assumed that some degree of 'Europeanisation' takes place when Swedish officials are seconded to Brussels and few saw a problem with this, curiously enough. Similarly, Swedish officials believe some degree of common European diplomatic culture will emerge via the EEAS, but that it is too early to tell. Some respondents went so far as to "hope" this would take place, seeing an important need for a common culture in today's complex diplomatic environment.

In summary, MFA respondents for this study see significant adaptation taking place as a result of the EEAS, but this perspective is based on impressions and expectations rather than concrete data (since the EEAS is in its early days). The MFA appears to encourage its officials to join the EEAS, although there is frustration that few have done so via Stockholm. Officials seemed willing and even happy that adaptation and closer relations between the MFA and EEAS would take place, if it improves the working situation of the EEAS and leads to a more effective foreign policy for Sweden and the EU. In general, Swedish officials during interviews were more likely to view influence as a 'one-way street', with Stockholm attempting to influence Brussels. Only when probed more deeply did respondents consider that domestic change may also be taking place.

#### **4.5 EUROPEAN FOREIGN POLICY LEADERSHIP: SWEDISH PERSPECTIVES**

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Leadership questions related to EU foreign policy have long been problematic, and only partly rectified with the new EEAS arrangement. The leadership 'division of labour' between the Swedish Foreign Minister and the High Representative (HR/VP) is seen, by and large, as fairly good. The current Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt arguably punches above his weight and is quite active on the European stage

(e.g. an early letter urging more attention to the EEAS, and more recent sponsorship of a revised EU security strategy). For the most part, Bildt strongly supports the EEAS and its HR/VP. According to Swedish MFA officials, Bildt has stood up for her in the face of private attacks by other countries. However, some respondents interviewed for this project expressed frustration that the current HR/VP “listens first to the ‘big three’ member states”. They deplored this intergovernmentalism dominated by the big three and expressed frustration with the “pre-cooking of decisions”.

A related question concerns whether or not foreign ministers are ready to reduce their own visibility in favour of a more united EU position led by the HR/VP. Sweden’s foreign minister seems ready to do so. For instance, respondents mentioned that the Swedish MFA no longer makes press statements regarding issues on which the HR/VP has already spoken. But the overall willingness to take a ‘back seat’ differs amongst EU member states, with larger member states less willing than smaller member states.

On the enduring rotating presidency, Swedish MFA officials note that the rotating presidency’s role is deeply reduced on CFSP matters but remains in many other issues. The rotating presidency is much reduced in third countries too, although The Hague representation is one outlier (the rotating presidency plays a strong role there). Relations between the presidency and the EEAS, it was frequently noted, depend mainly on personalities and who is in the driver’s seat (e.g. whether they are ready to share).

Opinions on whether the HR/VP should be more active, or whether she should limit herself to a coordinating role, were mixed. Most felt that the EU could use a more active HR/VP, since Sweden sees a stronger EU coming from that. Yet many respondents were resigned to the fact that foreign policy is ultimately an intergovernmental affair. The HR/VP will always need to bow to the bigger powers, and any increase in HR/VP activity does not necessarily correlate with less intergovernmentalism. Member states will “call the shots” for the foreseeable future.

To summarise, Swedish officials support a greater role for the HR/VP in foreign policy leadership to improve past problems. But they also seem resigned to the fact that intergovernmentalism still rules — making unified leadership on CFSP matters still quite complicated — and are reluctant to give up additional leadership until the EEAS becomes more firmly established and supranational.

## 4.6 CONCLUSIONS

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On the whole, and with an eye towards relevant theoretical approaches, interviewees in this study generally reported that some degree of ‘Europeanisation’ is taking place. Sweden is seeking to upload policy preferences to the EEAS, especially the issues of disarmament and non-proliferation, with some degree of perceived success. Sweden is also adapting, albeit in fairly minor ways, to the existence of the EEAS, its new actors, and its new routines. Yet Europeanisation should not be overstated – most respondents repeated the mantra that these are ‘early days’, that there is a considerable amount of organisational chaos, and that Sweden is carrying on with its own foreign policy priorities. But virtually all respondents were sympathetic to the EEAS’s plight and wished it success. They see socialisation in terms of a common European diplomatic culture taking place over time, but see little at the current moment.

One clear theme coming out of the interviews was the ongoing intergovernmentalism that surrounds the EEAS, despite the fact that the Lisbon Treaty intended to encourage some degree of ‘communitarisation’. Swedish respondents argued that intergovernmentalism has increased,

because the big three now have a larger platform than under the rotating presidency. But this fault is seen as a result of the nascent nature of the EEAS, suggesting that intergovernmentalism may diminish over time. Indeed, Swedish respondents for this summary expressed a common (and perhaps paradoxical) opinion: Sweden is ready and willing to take a more communautarised approach to foreign policy questions post-Lisbon, but is not willing to take the first step as long as other member states dominate decision-making.

In the future, the Swedish MFA hopes for a clarification of the division of labour between MFAs and the EEAS, on the one hand, and between the EEAS and other Brussels institutions, on the other. This need for clarity is most obvious in terms of representation in third countries and within international organisations. Interviewees remarked that the current confusion is not tenable and will do significant damage to the EU's broader interests. A telling opinion came out of several interviews: the ball for making these changes lies in the "EEAS's court" and national MFAs will not change their delegations or routines until this confusion is sorted out. This is a recurring theme that appears in other member-state studies in this report: the paradox that member-state governments sometimes demand, and at other times resist, EEAS leadership on foreign policy questions.

Thus, in summarising the findings in this case study against the backdrop of the three theoretical perspectives applied, we see: (a) a small degree of Europeanisation taking place, but organisational uncertainties have stalled the process, (b) considerable, even increased, intergovernmentalism owing to the use of a still-evolving EEAS by the big three member states, and (c) very little evidence of policy convergence through socialisation – presumably because such processes are dependent on a 'thick' degree of institutionalisation, and that is a long way off from the present.

## Quantitative data - Sweden

### MFA budget\*

Year **2012**: Total budget: 3,798 mln €, of which:

- Administrative costs: 294.1 mln €

### Number of missions

Total: 98

Outside the EU: 78

Inside the EU: 20 (including Stockholm-based envoys and Honorary Consulates)

### Number of staff employed by the MFA\*

Total: 2,580, of which:

- Staff in missions: 530
- Staff in the Ministry: 750
- Local staff: 1,300

### Number of staff seconded to the EEAS

Total: 10

### Number of arrangements of cooperation/burden-sharing with diplomatic missions of other member states (sharing premises, consular services etc.)

Approximately 16 co-locations, mainly with other Nordic countries, in the following places: Amman, Astana, Bagdad, Berlin, Dar es Salaam, Dhaka, Jakarta, Juba, La Paz, Minsk, Nicosia, Pristina, Sarajevo, Skopje, Tunis and Washington DC.

\* In addition, the Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (Sida) functions as a separate entity: administrative budget: 108 mln €; staff: 730, including 570 in Stockholm and 160 at missions abroad.

Sources: *Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden.*



# Spain and the European External Action Service

*By Ignacio Molina and Alicia Sorroza*

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## 5.1 SPAIN'S EUROPEAN POLICY: INTEGRATIONIST APPROACH

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Spain's position in relation to the European External Action Service (EEAS) should be viewed in the broader context of the country's European policy. Europe has unquestionably been a priority of Spanish foreign policy and even a core element of Spain's national project since the country returned to democracy in 1977. As the philosopher José Ortega y Gasset once said, in light of the highly turbulent nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Spain was in itself a problem and Europe was the solution.

Spain's European policy has evolved over the years and the idea that everything that is good for Europe is good for Spain has had its ups and downs. After a long period of marked Europeanism championed by social-democratic Prime Minister Felipe González (1982-1996) and maintained during the first term of office of conservative Prime Minister José María Aznar (1996-2000), a certain distancing took place. Aznar's second term (2000-2004) saw Spain turn its back to a certain extent on the Brussels-Paris-Berlin axis, preferring instead a more liberal and Atlanticist view that looked more towards Washington and London. The socialist government of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero (2004-2011), by contrast, sought to return Spain to its European origins and its close relationship with France and Germany. However, Zapatero's Europeanism was somewhat rhetorical and, certainly prior to the onset of the eurozone debt crisis, he paid no real attention to Spain's European policy. The eurozone crisis ensured that the European integration process was at the centre of Spain's attention during the first year of Mariano Rajoy's (People's Party) mandate.

Indeed, since accession in 1986, the EU has been the ideal mechanism through which to attempt to solve, or at least normalise, Spain's diverse political and economic problems. Although the euro zone's profound crisis may be altering this reality to a certain extent, Europe still remains the model to follow for the vast majority of Spaniards, regardless of ideological position or regional location. This widespread Europeanism also has implications for the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which considers the EU as the main alliance to which Spain belongs and understands that furthering integration is the main aim of its policy toward Europe.

Spain has almost invariably maintained a Europeanist approach regarding European integration, and, as a result, has supported efforts to create the Common Foreign and Security Policy, which would also help to overcome the decades of international isolation that Spain suffered during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Spanish diplomacy champions a strong EU that plays a meaningful role as a global actor, while recognising that some of its national interests (mainly in Latin America and North Africa) also require national action. As a result, allied with greater Europeanisation ('downloading') of the decision-making process and almost all substantive aspects of its foreign policy, Spain has also sought to 'Hispanicise' the European agenda ('uploading') in these two geographical regions. This initiative produced significant results during the first few years of Spain's EU membership, but it has subsequently dwindled in the context of Spain's relative loss of importance within the EU, which the economic crisis has certainly been exacerbating since 2010.

The launch of the European External Action Service (EEAS) has coincided with a severe international economic crisis that is particularly affecting the euro zone: especially Spain. Although it does not appear to be an opportune moment to define an EU foreign policy, the current situation has, in fact, opened up two windows of opportunity: firstly, the possibility of making progress towards political union for member states that are more committed to saving the euro and, secondly, justifying the carrying out of a root-and-branch review of Spanish diplomacy, which the current government under Mariano Rajoy, in power since December 2011, appears determined to undertake.

## 5.2 SPANISH DIPLOMACY IN A TIME OF CRISIS

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There is very little doubt that the economic crisis is affecting Spain's position in the world and that, in recent years, it has lost relevance as an international actor. In 2008, it was still the eighth largest economy in the world (and therefore its involvement in the G20, of which it is now a permanent guest, appeared justified). Four years on, however, Spain's GDP has fallen to 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> position in the world ranking, as a result of the recession and the rapid rise of other powers such as Brazil, Russia and India. Although it is evident that Spain is experiencing serious problems in terms of loss of relative prosperity, political power and image abroad, the fact remains that it is still in about tenth place in the world in terms of aggregated international presence.<sup>34</sup> Spain has occupied this privileged position since the beginning of the 1990s, when its multinational companies began to expand rapidly, its army increased its participation in missions abroad, its language and culture started to be promoted internationally, millions of immigrants began to arrive, and it became more involved in development cooperation (although this is now diminishing). As a result, and due to its size and level of development, Spain today is a nation that is well-immersed in globalisation, in spite of it not being a global power. It is only the fifth largest country in the EU in terms of economic or demographic weight, and its diplomatic aspirations are typical of a medium-sized power, similar to member states such as Italy, the Netherlands and Poland.

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<sup>34</sup> According to the Elcano Global Presence Index, which uses economic, military and 'soft' presence indicators. In 2011, Spain occupied 11th position in the world, behind Italy and ahead of Australia. See: [www.iepg.es/?lang=en](http://www.iepg.es/?lang=en)



## **Foreign policy priorities**

Spain's foreign policy priorities, beyond Europe itself, are clearly centred on three regions: the United States, Latin America and North Africa. The strategic alliance with the US is a strong relationship, although it has occasionally been politicised and difficult to manage, as a result of some anti-American sentiment among the Spanish population – especially among the Left – and the excessive emphasis that Washington puts on security aspects, either through NATO or bilaterally through the two major US military bases on Spanish soil. Latin America has always been closely linked to Spain through historical ties and common language, and more recently, these links have been strengthened by sustained immigration flows and the expansion of Spanish companies into almost every Latin American country. Spain's close proximity to the Arab countries of North Africa (especially Morocco) also represents a major challenge for Spanish diplomacy, in terms of energy supply, migration flows, organised crime, Islamic radicalisation and even contentious issues that remain unresolved: the decolonisation of Western Sahara, problems with the United Kingdom over Gibraltar, and Morocco's sovereignty claim over the Spanish cities of Ceuta and Melilla. Due to Spain's specific interests in these three regions, certain issues preclude any synergy between Spain and Europe's strategic objectives, and can even produce significant divergence.<sup>35</sup> That said, there would be no particular difficulty in reconciling national interests with those of the CFSP. The Spanish position would consist more of ensuring that the EU pays closer attention to Latin America and the Mediterranean, rather than of defining a reserved domain.

Apart from these three major geographic priorities, Spain has little foreign policy towards the rest of the world and is therefore inclined to entrust to the EU the bulk of its diplomacy in the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa, the former Soviet space and the Asia-Pacific region. It would similarly not resist greater Europeanisation of crisis management, international armed conflicts or so-called 'global issues', such as defending human rights and fighting climate change, regarding which the EU represents a highly effective tool to pursue Spain's markedly pro-multilateral and even pro-UN agenda in these areas. There may, of course, be occasional disagreements – as occurred, for instance, with Spain's non-recognition of Kosovo's independence – but in the vast majority of cases, Spain would support the idea of a common European position and would be willing to defer to it should the role of the EU as a global actor mature. For example, the Spanish Foreign Ministry participated in the work of the 'Future of Europe Group', also called the Westerwelle Group, which was an initiative led by the German foreign minister involving eleven Europeanist member states. The Group's final declaration emphasised that all current components of European external action (including development cooperation, enlargement, neighbourhood policy and migration management) should be better integrated and that the EEAS should be strengthened, and it also suggests the need for more majority decisions on the CFSP and joint representation in international organisations. Spain is also one of the leading countries in the 'European Global Strategy' project, which includes Sweden, Poland and Italy. This project is led by think-tanks from each of the initiating countries, and aims to develop an open and transparent process that welcomes participation from academic, think-tank and practitioner communities. The aim of the European Global Strategy process is to outline a new and wider positive narrative of the EU's role in an uncertain world, in order to promote Europe's shared values while defending its vital interests.

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<sup>35</sup> For example, in the case of the relationship with the US, Spain has its own agenda to promote the Spanish language, which is difficult to share with the EU. In Latin America, due to Spain's economic interests and special political relationship, occasional differences can occur, for example, regarding Cuba's authoritarian regime, against which many member states wish to take a harder line than Spain. And finally, in relation to Morocco, Spain has the difficult task of defending its territorial enclaves in North Africa, but this is not an objective shared by its European partners or even NATO.

Although the main Spanish priority in the EU is solving the eurozone crisis, Spain's participation in these initiatives aimed at formulating a stronger European foreign policy highlight the relevance that the MFA attaches to the need for the EU to become an influential global actor.<sup>36</sup>

Despite this Europeanism and the awareness that Spain has a very limited capacity to promote its own foreign policy, the government faces the foreign policy challenge with some hesitation. First, logical performance-related objections are being reinforced in view of the weakness and disorientation coming from the EU itself as a result of the euro crisis. That is, there are fears that the project of a European foreign policy will not survive its current embryonic stage as a result of growing political mistrust between northern and southern members of the euro zone, or fears over the possible division of the EU between those that participate in the common currency and those that do not. Second, even if the EU were able to overcome its present confusion and promote a strong foreign policy, Spain is a medium-sized member state that does not particularly seem prepared to actively mould it.<sup>37</sup> Right now, defending a strong EEAS remains the official doctrine and the profound conviction of most politicians and Spanish officials. However, it is increasingly common to hear them say that Europeanism can neither be naive nor delegative. The euro crisis and the country's weakness is leading Spain to want more Europe but also to become more aware that Spanish priorities do not always coincide with those prevailing in the EU and that the country, whether due to lack of influence, resources or will, does not play the proactive role in the CFSP that its size and global presence demand.

### 5.3 SPAIN AND THE EEAS

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Since the beginning of the Constitutional Convention and later during the long institutional reform process that resulted in the Treaty of Lisbon, Spain supported an integrationist position regarding the strengthening of the EU as a global actor. However, it did so without a special emphasis and it easily accepted that decision-making in CFSP matters would continue to be governed by intergovernmentalism. In late 2009, Socialist Prime Minister Zapatero did play an important role in the appointment of UK Labour politician Catherine Ashton as High Representative, who was elected to replace her political colleague Javier Solana. That role was extended during the first half of 2010, as Spain was the first member state to hold the rotating Presidency of the Council under the new Lisbon rules. During that transition period, the Spanish Foreign Ministry had to help Ashton chair the new Foreign Affairs Council, to convert the European Commission's external delegations into EU Delegations, to design the European External Action Service (especially facilitating understanding between the Council, the Commission and the Parliament), and to make other adjustments demanded by the Treaty. Despite some coordination problems and Spain's ambitions to seize its moment in the limelight during scheduled international summits, collaboration was good. In fact, the stated priority of the Presidency was to help Europe speak with a single voice in the world.

Since then, various domestic factors (and especially concern over Spain's weak position in the euro zone's public debt crisis) and external factors (the low profile of the High Representative and the slow start-up of the EEAS) were lowering Spain's expectations and interest in strengthening European foreign policy. Although in the summer of 2010, Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos announced a major reorganisation of his Ministry to adapt it to the EEAS, the fact is that this claim only served as

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<sup>36</sup> For more information on the European Global Strategy  
See: [www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/rielcano/EstrategiaGlobalEuropea/](http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/rielcano/EstrategiaGlobalEuropea/)

<sup>37</sup> For example, in the European foreign policy scorecard prepared by the European Council on Foreign Relations, Spain is not among the ten states that currently lead more components of the CFSP. It is listed among the ten "slackers".  
See: [www.ecfr.eu/scorecard/2012](http://www.ecfr.eu/scorecard/2012)

a supporting framework for the first budget cuts of the Ministry and even led to a downgrade of the organisational importance of European affairs in Spanish diplomatic action. When the EEAS actually began its work in December 2010, the Spanish Government, in a similar way to other member states, focused its concern on ensuring that national diplomats were well-represented in EU Delegations and at the Service's headquarters. Spain supported the report presented by the High Representative in December 2011 to the Council, the Commission and the European Parliament on the EEAS's performance during its first year. However, it did not participate in the 'Non-paper on the EEAS' presented that same month by twelve member states interested in improving its performance, due to some disagreements on consular activities and, above all, because the document was prepared in the transition period between the socialist government and the new conservative government.

#### **5.4 TIME FOR A RENEWED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPAIN AND THE EEAS**

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In 2012, when Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy came to power, Spain seemed to revive its interest in exploiting the EEAS actively and in ensuring its "effective and potent" deployment.<sup>38</sup> The Europeanism of Foreign Minister José Manuel García Margallo, a former member of the European Parliament, strongly supports it, along with the deep reconsideration of Spanish foreign policy as a consequence of the rapidly diminishing resources at the disposal of the Ministry, which suffered a 54% budget cut in March 2012.

The Ministry has announced the closure of three consulates in Morocco and Portugal. Spain has 118 bilateral embassies, 10 multilateral ones, and 94 consulates worldwide (several missions are small ones and thus, for example, 47 embassies and 54 consulates currently lack a trade office). The Foreign Ministry is also responsible for the International Cooperation Agency (AECID) with 44 technical cooperation offices and 15 cultural centres. In addition to this, the network of Spanish Government delegations abroad includes 35 tourist offices and 75 Spanish language and culture centres (within the Instituto Cervantes). This means Spain is the fifth largest diplomatic power in the EU.

Strategic plans developed this year to reform the foreign service in general and development cooperation in particular, which is the area where most cuts have focused<sup>39</sup>, recognise the need to seek synergies with the resources and actions of the EU so as to encourage specialisation or the optimal division of labour. These ideas are yet to translate from theory to specific proposals, and the fact is that there has not been a genuine political or administrative assessment of the impact of the EEAS on national diplomacy. However, the government has asked the top officials of the EEAS, Catherine Ashton and Pierre Vimont, to accept the double-hatted role of Spanish national diplomats working for EU Delegations remaining committed part-time to some strictly Spanish functions in countries where Spain does not have representation.

Spain signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the European External Action Service on 10 December 2012 in order to establish a Spanish Embassy on the premises of the EU Delegation to Yemen. This could be the beginning of a new strategy. In principle it is a positive decision, as it is aimed at both maximising Spanish influence abroad and reducing the costs. Economic criteria motivated this decision; nevertheless, it should also respond to a more strategic evaluation connected in particular to reflections on the future of Spanish diplomacy (and foreign policy in

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<sup>38</sup> As it was stated on the first appearance of the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Congress of Deputies (22 February 2012). As mentioned before, the new minister himself has participated in various initiatives to strengthen the CFSP that have taken place in 2012.

<sup>39</sup> Spending in the area of international cooperation has been reduced dramatically from 0.43% of GDP in 2010 to 0.23% in 2012, by far the largest reduction witnessed amongst the OECD's 34 member states (including Greece).

general) in the context of adapting to the new European legal framework and the new capacities assumed by the European Union pursuant to the Lisbon Treaty.

Although Spanish diplomats in third countries are already engaged in a post-Lisbon reality and work closely with EU Delegations, they recognise that there is still a lack of coordination and reluctance to accept that Heads of EU Delegations may blur Spain's visibility on topics or regions considered crucial. As the EEAS has only been established for just over two years, there is no structural pattern and the relationship between the EU Delegations and Spanish diplomatic missions depends largely on the personality and attitude of the respective Delegation Heads and ambassadors. It also depends on the importance that Spain attaches to one area or another. Thus, it is relatively easy to accept a certain subordination to the EEAS in Asia and Africa, where Spanish diplomacy has never had a major impact. By contrast, in Latin America or North Africa, where there is a large presence of Spanish embassies and consulates and where Spain has major economic interests, more autonomy is claimed for national diplomacy, as well as more prominence for Spain within the EEAS. It is no coincidence that a major proportion of seats held by Spaniards within the Service focus on those areas.

Currently, there is no overall assessment of collaboration in the field, because there are varied situations, and yet there are notable cases of good coordination, such as Syria. There is a consensus that the Head of the EU Delegation should become Europe's main representative towards the government of the country in question; and the drafting of joint reports by the Head of EU Delegation and the ambassadors of the member states stands out as very positive. The emphasis so far has been on the flow of information and, in this respect, Spain has supported the implementation of the ACID project, a type of electronic digital signature that allows secure, confidential and fluid communication between Delegations and embassies.

## **5.5 SPANISH PRESENCE IN THE EEAS**

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As mentioned, Spain's main priority in the early stages of the EEAS has been personnel policy or, in the words of Minister Margallo, to "take advantage of the European foreign service to achieve successful participation of our Spanish officials in it. This participation should be checked both at central services in Brussels and in Delegations abroad and also in all higher levels where right now the Spanish presence is very limited". Despite some complaints of alleged mistreatment in this staffing distribution, the truth is that since late 2011, Spaniards have run eleven Delegations (including in important places like Russia, Morocco and Argentina) and occupied 55 places in the Headquarters. In both cases, the number is lower than for Italy or France, but similar to Germany and the UK, which is not a bad situation. Nevertheless, the government did not complain about the absence of Spaniards, but rather about the low number of national diplomats seconded to the EEAS by the member states as part of the one-third quota. Anyway, with the appointments of Bernardino Leon as EU Special Representative (EUSR) for the South Mediterranean and Luis Fernandez de la Peña as one of the 16 Managing Directors (in his case, for Russia, Eastern Neighbourhood and Western Balkans), and also several other senior positions in the EEAS, such as Felix Fernández-Shaw, Head of Division for Coordination of Development Cooperation, Spain's presence is commensurate with its weight.

Within the Foreign Ministry, there is a specific unit to inform and encourage Spanish diplomats who want to apply for posts in the EEAS. Although there is an official stimulus policy, the truth is that there is no additional funding for it, and candidates are facing potential informal impediments, because it is not certain that the rotation will benefit their career when they return to the Spanish Foreign Service. This may cause some segmentation between diplomats with an 'Europeanised'

career and those who lack that. Another problem is the imbalance in geographical areas, with a major Spanish presence in relations with Latin America, but very minor in areas such as the Balkans and the Maghreb.

Regarding the review of the EEAS foreseen for the first half of 2013, Spain claims that this is a good opportunity to strengthen the European diplomatic service, which is seen as central to ensuring the coherent and comprehensive external action of the EU. It seems inevitable that cooperation between all the actors involved in this field will have to be improved, especially with the Commission, in areas such as the Neighbourhood Policy or multi-year programming in the area of cooperation and development. There is also a need to review the relationship between the HR/VP and the College of Commissioners. Enhancing the capabilities of the network of EU Delegations and especially their relationship with member-state embassies is a fundamental issue for Spain. At the same time as pushing for the EEAS's role to be strengthened (for example in international negotiation processes at both regional and multilateral levels), Spain is also calling for mechanisms to allow national diplomats to become more and better integrated into the EEAS.

Spain intends to find enough consensus between several member states on these ideas and many other issues (such as EU crisis management and the CSDP), and they could feature in a collective non-paper addressed to the HR/VP.

## **5.6 CONCLUSIONS**

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Almost three years after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty and a decade since efforts to strengthen the CFSP began, Spanish foreign policy is still committed to the aim that the EU should become a global player. However, the eurozone crisis and the consequent loss of trust between EU member states and in the integration project itself, combined with the slow deployment of the European External Action Service and the loss of influence of Spanish diplomacy, have lowered that enthusiasm.

In a very complex European and international context, the establishment of fruitful relations with the EEAS and a win-win game (going beyond the mere presence of Spanish citizens in the Service), both in Brussels and in EU Delegations, appears fundamental not only for the Spanish but also for European foreign policy, which cannot be understood or considered without taking into account the complex network of relations and interests of its member states. However, this is only one element and must be combined with a much broader process related to the need to rethink Spain's role in the world and its external action beyond the present crisis, a consideration that cannot be separated from another European discussion of great relevance: the (political) future of the European Union.

## **Quantitative data – Spain**

### **MFA budget**

Year **2012**: Total budget: 1,680.15 mln €, of which:

- Administrative costs: 864 mln €

Year **2011**: Total budget: 2,747.73 mln €

### **Number of missions**

Total: 221

### **Number of staff employed by the MFA**

Total: 5,701 of which:

- Diplomatic officials: 807
- Non diplomatic officials: 1,609
- Contracted staff: 3,285

### **Number of staff seconded to the EEAS**

Total of seconded national diplomats: 13

### **Number of arrangements of cooperation/burden-sharing with diplomatic missions of other member states (sharing premises, consular services etc.)**

Spain signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the EEAS on 10 December 2012 in order to establish a Spanish Embassy on the premises of the EU Delegation in Yemen.

*Sources: Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Spain; European External Action Service (2012), 'Staffing in the EEAS', Brussels.*

# Finland and the European External Action Service

**By Kristi Raik**

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## 6.1 INTRODUCTION

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Finland's EU accession in 1995 was part of a major post-Cold War re-ordering of the European security space. During the Cold War era, Finnish foreign policy had been dominated by efforts to defend the country's sovereignty in the shadow of the dominant Soviet Union, with adaptive neutrality as its backbone. EU membership marked a "complete makeover" of foreign policy<sup>40</sup>, including a strong Western orientation and the build-up of a more global outreach. There was strong continuity, however, of predominant security concerns, which were among the Finnish political elite and the broader public's main motivations for joining the EU, and which found a new expression in Finland's active contribution to a common EU policy on Russia during its first years of membership.

As a new member state, Finland sought to make a leap from Europe's periphery to the core. It soon won the reputation of a model pupil in the EU, being very integration-minded, but also pragmatic and constructive. Its strong pro-integration stance, including support for the Community method and a strong European Commission, placed it close to the Benelux countries during the second half of the 1990s. In the field of foreign policy, the first 5-7 years of membership were characterised by "policy

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<sup>40</sup> Tiilikainen, T. (2006), 'Ulko- ja turvallisuuspolitiikka: Suomen linjan täydellinen muodonmuutos', in T. Raunio and J. Saari (eds.), Eurooppalaistuminen. Suomen sopeutuminen Euroopan integraatioon, Gaudeamus, Helsinki, pp. 206-233.

assimilation”.<sup>41</sup> Neutrality was replaced with military non-alliance in order to adapt Finnish security and defence policy to EU membership. Despite some hesitation and ambiguity about taking part in a common security and defence policy<sup>42</sup>, Finland (together with Sweden) became an active supporter of the ESDP/CSDP, trying to shape it as an alternative to the traditional military conception of security, notably by developing the EU’s civilian crisis management capacity. As an EU member, Finland also emphasised multilateralism and the strengthening of a norms-based international order.

Since the early 2000s, this initial enthusiasm for the EU has gradually been giving way to more critical attitudes – although one should also note that the broader public was never quite as pro-integrationist as the leading political elite used to be in the late 1990s. The “big bang” victory of the Eurosceptic populist True Finns party in the 2011 parliamentary elections shook the pro-EU consensus of the political elite and contributed to an overall shift in public discourse towards criticism of the EU. Like elsewhere in Europe (and beyond), the economic crisis has been feeding more doubtful attitudes towards the Union. Finland’s tough line on measures to tackle the crisis (in particular its insistence on attaching collateral to bailouts of eurozone countries) has changed the country’s image from that of a model pupil to one of a troublemaker.

## **6.2 INTERPLAY OF NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND EU FOREIGN POLICY**

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Since the 1990s, Finland has been a strong supporter of the CFSP, while adapting its foreign policy priorities and structures in accordance with the common goals and activities of the EU. In recent years, however, the strong EU orientation of Finnish foreign policy has been mitigated by a degree of re-nationalisation. In principle, Finland’s support for strengthening common EU policies and structures has remained unchanged, but the level of expectation has been scaled down. Dissatisfaction with the lack of unity and coherence in the EU has underscored the perception that Finland needs to maintain strong national diplomatic structures and the ability to safeguard its specific national interests. There is a widely-shared view among the foreign policy elite that the EU’s common foreign policy can bring added value to national diplomacy and can to some degree be used as an arena and framework for promoting national priorities, but it cannot replace national foreign policy. While Finland has shown a relatively strong commitment to common EU positions and actions – and expects a similar commitment from other member states – it also stresses the intergovernmental nature of common foreign policy, the primacy of national structures and the importance of national control.

The establishment of the EEAS does not bring substantial changes to Finnish foreign policy, but Finland expects a greater consistency and coherence in the EU’s global activity to benefit member states. Relations with Russia are an inevitable priority of Finnish foreign policy and have consistently been among the main issues promoted by Finland in the EU. As an example of shifting attitudes towards EU foreign policy, nurturing good bilateral relations with Russia has retained prominence over the past few years, although the framework of EU-Russia relations has remained important for Finland. The EU provides a buttress and an umbrella in dealings with Russia and increases security through mitigating domination by a strong partner, but membership does not reduce the need for national diplomacy. The EU has not always been effective in helping to defend Finnish interests *vis-à-vis* Russia, for example on issues like Siberian overflights or Russian customs duties on wood

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<sup>41</sup> Haukkala, H. and Ojanen, H. (2011), ‘The Europeanization of Finnish Foreign Policy: Pendulum Swings in Slow Motion’, in Wong, R. and Hill, C. (eds.) *National and European Foreign Policies: Towards Europeanization*, Routledge, London and New York, pp. 149-166.

<sup>42</sup> Palosaari, T. (2011), ‘The Art of Adaptation: A Study on the Europeanization of Finland’s Foreign and Security Policy’, Tampere Peace Research Institute, TAPRI Studies in Peace and Conflict Research No. 96, 2011, Tampere University Press.



and timber, which harm Finnish commercial interests. Finland has found that it has not always been easy to put issues of national concern on the agenda of EU-Russia relations. The increased continuity ushered in by the Lisbon Treaty (through the replacement of most of the tasks of the rotating Council Presidency with permanent structures) has had a tentative positive effect in this regard. However, with continuing intergovernmental decision-making and differing positions among member states, it remains just as difficult as before to pursue strategic discussion and develop EU-Russia relations in a comprehensive manner.

Finland has actively sought to tie Russia to regional structures, using the EU to advance this goal. The Northern Dimension, which was initiated by Finland in the late 1990s as its most prominent contribution to EU-Russia relations, has since then become a rather marginal instrument of regional cooperation and can hardly be described as a major success. Arctic cooperation is another regional priority of increasing importance in which Finland would like to see stronger EU involvement.

One recent example of adaptation to common EU policies is Finland's changed approach to the EU's Eastern neighbourhood and Central Asia – a region that is not among the top national priorities and not vital for national security. Finland's interest in the region increased after the 2004 "big bang" enlargement, in parallel with EU efforts to develop new policies towards countries that became geographically closer and strategically more important to the Union. Finland has supported building closer ties with the region, including through the Eastern Partnership policy, but (unlike Sweden) it has not been among the most active proponents of this new initiative. Finland has contributed rather actively to the development of an EU strategy for Central Asia. As a reflection of the ENP, Finland created its own Wider Europe Initiative for Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Some of Finland's main priorities regarding the EU's global role fall at least partly outside the EEAS's mandate. Finland stresses the need for more coordinated use of different EU foreign policy instruments. It wishes to strengthen EU economic diplomacy and expects to benefit more from its market access strategy in future. While trade promotion as such obviously cannot be delegated to the EU, and competition is hardening among member states for market access outside Europe, Finland sees an important role for the EU in ensuring the respect of common rules and standards and fighting against protectionism. Contributing to EU development policy is also high on the Finnish foreign policy agenda (Finland channels a fifth of its development assistance through the EU). The importance of these areas for Finland explains its frustration over the continued fragmentation of EU external relations between competing institutions and the unhelpful approach of the Commission during the early days of the EEAS. Inter-institutional competition is seen as a significant factor preventing the full harnessing of the potential of EU foreign policy.

### **6.3 CHANGES TO THE ORGANISATION AND RESOURCES OF FINNISH DIPLOMACY**

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EU accession was the main motivator of a major restructuring of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1998.<sup>43</sup> The structure that has been in place since then includes a functional division of political, external economic relations and development policy departments, and a parallel geographical division of four departments (Europe; Russia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia; the Americas and Asia; and Africa and the Middle East). General coordination of EU affairs was initially the responsibility of the MFA, but in 2000 the EU Secretariat of the Ministry was transferred to the Prime

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<sup>43</sup> Antola, E. (2005), 'Finland', in Hocking, B. and Spence, D. (eds.), *Foreign Ministries in the European Union*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, pp. 95-110.

Minister's Office, so as to better correspond to the all-encompassing nature of EU affairs. No major changes to the current structure are foreseen.

The tasks of the MFA's Europe department include dealing with general EU matters jointly with the Prime Minister's Office as well as coordinating EU matters within the Ministry. Coordination of CFSP matters belongs to the CFSP unit of the political department, while the lion's share of the work is carried out mainly by the relevant geographical departments.

The total number of Finland's diplomatic representations increased considerably in the 1990s, but remained stable in the 2000s. The first decade of the millennium may well have been the historical highpoint in terms of the size of the Finnish diplomatic network. In recent years, the MFA has been under constant pressure to reduce the cost of diplomatic representation abroad, with few other efficient options than closing down missions. The majority of representations operate with minimal resources and have only 1-2 diplomatic staff. Some savings have been made by increasing the share of locally-hired staff. In 2011-2013, nine representations were closed down, including three embassies (in Caracas, Manila and Islamabad), but some new missions were also opened. The total number of missions will fall from 98 to 92, and about five more missions are expected to face closure in the coming years.

The geographical focus of the diplomatic network is strongly in Europe, where more than one third (36) of Finnish representations are located. However, there is demand – created by commercial interests, development policy and the increased mobility of Finnish citizens – to strengthen Finland's global presence outside Europe. Cuts to the European network, in particular in EU member states, have therefore been considered. However, bilateral diplomacy with other member states has actually become more intense in the past few years due to the economic crisis, which has increased the demand for reporting from other EU capitals.

The administrative budget of the MFA is being gradually reduced, and the planned average pace of cuts is 13 million euros per year in the period 2012-2016. The main areas of potential savings, as identified by the MFA, include the management of development assistance (the total volume of aid should be increased, but focused on fewer countries and administered more efficiently) and the re-organisation of diplomatic representations.

#### **6.4 FINNISH VIEWS ON THE FUNCTIONING OF THE EEAS**

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Finland has been among the most supportive countries of the EEAS and the HR/VP. It shared the criticisms of many other member states regarding the initial difficulties faced by the new structures (as expressed in the non-paper by 12 countries of 8 December 2011), but continues to regard the strengthening of the EEAS as an important priority. The Finnish diplomatic elite sees considerable potential benefits in a truly more united and coherent EU foreign policy, but is not overly optimistic about the short-term perspectives. The atmosphere among member states has become less favourable to a truly common foreign policy – as expressed by Foreign Minister Tuomioja: “Member states are less willing to work together than before. The High Representative is doing her best in these circumstances. She is totally dependent on member states' willingness to commit.”<sup>44</sup> Some diplomats have privately expressed strong criticism of large member states for failing to coordinate national moves at EU level and not allowing the HR/VP and EEAS to take leadership. The rise of nationalism and confrontation inside the EU has contributed to sceptical and cautious attitudes towards the potential of the EEAS.

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<sup>44</sup> Agence Europe, 9 March 2012.

Finland itself has behaved constructively in the field of foreign policy, but foreign policy does not operate in a vacuum. Finland's stubborn and sometimes short-sighted positions in handling the debt crisis have contributed to the overall confrontational mood in the EU.

At this stage, the position of the Finnish MFA is that it is too early to assess whether any of its functions can be transferred to the EEAS. So far, many of the diplomats who work on EU-related issues consider their workload to have increased because the EEAS has increased the need for coordination. Others whose work is not directly related to the EEAS have not experienced and mostly do not expect any change in their work. Contacts between the EEAS Headquarters and the Finnish MFA are considered to function in a satisfactory manner, with no considerable changes compared to pre-Lisbon times. In the field, the EU Delegations have brought about more notable change in terms of more frequent contacts and coordination. According to some Finnish diplomats, the Finnish side could be more active in contacting colleagues in the EEAS and trying to promote Finnish positions.

There are a number of areas and instruments that, from the Finnish perspective, would bring added value to national diplomacy and help to deliver the potential of the EEAS.

The contribution of EU Delegations is seen as significant and harbouring potential to increase their different functions. Having a limited number of missions itself, Finland supports the largest possible network of EU Delegations. It gives an overall positive assessment of the role of EU Delegations in taking on a new coordinating role on the ground, although there has been some variation depending on location and personalities. There have been more negative and controversial experiences with regard to EU missions to international organisations, where member states have been keener to retain their positions. In third countries, EU Delegations have made the EU a more important framework for national diplomats. The other side of the coin is that the visibility and access of national diplomats from smaller member states is expected to weaken as the EU Delegations establish their new role. In pre-Lisbon times, the rotating presidency was particularly important for the embassies of small and mid-sized member states in terms of giving them the opportunity to upgrade their standing for six months by representing locally the whole EU.

Although the Finnish MFA believes that Finland benefits from the EU Delegations, it holds the position that these do not reduce the need for and cannot replace national representation. The reasons for cuts to the national diplomatic network do not lie with the EU, but stem from domestic financial constraints and shifting priorities. The national network of missions continues to be designed on the basis of national needs. However, if some missions need to be closed down (for national reasons), then the existence of EU Delegations can help to compensate for that loss. For example, Finland is interested in the possibility of locating laptop-diplomats in EU Delegations and is negotiating with the EEAS to place a Finnish diplomat in the EU Delegation in Bogota. On the one hand, such arrangements can reduce the detrimental effects of closing down national missions. On the other hand, if there is a national need to open a new mission, but no resources to do so, then laptop-diplomats in EU Delegations may be the next-best option. Finland supports the establishment of clear rules for locating national laptop-diplomats in EU Delegations and wishes to avoid imposing an excessive additional administrative burden on the EEAS.

At the same time, Finland has engaged in many co-location arrangements with the other Nordic countries (14 in operation in 2012), based on a framework agreement that lays down the principles and responsibilities of each side. Such cooperation is limited to practical aspects (shared premises, equipment, possibly security services), whereas substantive work remains national. The motivation is purely pragmatic, based on financial cost-benefit calculations. However, a certain level of trust is a precondition of co-locations. The success of these arrangements may contribute to a shift in thinking in

that diplomatic representation might no longer be seen in strictly national terms, but instead managed in cooperation with close partners. Finland has no preference in principle for either the Nordic or EU framework, but makes decisions on a case-by-case basis, according to financial assessment.

Reporting from EU Delegations and from Headquarters in Brussels is another important contribution of the EEAS that should be strengthened. Again, the Finnish MFA does not see this as a replacement of national reporting, but as added value. So far Finland has not been satisfied with the degree of information-sharing and reporting by the EEAS, in particular regarding the activities of the HR/VP. There have been technical obstacles, but also a lack of resources and little culture of transparency.

Finland expects a stronger contribution from EU Delegations in terms of economic diplomacy, in line with the overall Finnish priorities described above. It is also interested in developing EU Delegations' capacity to provide consular services and regrets the resistance of some member states in this area. Apart from the practical value, this would help to increase the legitimacy of the EEAS and the EU in the eyes of citizens. Finland is aware that the EEAS currently lacks the necessary resources to take on consular functions, and does not expect quick progress in this area.

Finland has been a strong supporter of a new EU foreign and security policy strategy, seeing it as a means to strengthen the EEAS. It has argued in favour of not just updating the European Security Strategy of 2003, but also of developing a truly new and comprehensive strategy encompassing the different actors and instruments of EU external relations. It has also suggested that the sense of ownership towards the EEAS among member states could be strengthened via the close involvement of the latter in preparing a new Strategy. However, Finland became somewhat side-tracked in the debate over the Strategy, as it was surprised by a joint initiative by four member states (Sweden, Poland, Spain and Italy) unveiled in July 2012, aimed at creating a 'European Global Strategy'.

## **6.5 FINNS IN THE EEAS**

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The Finnish MFA has been disappointed by its lack of success in posting national diplomats to the EEAS, although it has put forward several highly qualified candidates. In particular, Finland is disappointed not to have secured a Head of Delegation position. (However, the EU Delegation in Reykjavik is led by a Finn who was part of the 'en bloc' transfer from the European Commission to the EEAS.) The most significant position held by a Finn is that of Director of the EU Situation Centre. There are also two Finns among the chairs of CFSP Working Groups (CivCom and COEST). The meagre results are said to have reduced Finnish diplomats' eagerness to apply. Several Finnish diplomats consider the lack of success to have been the fault of Finland's overly timid approach to promoting its candidates. Finland has strongly stressed merit-based recruitment, but the perception among Finnish diplomats is that recruitment has not been fully merit-based, and that merit alone is not enough unless it is backed by active lobbying from national structures. There are cultural differences between member states with regard to the promotion of national candidates, which are seen to have worked to Finland's disadvantage.

That said, the official position of the MFA is that it is very important to promote Finnish candidates to positions in the EEAS. It is also regarded as important for them to return and bring new perspectives and experiences to national structures. At the same time, from the point of view of the MFA, it is a problem if the best people move to the EEAS and leave gaps that need to be filled either by increasing the workload of existing staff or by new recruitment. Thus far, though, the number of people who have left has been so small that it has only been a minor problem. Furthermore, some of the people who move to the EEAS are expected never to return as a result of having found more

challenging and better-paid jobs in the EU. There is thus a danger that the EEAS will remain distant from national MFAs due to limited circulation of staff. It is acknowledged that, in order for the EEAS to contribute to a common European diplomatic culture, it is important to think of ways to promote movement of staff in both directions, from national MFAs to the EEAS and back.

On the whole, Finnish diplomats have not been overly enthusiastic about the chance to apply to join the EEAS. There has been more interest among young staff members than their more senior colleagues, but also hesitation and concern about the impact that serving in the EEAS would have on their career prospects upon returning to the MFA. The formal position of the MFA is that EEAS experience is on a par with national service, but many diplomats reckon that being away from the national organisation may have a negative impact on their career.

MFA staff describe Finns in the EEAS (and other EU institutions) as important contact points, and the Ministry keeps track of all Finnish nationals serving in the EEAS. Yet several Finnish diplomats consider that Finland nurtures less active contacts between national institutions and fellow citizens serving in the EU than many other member states, and that it is more timid or passive in making use of Finnish civil servants in EU structures. On the other hand, according to some assessments, Finnish nationals employed in EU institutions are perhaps more likely to shift their loyalty to their employer and place relatively little emphasis on national networks, which implies, for example, taking a more restrained approach to sharing sensitive information with national contacts outside one's own institution.

The MFA stresses that it respects EU staff members' loyalty to their employer and regards the use of its own nationals for the pursuit of specific national positions as inappropriate. This reflects the Finnish culture of respect for rules: EU staff members are there to serve the EU as a whole. Again, there are cultural differences that may not always work to Finland's advantage in the EU context, where member states often use their own nationals as sources of information and channels of influence. In a positive reading, Finland tries to make its contribution to the EU's administrative culture and to transfer its well-functioning model to the EU. In any case, there is no doubt that experience in the EU institutions has an Europeanising effect on individual Finnish diplomats, as they learn to operate in the multi-national community and complex institutional setting of the EU.

## **6.6 NEED FOR LEADERSHIP**

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Lack of leadership stands out as a major problem of EU foreign policy in discussions with Finnish diplomats. However, the Finns point the finger at member states rather than the EEAS/HR/VP. The Finnish foreign policy leadership has signalled readiness to accept reduced visibility for the sake of common EU representation, but Finland is concerned about the weakened commitment of many other member states. Other EU institutions – the Commission as well as the European Council – have also competed with the EEAS to the detriment of the common European interest. Finnish diplomats see the need to address the role of the European Council in the field of external relations, which is currently detached from foreign policy structures and can produce surprising outcomes that may undermine the daily work done of the EEAS and MFAs.

Finland expects the EEAS to be more active in taking the initiative, steering debates and showing leadership, including in crisis situations. It sees considerable scope to strengthen the leadership role of the EEAS in the current treaty framework. Among other things, Finland sees room for improvement in the preparation of FAC meetings, although there have already been some positive developments since the non-paper of December 2011. Stronger leadership in agenda-setting and the definition of priorities is one of the expectations of the Finnish MFA. For example, the agendas of

Foreign Affairs Councils have generally been too long, which has left little time for in-depth debate. Finland has also criticised the very late distribution of documents for the FAC meetings and has seen this practice as part of power game whereby those member states that have not been involved in the preparatory process are left with very little time to prepare their positions.

In order to share the heavy workload of the HR/VP and also strengthen the ownership of member states, Finland supports the idea of using foreign ministers to replace the HR/VP for specific tasks. Finland has also raised this issue with the HR/VP. Lack of trust among member states is likely to limit the opportunities to apply this idea. Delegating certain issues from the EEAS to member states may also be undesirable for member states that wish to promote these issues. For example, leaving the Northern Dimension to Finland and the Eastern Partnership to Poland would be likely to downgrade the importance of these issues within the EU framework and in the eyes of outsiders.

## **6.7 CONCLUSIONS**

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Finnish foreign policy went through a period of strong adaptation to EU membership in the latter half of the 1990s. Both the structures of the MFA and the substance of Finnish diplomacy were Europeanised to a considerable degree, which was in line with the country's broader pro-integrationist EU policy. The importance of the EU framework for national foreign policy has not changed with the establishment of the EEAS. However, the rather optimistic pro-EU attitude of the late 1990s has been replaced with a more cautious and critical approach, reflecting both the difficult political atmosphere in the EU caused by the economic crisis and the shift in the domestic political landscape as a result of the rise of the Eurosceptic 'True Finns' party.

While Finland has been among the strongest supporters of the EEAS and the new HR/VP, one can discern a degree of contradiction in Finnish views and expectations towards the EEAS. Despite their high expectations, goodwill and support, Finnish diplomats maintain a strongly national perspective on foreign policy and stress what they see as the irreplaceable role of national diplomacy. They admit, for example, that common representation outside the EU, by EU Delegations, weakens the role of national diplomats on the ground, but at the same time they are unwilling to link the ongoing reductions of the national diplomatic network to the strengthening of EU Delegations. They expect leadership from the HR/VP/EEAS, but emphasise national control and intergovernmental decision-making. In practice, it is not easy to make such views compatible, with the expectation of a more united European presence in the world.

Adherence to intergovernmentalism is mitigated, however, by a rather high level of convergence and commitment to common positions and actions. On the whole, Finnish diplomats themselves perceive Finland's approach as adaptive rather than proactive, and many call for improvements to the ability of the national diplomatic machinery to influence EU policymaking and to upload national positions to the EU agenda.

A lot of the hesitation towards the EEAS has to do with the fact that the Service is still under construction and has to prove its value before it can be figured in to national planning of foreign policy structures and resources. A stronger sense of ownership and trust is probably also necessary for greater synergies and full use of the EEAS's potential by Finland. Being involved in the structures and processes of EU diplomacy is important for the Finnish MFA and is seen to contribute to elite socialisation and the strengthening of a European outlook alongside the national one.

## Quantitative data - Finland

### MFA budget

Year **2012**: Total budget: 1,394 mln €, of which:

- Administrative costs: 211 mln €

Year **2011**: Total budget: 1,268 mln €, of which:

- Administrative costs: 200 mln €

Year **2010**: Total budget: 1,174 mln €, of which:

- Administrative costs: 205 mln €

### Number of missions

Year **2013**: Total: 92, of which:

- Embassies to EU member states (excluding Malta): 25

Year **2011**: Total: 98

### Number of staff employed by the MFA

Total: 2,704, of which:

- Staff in missions: 565
- Staff in the Ministry: 945
- Local staff: 1,194

### Number of staff seconded to the EEAS

Total number of Finnish nationals: 25 (AD level), including:

- 8 seconded national diplomats (not all from MFA, e.g. Head of the Joint European Union Situation Centre, SITCEN)
- 5 director level, including 1 Head of Mission (HoM)

### Number of arrangements of cooperation/burden-sharing with diplomatic missions of other member states (sharing premises, consular services etc.)

14 co-location arrangements with other Nordic countries and numerous cooperation arrangements on visa issues with Nordic countries, Estonia and other Schengen countries.

*Sources: Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 'Ulkoasiainministeriön talousarvioehdotus vuodelle 2012'; 'Ulkoasiainministeriön toiminta- ja taloussuunnitelma sekä kehusehdotus 2012-2015'.*





# Poland and the European External Action Service

*By Grzegorz Gromadzki*

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## 7.1 POLISH FOREIGN POLICY

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The priorities and dimensions of Polish foreign policy have lacked clarity since Poland's entry into the EU in 2004. In the 1990s (from 1993 if not before) there were clear goals in its foreign policy: accession to NATO and the EU, along with the largest possible number of other post-communist countries (the slogan 'return to the West' was popular among politicians and society at large) and good relations with all new neighbours, including unified Germany, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, and post-Soviet countries Belarus, Lithuania, Russia and Ukraine. Therefore the following three dimensions of foreign policy were perceived as priorities: 1) European policy (entry into the EU); 2) transatlantic relations (NATO membership and close relations with the US), and; 3) policy towards Eastern neighbours (Ukraine, Belarus and Russia). There was consensus among all the main political forces over these main goals, and first of all entry into NATO and the EU.

Now the situation is more complex and unclear because the primary and obvious goals – EU and NATO membership – have been achieved and a new strategy is needed. The end of consensus in the Polish political class about foreign policy is visible. There are fundamental differences between the two main parties, PO (Civic Platform) and PIS (Law and Justice), on the majority of foreign policy issues, first of all on EU affairs and policy towards Russia. The PO is rather Euro-enthusiastic, while the PIS is rather Eurosceptic; the PO is open to cooperation with Russia, but the PIS prefers an assertive approach to Russia – particularly since the Smolensk plane crash of 2010, but this position was also evident earlier.

The current government (a coalition of the PO and the PSL; the Polish Peasants' Party), in power since autumn 2007, has supported the three main priorities identified above, but in a somewhat modified form. European policy remains the key issue but is now perceived as something between foreign and domestic policy. One could say that there is a growing understanding of this nature of EU policy, which is a positive process. Poland's role in the EU is still unclear. There is an ambivalent situation because on the one hand Poland's position within the EU has strengthened during the last five years but on the other hand, some degree of marginalisation in the next few years is inevitable because Poland is outside the euro zone. Yet in general, the government supports further political and economic integration within the EU.

Transatlantic relations are still crucial for Poland, but the current government presents a more pragmatic approach towards the US than previous governments. The Polish authorities understand that the main interests of the US are located in other regions than Europe, therefore Polish expectations *vis-à-vis* the US have lowered. But this does not mean that Poland is no longer interested in strong transatlantic links and a significant US military presence in Europe. Politicians from the ruling coalition and Polish diplomats know that Poland's attractiveness to the US depends on Poland's position in the EU and relations with big member states, Germany first of all. Therefore Poland's significance for the US can be built up by strengthening Poland's role in the EU.

Under the current government, policy towards the country's Eastern neighbours has become more pragmatic and a realistic approach prevails. There is significant disappointment regarding Ukraine and the current political situation in that country. Relations with Belarus can be described as being in a state of negative status quo. Warsaw is now paying more attention to Moldova (which was neglected in the 1990s and early 2000s). Relations with Russia have improved but without a breakthrough. However, it should be noted that the European integration of East European countries – and particularly Ukraine – is still a crucial long-term goal for Poland.

To sum up, Poland's foreign policy is rather provincial, focused on regional issues (notably Eastern Europe) plus transatlantic relations. Engagement in global affairs – Iraq and Afghanistan – was not driven by the 'global responsibility' of Poland but rather by the necessity to prove that Poland is a reliable partner and ally for the US and in NATO, which in the opinion of many Polish politicians and diplomats is indispensable for Poland's security.

## **7.2 CHANGES IN NATIONAL PRIORITIES, STRUCTURES AND RESOURCES OF POLISH DIPLOMACY**

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Poland would like to play a more important role within the EU, and a non-provincial, more differentiated and multidimensional foreign policy would be a significant asset for achieving this goal. This way of thinking is more and more widespread among politicians and diplomats. However, there is still a relatively strong group of diplomats who are 'conservative', 'provincial' and persuaded that Poland should focus on issues that are vital to its security and therefore should not waste limited resources on issues other than the three main priorities (EU affairs, transatlantic relations, and Eastern Europe). But it seems that the government (and MFA) would like to add new dimensions to Poland's foreign policy while preserving the three old priorities.

Stronger involvement in policy towards the Arab world would be one of the new dimensions. Poland belongs to the Libya Contact Group/Friends of Libya. Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski visited Benghazi on 11 May 2011 as the first senior government representative from the Contact Group. However, Poland refused to take part in the military operation in Libya. Poland would also like to

export around the world its know-how on the democratic transition process, but its financial resources are modest and this dimension of foreign policy can be hampered by the economic interests of Poland in many countries in different regions. Therefore one can say that there is still more rhetoric than substance in these new dimensions of Polish foreign policy. The MFA would like to introduce more economic aspects to foreign policy. Relations with China could be seen in this context. Poland is perceived by China as a potential main political and economic partner in the Eastern part of the EU.

### ***Ambivalence about the CFSP***

The creation of the EEAS is not an important factor in Poland's efforts to refresh its foreign policy. This absence of the EEAS from strategic thinking about the priorities of Polish foreign policy is caused *inter alia* by strong doubts about the CFSP. The opinion that the CSFP does not really exist and that there is no serious discussion in the EU over how to achieve unity is a popular one among Polish diplomats.

Some add that in the EU there is no belief in the CFSP, above all among the big member states but also some small ones like Cyprus (which is receiving financial aid from Russia). They underline that the EU lacks a coherent policy towards important and difficult partners – Russia for example. Predictions about the future of the CFSP are rather pessimistic, and many Polish diplomats fear the nationalisation of member states' foreign policies.

On the other hand, there is a deep understanding that the CFSP acts as leverage for Poland's foreign policy goals, particularly in Eastern Europe. Fruitful cooperation between the Polish authorities and High Representative for the CFSP Javier Solana during the Orange Revolution in Ukraine in 2004 provided the first proof of that. Therefore Poland (along with Sweden) proposed the Eastern Partnership – the first political concept for the EU drafted by Poland as a member state. Some Polish diplomats note that Poland has also improved its position in the EU through engagement in the CFSP, and its interests frequently coincide with the EU position. But there is a tendency to take from the CFSP only what is useful – in an *à la carte* manner.

### ***Structure and resources of the MFA***

Two aspects of structural change in the MFA seem to be important in the context of the EEAS. Firstly, the place of the CFSP within the MFA, and secondly, changes to the network of diplomatic missions.

A new Bureau of the Political Director was created in summer 2012. This new unit includes the former Department of Common Foreign and Security Policy and part of the Bureau of Human Resources (the latter is now the Division for Employment in International Institutions and Organisations, which is responsible *inter alia* for the secondment of Polish diplomats to the EEAS).

The former Department of Common Foreign and Security Policy used to handle matters related to Poland's participation in the CFSP. It offered substantive support to the representatives of Poland attending the Foreign Affairs Council meeting, COREPER II, the Political and Security Committee, the Working Party of Foreign Relations Counsellors (RELEX), and to the Political Director and European Correspondent of the MFA.

Important changes to the Polish diplomatic missions' network took place in 2008-2009, at the instigation of the then new government and the new minister of foreign affairs, Radosław Sikorski.

Eighteen embassies and consulates general were closed (in Casablanca, Dakar, Dar es Salaam, Dhaka, Panama City, Rio de Janeiro, Sana'a, Benghazi, Lagos, Manila, Phnom Penh, Vientiane, Harare, Montevideo, Leipzig, Kinshasa, San José, and Ulaanbaatar). At the same time, new Polish missions were opened in Ashgabat, Kabul, Podgorica, Ramallah and Manchester. A bit later two new consulates were opened in Ukraine (Vinnytsia in 2010 and Sevastopol in 2011). These changes were introduced without a general strategy or a long-term vision (but the new missions in Ukraine are a part of the long-term strategy of opening new consulates in Eastern Europe that has been pursued for years) and were not directly linked to the establishment of the EEAS. The Polish embassy in Ulaanbaatar has been an interesting case. The embassy was opened in 1960, closed in 1995, reopened in 1999 and closed again in 2009. It is worth noting that the EU does not have a Delegation there.

The economic crisis is the main factor behind the reduction of the network of missions. The MFA follows four main criteria for maintaining diplomatic missions: i) political interests; ii) economic interests (trade, investments); iii) a Polish minority or a noticeable group of Poles living in the given country, and; iv) historical ties.

Polish diplomats strongly support the idea of establishing common embassies with EU member states. So far there is only a Višegrad house in Cape Town, which is used by diplomats of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, and the Polish embassy in Algiers is located on the premises of the Swedish embassy. Polish diplomats are interested in the possibility that EU Delegations in third countries where there are no Polish embassies could be used by Polish laptop-diplomats. Many Polish diplomats think that 'laptop diplomacy' will be an important option in the future.

The Polish MFA's budget is modest in comparison with those of big member states. In 2011 it was 958 mln PLN, or 0.62% of the state budget (it should be noted that part of the spending of the Polish EU Presidency was included in the budget). Almost 60% was spent on Polish diplomatic missions abroad. The budget plan for 2012 is even smaller: 1,750 mln PLN. The floating exchange rate is a big source of problems, because two-thirds of payments are made in foreign currencies (especially EUR and USD). This creates difficulties in planning expenditure. Therefore a significant reserve is needed or cuts during the fiscal year are inevitable. The weak PLN in recent years has created a significant deficit in the MFA budget. In 2011 the initial budget was 1,823 mln PLN, but due to a weaker PLN than anticipated by the MFA, the final budget was 1,958 mln PLN.

### **7.3 EUROPEAN FOREIGN POLICY LEADERSHIP**

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#### ***The rotating presidency. Poland's experience***

In the second half of 2011, Poland assumed the rotating presidency of the EU for the first time. The presidency was treated very seriously by the Polish authorities and was perceived as proof of Poland's maturity as an EU member state. It was an important experience for Poland in general. Polish diplomats evaluate the rotating presidency as an unequivocally positive experience for the MFA. It was a time of fast Europeanisation and self-confidence building for Polish diplomats.

The period of the Polish EU Presidency was also significant in terms of establishing a model for relations between the EEAS and the member state holding the rotating presidency. A common understanding between the Polish MFA and the EEAS during preparations for the presidency and the presidency itself was built with difficulty. Foreign Minister Sikorski sent several letters to HR/VP Ashton before the presidency. According to the Polish MFA, she replied by merely referring to the Lisbon Treaty. Yet during the presidency, the division of responsibilities between the Polish MFA and the Service was clear

for both sides and did not provoke tensions. For instance, the list of substitutions of Lady Ashton by Minister Sikorski was agreed in advance. The Polish Presidency did not represent the EU at all times – the HR/VP did so if the issue was in her competence. According to the presidency report prepared by the Polish authorities, “despite its active attitude in relations with the EEAS, Poland did not overstep the framework outlined by the Lisbon Treaty provisions”. The Polish authorities understood well that rotating presidency was losing its importance with the Lisbon Treaty in force. However, Polish diplomats note that there is still room for the presidency country to be active and effective, and some of them suggest that the diminishing role of the rotating presidency has, *inter alia*, been provoked by a series of small member states having held the presidency.

Sixteen replacements of Lady Ashton by Polish diplomats (primarily Foreign Minister Sikorski) served as proof of the good cooperation with the HR/VP. This kind of cooperation has become a systematic practice, which was visible during the Danish Presidency too, when more than 20 replacements took place. The minister of foreign affairs of the presidency country should represent the HR/VP when needed, because she cannot be everywhere. The HR/VP does not have alternates in the EEAS since there is no deputy HR/VP. Managing Directors cannot play such a role.

Good personal relations between Sikorski and Lady Ashton during the rotating presidency also helped to build smooth cooperation between the HR/VP and the Polish MFA. Friendly relations are also visible beyond the presidency. For instance, Lady Ashton was a guest at the annual conference of Polish ambassadors in July 2012 in Warsaw.

#### **7.4 POLISH VIEWS ON THE FUNCTIONS OF THE EEAS**

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##### ***The creation of the EEAS***

Poland supported the creation of the EEAS, perceiving the new institution to add value to Polish diplomacy. Ensuring the adequate representation of member states in the EEAS was the main goal of the MFA. The one-third quota for national diplomats was accepted, but many Polish diplomats would prefer to see a bigger proportion of diplomats from the member states. The Polish authorities demanded geographical balance across the Service, including in leadership positions. This position was written in official statements: “Poland has emphasised from the beginning of the negotiations a need to maintain a geographical balance in the recruitment process for the Service and this demand was reflected in the records of decisions”.

The MFA wanted to see as many Poles as possible in top posts in the EEAS. Poland's efforts concerning the EEAS before and after its establishment were mainly focused on this goal. Poland wanted to have a representative in the top management and it succeeded. The significant number of Poles in high posts in the EEAS has been seen as proof of Poland's strong position in the EU. However, there is still a strong feeling that Poland is underrepresented in the EEAS in general and in Poland's priority region – Eastern Europe – in particular. The government has been strongly criticised by the opposition for this underrepresentation, especially right after the establishment of the EEAS.

There has been no deep discussion about the functions of the EEAS. The Service is mentioned only twice and very briefly in the official document on ‘Polish Foreign Policy Priorities 2012-2016’, published by the MFA in March 2012: “The EU now has an appropriate instrument at its disposal: the European External Action Service (EEAS). It also serves the purpose of ensuring more effective coordination of the EU's external actions. It is in the EU's – and Poland's – interest to ensure that [a] Member State's participation in the EEAS is proportional to the size of their population. Only then

will the new diplomatic corps have the indispensable legitimacy of representing both citizens and EU Member States [...] Modern-day diplomacy has to combine skilful information management with the ability to compete in a complex global environment. One of the first serious tests for the Polish foreign service is working together with the European External Action Service. It will be important to ensure an adequate participation of Poles in EU structures and external representations and to increase their presence in key international organisations (the UN, the OECD, NATO etc.).”

Polish diplomacy was active in some more detailed questions, first of all concerning the place of Eastern Partnership countries in the EEAS structures. The MFA promoted the partition of the European Neighbourhood Policy in the EEAS into two parts, the East and the South, and such division was indeed established. However, this was not a key priority and the negotiations were conducted by mid-level diplomats.

### ***Opinions about the functioning of the EEAS***

The Polish MFA did not avoid reasonable criticism of the EEAS in the early phase of its functioning, as evidenced by the letter of 12 signed by Sikorski. Polish diplomats underlined that the EU Delegations in third countries were not prepared to undertake political tasks, such as monitoring the political situation. But visible progress in the Service’s daily work is acknowledged by Polish diplomats, for instance with regard to the FAC meetings and the elaboration of common positions. The political work of the EU Delegations has also improved. Recruitment of diplomats from the member states strengthened the Delegations, first of all at the level of ambassadors.

In general, there was much better assessment of the EEAS in the second half of 2012 than in 2011. The EEAS is still in *statu nascendi* and needs one or two more years to become fully operational. Fulfilling the quota of national diplomats could help.

### ***Transfer of tasks and functions to the EEAS***

According to many Polish diplomats, the EEAS should play an ancillary role for national diplomacies because it is seen as a bureaucratic, not a political, tool. Yet some diplomats consider that Poland is ready to pass some of its competences to the EEAS, but the scale of this depends on the future of the CFSP and is conditional upon the feeling that Polish diplomacy is well-represented in the EEAS. However, in some areas which are crucial for Poland, notably Eastern Europe, there is need for both levels – both EU policy and bilateral relations between Poland and its partners in Eastern Europe. This should be a model for all border member states of the EU. Historical contacts over many centuries and minorities on both sides of the border are *inter alia* the reasons for this model. These issues cannot be ceded to the EU level. But bilateral relations should complement EU policy, not contradict it.

There is scepticism about common consular service because Poland uses visa policy as a tool in its relations with Eastern neighbours and is much more open than many other member states: although of course in accordance with the Schengen rules, which are flexible to some extent.

### ***The EU Delegations' role in third countries***

Poland supports a strong role for EU Delegations in coordinating member states’ positions in third countries, including the role of Heads of EU Delegation as chairmen of HoMs meetings. The Delegations are expected to organise meetings of HoMs, gather information and develop common positions, but only in those matters that are within the competence of the EU, not in bilateral issues.

The Delegations in ‘forgotten countries’ are assessed quite positively, while the Delegations in large, important third countries are not taken seriously by the embassies of member states, especially the largest ones. However, there are increasingly positive opinions about coordination between EU Delegations and the embassies of member states.

In the view of Polish diplomats, the limits of the role of EU Delegations depend on the power of the host country and its relations with the EU. In the case of big third countries which are ‘trouble-makers’ it is better to resolve problems through contacts between Warsaw and Brussels (i.e. the EU institutions including EEAS Headquarters) and not through contacts between the Polish embassy and the EU Delegation, because the latter level is simply too low. In such countries the HoMs meetings chaired by the Head of the EU Delegation do not have significant importance. Opinions submitted by the Delegation to the EEAS Headquarters in Brussels are not of primary importance for the development of EU policy towards those countries.

The EU Delegations can represent Poland in international organisations regarding issues which are the exclusive competence of the EU. For shared competences, a common position agreed by 27 member states along with the EEAS is needed. But in general Poland considers that the role of the EU Delegations in international organisations should be strengthened.

## **7.5 CONTACTS AND LINKS BETWEEN WARSAW AND BRUSSELS**

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In general, there is full satisfaction among Polish diplomats with the scope, frequency and intensity of contacts with the EEAS. Polish diplomats underline the high level of professionalism of EEAS officials.

More intensive contacts occurred during the Polish Presidency, which was a highly valued lesson of working contact between the MFA and the EEAS. Polish diplomats got to know better the structure of the EEAS and now have no difficulty identifying the right people in the Service. This has enhanced the effectiveness of the MFA. But there is still a need to learn more about how the EU works.

The contacts during the presidency were relatively good. However, communication problems within the EEAS were noticed, for example, between the General Secretariat and Lady Ashton's Cabinet, which affected to some extent the relations of the presidency with the Service. According to Polish diplomats, the EEAS had no problem accepting an active Polish Presidency.

Since the presidency, contacts at the highest level have been rather smooth. The good personal relations between Sikorski and Lady Ashton, mentioned above, play a significant role. HR/VP and the EEAS are well-informed about the activities of the Polish MFA. For instance, the visit of Sikorski, Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt and Bulgarian Foreign Minister Nikolay Mladenov to the Middle East (Lebanon, Iraq and Kurdistan in June 2012) was prepared in consultation with Lady Ashton and the EEAS.

There is a similar, positive situation at departmental level. Contacts are not particularly frequent but fruitful. The ‘Red Phone’ between the MFA and the EEAS is used in crisis and emergency situations, especially by those MFA departments which are responsible for policies of high importance for Poland. The accessibility of EEAS staff is good and they react quickly. The Minsk crisis in 2012 is frequently mentioned as a positive example of cooperation and a lesson of European solidarity that was coordinated well by the EEAS. On the other hand, several departments do not have daily contact. It should be strongly underlined that Polish diplomats do not identify explicit negative examples of their contact with the Service.

The Polish MFA uses willingly the information and analytical materials provided by the EEAS concerning regions which are not among the priorities of Polish foreign policy, e.g. Sub-Saharan Africa. These materials are sometimes the only ones that are available to the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The quantity of EEAS materials is considered sufficient, and the quality is good and has further improved. Materials concerning regions or issues which are priorities of Polish foreign policy are regarded as much less important, and even as unimportant.

The influence of the Polish MFA on the EEAS is an interesting issue. According to Polish diplomats, the best way to have influence is to build a group of member states interested in the given issue. The EEAS cannot simply ignore the common position of several member states. Council Working Parties can be used to influence Lady Ashton's agenda. The agenda of the EEAS is seen to depend heavily on EEAS officials, not the HR/VP herself. Therefore good working contacts with EEAS officials are indispensable (not only at a high level but with mid-level officials as well). Poland is not ignored by the EEAS on issues of national importance, such as policy towards Eastern Europe, although compromises are not always worked out in line with Polish expectations. Some Polish diplomats have experienced that they have full control over what is happening and full knowledge, and feel that they are participants in EU policymaking. However, the MFA is still in the process of building the practices of contact between member states' MFAs and the EEAS.

### ***Seconded diplomats***

Working in the EEAS is perceived by Polish diplomats first of all as a professional challenge and an opportunity to participate in building up the institution from scratch. The EEAS is important for people who are interested in the EU institutions but also for diplomats who are interested in countries where Poland has no diplomatic mission and for those interested in the work of international organisations, because the Service offers more possibilities. These people can develop their competence as members of staff at the EU Delegations, for example. The much higher salaries in the EEAS compared with the Polish MFA are also an important incentive. Many young diplomats would like to spend part of their career in the EEAS. But there is no career system in the MFA and what to do with the people who return from the EEAS and how to use their experience are open questions.

A high interest in secondment to the Service was visible at the beginning of rotation in 2011. Now many diplomats know how difficult the selection process is, which is the main reason for their reluctance to apply for posts. One of the main obstacles for Polish candidates is insufficient knowledge of French, especially among the older generation of diplomats. The young generation is much better prepared in terms of language skills, but they do not have sufficient experience in other areas which are indispensable for the different positions in the EEAS.

There is no detailed map of where Poland would like to be present in the EEAS, but rather a search for posts for specific candidates with specific skills. Therefore the MFA set up a database of highly-skilled Polish diplomats who will be gradually prepared for work in the EEAS.

The question of the loyalty of seconded diplomats is a very sensitive issue. The MFA stresses that it respects their loyalty to the EEAS, but notes that it is easier to have contacts and receive information from Polish diplomats. They are still close to the MFA and have a Janus face. They represent a European approach, but they serve in the EEAS for a short time and they know that they will return. They have to think about their future place in the MFA after their contract with the Service has ended. Difficulty finding a position after their return is a serious problem for diplomats seconded to the EEAS.



However, work in the EEAS (in the Headquarters in particular) gives unique experience and additional skills and knowledge about inter-institutional relations within the EU. This knowledge is regarded as better, and deeper, than that of Polish diplomats returning from Poland's Permanent Representation in Brussels.

The views of Polish diplomats as to whether diplomats seconded to the EEAS (and other EU institutions) become more 'Europeanised' in their outlook on national and European foreign policy are mixed. Some consider that these people are not likely to adopt Brussels-centric thinking because they know that they will soon return to the MFA. Some hope for more Europeanisation, but note that this will be a long process. Others note that it is too early to tell. There is also the opinion that the Europeanisation of the MFA through the work of diplomats from member states in the EEAS is good in theory, but not necessarily realistic.

The question of national diplomats' career in the EEAS is still unresolved. In the view of some Polish diplomats, diplomats seconded from the member states should be treated in the same way as other EEAS employees and should be able – if they wish – to stay in the EEAS for more than a few years. Everyone in the EEAS should have the same career opportunities; only then it will be possible to create a coherent institution. If not, seconded diplomats will always be treated as a 'strange', temporary element in the Service.

## **7.6 CONCLUSIONS**

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In the case of so-called new member states, Europeanisation is a natural process that follows their EU membership and would happen even without the EEAS. Therefore it is extremely difficult to say how important the role of the EEAS is. Yet the EEAS can certainly be regarded as a catalyst of the process.

Polish expectations towards the EEAS are not well articulated in a coherent position, but it seems that a perception of the EEAS as complementary to the MFAs of member states prevails. However there is a deep understanding of the EEAS's leverage for Poland's foreign policy goals, particularly in Eastern Europe. Some Polish diplomats note that Poland has improved its position in the EU also through engagement in the CFSP, and that its interests frequently coincide with the EU position. But there is a tendency to take from the CFSP only what is useful – in an *à la carte* manner.

The MFA wanted to see as many Poles as possible in high posts in the EEAS. Poland's efforts concerning the EEAS before and after its establishment were mainly focused on this goal. The significant number of Poles in high posts in the EEAS has been treated as proof of Poland's strong position in the EU. However, there is still a strong feeling that Poland is underrepresented in the EEAS.

Relations between the MFA and the EEAS are perceived as an on-going process, and the evolving division of labour will be devised not only according to formal rules but also according to practices. Despite the decreasing role of the rotating presidency in EU external relations, Polish diplomats note that there is still room for the presidency country to be active and effective. The period of the Polish EU Presidency in 2011 was significant in terms of establishing a model for relations between the EEAS and the member state holding the rotating presidency. A common understanding between the Polish MFA and the EEAS during preparations for the presidency was built with some difficulty but during the presidency the division of responsibilities between the Polish MFA and the Service was clear for both sides and did not provoke tensions.

Polish diplomats underline that there is visible progress in the Service's daily work, for instance with regard to the FAC meetings and the drawing up of common positions. The political work of the EU Delegations has also improved. Recruiting diplomats from member states has strengthened the Delegations, first of all at the level of ambassadors. In general, there was much more positive assessment of the EEAS in the second half of 2012 than in 2011.

## Quantitative data - Poland

### MFA budget

Year **2012**: Total budget: 423.9 mln € (1,774.165 thousand Polish zlotys\*), of which:

- Administrative costs: 294.6 mln € (1,233.008 thousand Polish zlotys), including:
  - Costs for headquarters: 71.4 mln € (298.731 thousand Polish zlotys)
  - Diplomatic missions abroad: 223.2 mln € (934.277 thousand Polish zlotys)

Year **2011**: Total budget: 442.6 mln € (1,823.536 thousand Polish zlotys\*\*), of which:

- Administrative costs: 297.4 mln € (1,225.412 thousand Polish zlotys), including:
  - Costs for headquarters: 55.7 mln € (229.649 thousand Polish zlotys)
  - Diplomatic missions abroad: 224.7 mln € (925.763 thousand Polish zlotys)

### Number of missions

Total: 158, of which:

- Polish Institutes: 21

### Number of staff employed by the MFA

Year **2012**: Total: 4,622, of which:

- Staff in the Ministry: 1,533

Year **2011**: Total: 4,903, of which

- Staff in the Ministry: 1,597

### Number of staff seconded to the EEAS

Total of seconded diplomats: 9

### Number of arrangements of cooperation/burden-sharing with diplomatic missions of other member states (sharing premises, consular services etc.)

- Višegrad House in Cape Town, shared by the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia.
- The Polish embassy in Algiers is located on the premises of the Swedish embassy.

\* Exchange rate in 2012: 1 € = 4,1850 Polish zlotys.

\*\* Exchange rate in 2011: 1 € = 4,1198 Polish zlotys.

Sources: Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Poland (latest available data); European External Action Service (2012), 'Staffing in the EEAS', Brussels.



# Estonia and the European External Action Service

**By Kristi Raik**

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## 8.1 INTRODUCTION: FROM EUROSCEPTICS TO PRO-INTEGRATIONISTS

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As a small country in Europe's eastern periphery, the foreign policy of Estonia is characterised by a strong degree of continuity along three main dimensions: the EU, US/NATO and Russia. After regaining independence in 1991, Estonia's overarching goal was to 'return to the West', which crystallised into two top foreign policy priorities: full membership of the EU and NATO. The closest possible integration with the Euro-Atlantic community was seen as the best way to address an existential concern about national security, with Russia perceived as a latent threat. Estonia continues to see value-based integration as the best security guarantee for a small state and seeks to be a constructive and pragmatic member of the EU and other Western institutions.

In 2004, the EU became an instrument rather than a goal of Estonia's foreign policy. At the same time, the process of integration continued, with joining Schengen and the euro identified as the next goals. In 2011, having adopted the euro, Estonia proudly declared itself "the most integrated state in northern Europe".<sup>45</sup> Upon its EU accession, Estonia was rather sceptical towards the CFSP and (at the time) the ESDP, although it was not willing to undermine these policies or choose between a

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<sup>45</sup> Ilves, T.H., President of Estonia, 'Speech at the Official Independence Day Concert', Vanemuine Theatre, Tartu, 24 February 2010, [www.president.ee/en/official-duties/speeches/2699-president-of-estonia-at-the-official-independence-day-concert-vanemuine-theatre/index.html](http://www.president.ee/en/official-duties/speeches/2699-president-of-estonia-at-the-official-independence-day-concert-vanemuine-theatre/index.html)

European or Atlanticist orientation.<sup>46</sup> Since then, a strong degree of adaptation and convergence can be noted, as the framework of EU foreign policy has become increasingly important in defining national positions. In line with this shift, Estonia has been a supporter of building up a strong EEAS. NATO continues to be *the* provider of hard security guarantees and the US remains the country's most important security ally. However, Estonia's strong Atlanticism has been softened by two factors: first, the positive experience and Europeanising effects of EU membership, and second, changes in the transatlantic relationship and global priorities of the US. Estonia's concern about the USA's changed priorities has not reduced its contribution to partnership with Washington (e.g. through participation in operations in Afghanistan and elsewhere, and through keeping defence spending close to 2% of GDP), but it has made the EU more important for national security.

Estonia has learned to value the EU's solidarity through dramatic events. The so-called Bronze Soldier crisis of spring 2007 offered significant proof of solidarity inside the EU. The crisis was provoked by the relocation of a Second World War monument in Tallinn by the Estonian government and involved extensive cyber-attacks, harassment of Estonian diplomats in Moscow, and unofficial economic sanctions by Russia.<sup>47</sup> The EU's unity in backing Estonia in the latter's confrontation with Russia came as a surprise to both the Estonians and the Russians. Another significant experience of EU solidarity was the EU and its member states' strong support in a four-month long operation to free seven Estonians who were kidnapped in Lebanon in March 2011.

Estonia's overall attitude towards the EU has become more pro-integrationist. Before accession, public opinion was more Eurosceptic than in the other candidate countries, largely due to concern about national sovereignty. Swimming against the tide, Estonians have become one of the most pro-EU nations in Europe.<sup>48</sup> This corresponds with a shift in the official position that nowadays sees the closest possible integration and belonging to the core of the EU as vital for defending national interests. Overcoming the steep economic recession of 2008-2009 and maintaining strict budgetary discipline have added weight to Estonia's positions in the EU. Estonia emphasises the need for EU unity and is not in favour of multi-speed integration, but if and when that occurs, it wants to be part of the avant-garde. At the same time, the country has consistently supported further enlargement of the EU to the Western Balkans and Turkey, and has been in favour of extending the membership perspective to the bloc's Eastern neighbours.

## **8.2 EU MEMBERSHIP AND FOREIGN POLICY ADAPTATION**

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Up to 2004, the Estonian foreign policy elite had devoted most of its time and energy to securing EU and NATO membership. Joining the EU did not change Estonia's foreign policy priorities, but it triggered a re-allocation of resources and opened up space for new activity. The most important new priority that Estonia adopted as an EU member was the EU's Eastern neighbourhood. Estonia became a strong supporter of EU-oriented reforms in the region and directed most of its development assistance to Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova (the fourth priority country being Afghanistan). This new priority served a double purpose: first, addressing geopolitical concern over Russian dominance in

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<sup>46</sup> Raik, K. and Palosaari, T. (2004), 'It's the Taking Part that Counts: The New Member States Adapt to EU Foreign and Security Policy', FIIA Report 10/2004, Finnish Institute of International Affairs, November 2004, Helsinki.

<sup>47</sup> See Brüggemann, K. and Kasekamp, A. (2009), 'Identity Politics and Contested Histories in Divided Societies: The Case of Estonian War Monuments', in Berg, E. and Ehin, P. (eds.), *Identity and Foreign Policy: Baltic-Russian Relations and European Integration*, Ashgate, Aldershot.

<sup>48</sup> European Commission, Standard Eurobarometer 77, Spring 2012.

the post-Soviet region; and second, finding a niche in EU foreign policy where Estonia could make a positive contribution by using its own transition experience.<sup>49</sup>

Development cooperation as such emerged on Estonia's foreign policy agenda in 1998<sup>50</sup>, at the time when Estonia started accession negotiations with the EU, and became a more important priority only after EU accession. The selection of target countries (as listed above) reflects a strong link between development assistance and national security interests in the context of EU and NATO membership.<sup>51</sup> More than 50% of Estonia's development assistance is directed through the EU.

With Russia as a dominant and difficult neighbour, Estonia had hopes before accession that EU membership would help to normalise its Eastern relations. This has not happened: the Estonia-Russia border treaty has still not been signed, Russia continues to blame Estonia on the international as well as the domestic arena for mistreating Estonia's large Russian-speaking minority, and Moscow continues its efforts to influence and de-stabilise Estonia's domestic politics. The overall EU-Russia relationship also remains tense, but a positive aspect from the Estonian perspective is that the EU has become increasingly critical of Russia and its unity *vis-à-vis* Russia has somewhat improved. Estonia has experienced that its concerns regarding its giant Eastern neighbour are heard and taken seriously in Brussels. To some extent it has been able to use the EU as a channel to address practical bilateral problems (e.g. related to border-crossing or trade). It has gradually adopted a more pragmatic attitude towards Russia and avoided confrontation with dominant views in the EU, in contrast to Lithuania, which has been more outspoken and has not stopped short of blocking the EU's decisions on Russia in order to make its point.<sup>52</sup> In spite of its more adaptive behaviour, Estonia continues to be critical of the EU's lack of a strategic and firm approach to Russia.

Estonia values the EU's strengthened presence in Moscow thanks to the EU Delegation. As an example of value added, Estonia appreciated the participation of the Head of the EU Delegation in a hearing in the Russian Duma on the human rights situation in the EU, which took place in May 2012. Thanks to the common representation of the EU in the hearing, accusations directed at Estonia were given an adequate response by the Union. The diplomats in the EU Delegation to Russia include an Estonian national, which has both symbolic and practical value for Estonia. The existence of the EU Delegation is not seen to reduce the need for national diplomatic representation, but it helps to strengthen EU unity, coordination of member states' activities and possibly access to Russian officials. Likewise, Estonia perceives EU Delegations in the Eastern neighbourhood to contribute to the EU's visibility and coordinated action on the ground.

EU membership created the need to develop policies and positions on a whole range of global issues on which Estonia had never been active before. Participation in EU foreign policy processes increased the Foreign Ministry's workload. Quite unrelated to the impact of EU membership, the need for a more global foreign policy outlook has been much debated among Estonia's foreign policy elite in

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<sup>49</sup> Made, V. (2011), 'Shining in Brussels? The Eastern Partnership in Estonia's Foreign Policy', *Perspectives* 19(2), pp. 67-80.

<sup>50</sup> Kuuse, E. (2010), 'Arengukoostöö adressaatidest doonoriteks: mõjurid ja loogika Eesti, Läti, Leedu päästeametite näitel', *Magistritöö*, Tartu Ülikool, [www.ut.ee/ABVKeskus/sisu/publikatsioonid/2010/pdf/Kuuse.pdf](http://www.ut.ee/ABVKeskus/sisu/publikatsioonid/2010/pdf/Kuuse.pdf)

<sup>51</sup> Einre, H. (2011), 'Väikeriigi bilateraalse arengukoostöö motiividest julgeolekupoliitilises kontekstis Eesti ja Soome näitel', *Magistritöö*, Tartu Ülikool, [http://dspace.utlib.ee/dspace/bitstream/handle/10062/24628/einre\\_henrik.pdf?sequence=1](http://dspace.utlib.ee/dspace/bitstream/handle/10062/24628/einre_henrik.pdf?sequence=1)

<sup>52</sup> Haukkala, H., Etzold, T. and Raik, K. (forthcoming), 'The Northern European Member States', in Hadfield, A., Manners, I. and Whitman R.G., *Foreign Policies of the European Union Member States: Continuity and Europeanisation*, Routledge, London and New York.

recent years. Estonia has responded to the rise of new powers and new economic opportunities in Asia in particular by increasing its presence in and the attention it pays to the region.<sup>53</sup>

The establishment of the EEAS is perceived by some Estonian diplomats to have added to their workload. But they also see potential to make more systematic use of the EEAS's work, above all in countries and areas where there is no national representation and no strong priorities. However, first the MFA should map this potential and develop a vision of how to tap into the EEAS's work. Increased use of common reporting and analysis by member states might lead to a stronger convergence of positions, but it is too early to tell whether this potential will materialise.

### **8.3 STRUCTURE AND RESOURCES OF ESTONIAN DIPLOMACY**

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The Estonian MFA contains three departments dealing with the substance of foreign policy: the political department, the external economic and development cooperation department, and the department of Europe and transatlantic cooperation. This structure is the result of reform introduced in 2012, which reduced the number of departments and units in order to create a less top-heavy structure. The reform was not related to the establishment of the EEAS. The political department includes the unit of the European correspondent that coordinates CFSP matters. The overall coordination of EU affairs was moved from the MFA to the EU Secretariat (initially called the Office of European Integration) of the Government Office years before Estonia's EU accession, in the late 1990s.

Estonia was among the EU countries hit hardest by the financial crisis, and saw its GDP drop by 4% in 2008 and by a further 14% in 2009. This triggered extensive budget cuts in the public service. The MFA fired close to 50 people during 2008-2009 – a dramatic cut considering the total number of staff, which is currently below 550. Salaries and allowances were also reduced. The administrative budget of the MFA shrank for four consecutive years, from 2008 to 2011, and grew only slightly in 2012. Nevertheless, the network of diplomatic missions was extended during that period.

Estonia's network of diplomatic representation was built up during the 1990s. The number of missions reached 37 in 2000, with a strong concentration on Europe and transatlantic relations. Since then, ten new missions have been opened (including Kabul, Tokyo, Astana, Cairo, Sydney and New Delhi), reflecting the broadening scope of Estonian foreign policy, the perceived need to adapt to globalisation, and increased commercial and other ties outside the Euro-Atlantic region. The opening of an embassy in Brazil is being prepared. Consular services and the promotion of commercial interests have become relatively more important functions of diplomatic missions.

Despite the adjustments, the diplomatic network continues to strongly reflect the key political priorities: the EU, NATO and Estonia's neighbourhood. A possible reduction of the network in Europe has been discussed, but only the embassy to Bulgaria has been closed down so far, in 2012. The future closure of some missions is not to be ruled out, but the threshold for doing so is very high. Embassies in EU member states are regarded as highly important for Estonia's ability to attract support for its positions and defend national interests in EU policymaking processes, not just in foreign policy matters, but perhaps even more importantly in other areas.

Further extensions of the network are being considered and will depend above all on the financial situation. The MFA is also considering increased cooperation with other EU member states as a means

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<sup>53</sup> Foreign Affairs Committee of the Parliament of Estonia (2012), 'Eesti võimalused ja huvid Aasias aastani 2025. Raport väliskomisjoni 2011–2012 Aasia-strateegia kuulamise põhjal', Tallinn: [www.riigikogu.ee/public/Riigikogu/Valiskomisjon/Raport\\_valiskomisjon\\_2012\\_net.pdf](http://www.riigikogu.ee/public/Riigikogu/Valiskomisjon/Raport_valiskomisjon_2012_net.pdf)



of broadening its diplomatic outreach. Estonia is already represented by another EU country in consular issues in more than 80 locations where there is no Estonian mission. It has entered into three co-location arrangements with Finland (in one of these cases, in Georgia, a Finnish diplomat was located in the premises of the Estonian embassy), on the basis of a framework agreement among the Nordic and Baltic countries. Estonia also shares embassy premises with Latvia in Cairo. In three cases it has temporarily located its diplomats in the embassies of other EU countries while preparing to open its own embassy. Estonia is interested in further burden-sharing arrangements, above all in the Nordic-Baltic framework.

#### **8.4 ESTONIAN VIEWS ON THE EEAS**

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As a small country with limited resources, Estonia supports the strengthening of the EU's global voice and presence as a way of enhancing its national representation and the ability to promote its interests. Taking a constructive approach to the establishment of the EEAS is also in line with Estonia's overall pragmatic and increasingly pro-integration EU policy. Estonia wishes to 'have a seat' at the tables where decisions are taken that have an impact on its national interests, and the EEAS is one way to ensure better access to these tables. It also hopes that a strengthened common foreign policy can constrain big member states and reduce their tendency to go it alone, possibly against the interests of other member states or the EU as a whole. So far, these hopes have not materialised: the big member states are perceived not only to have better access to the EEAS and the HR/VP, but also to continue to prioritise national activity at the expense of common foreign policy. While Estonia accepts the relatively strong influence of the big member states as inevitable, history has given it a degree of mistrust towards big powers. On the positive side, the Estonian foreign policy leaders of today are fairly confident that in matters of high national concern, their views are heard and taken into account in European capitals.

As noted above, reporting from the EEAS has the potential to bring much added value for Estonia, which has a very limited diplomatic network and capacity. One of Estonia's priorities is to improve information exchange between the EEAS (both Headquarters and Delegations) and the member states. Estonia also wishes to see more transparency between the EEAS and other EU institutions, as well as within the EEAS. Having an open administrative culture itself, Estonia values transparency and regrets the differences in this regard within the EU. Estonia considers formal information sharing by the EEAS to have been insufficient so far, but Estonian diplomats tend to have had positive experiences in terms of informal exchange with EEAS officials, both in Brussels and in some Delegations.

Estonia strongly supports the strengthening of EU Delegations, in particular their political sections. To some extent this is explained by the fact that Estonia will most probably never have a diplomatic mission in even one third of countries in the world. On the other hand, coordinated action by member states in significant partner countries such as Russia and other Eastern neighbours is also important for Estonia, as it can give a solid framework and backing to national activity.

Estonia gives a largely positive assessment of the way that the Delegations have started to manage their new coordinating role, with the significant exception of international organisations, where the EU Delegations have encountered much resistance from member states to their efforts to take on their new function. It expects the Delegations to go beyond coordination and make proposals regarding EU positions and actions, and to do so not only at the request of Brussels but also on their own initiative (a view not shared by all member states).

Estonia also has a strong interest in developing consular services at EU Delegations, but does not expect quick progress in this field due to the reluctance of several other member states. It does not regard visa issuance by EU Delegations as a realistic goal, but it does stress that the Delegations should take responsibility for coordinating the EU response in crisis situations and for providing elementary help to citizens. It has coordinated its positions on the potential consular role of the EEAS with the other Baltic and the Benelux countries. The six countries are also looking for ways to increase cooperation in consular matters (independently of the EEAS).

In spite of its largely positive view and high expectations of EU Delegations, Estonia does not link changes in its national diplomatic network to the functioning of the EEAS. The MFA does not believe that the EEAS will have any influence on Estonia's diplomatic representation in the near future, and considers that it is too early to assess its longer-term impact. Furthermore, even in a longer-term perspective, the EEAS is not expected to replace national representation in states where Estonia has vital interests.<sup>54</sup> As noted above, the number of Estonian missions abroad has been growing in recent years and is set to further increase if national resources allow that. Apart from defending national interests, the missions are seen as indispensable for making Estonia better known in the world and spreading a positive image of the country – something that could not possibly be done by the EEAS.

Estonia is (so far) sceptical about the idea of placing national laptop-diplomats in EU Delegations. It views this possibility from a purely financial perspective and suspects that it might be more expensive than other solutions, such as non-resident ambassadors or co-location arrangements with other EU countries.

One source of dissatisfaction and disappointment among Estonian diplomats is the low level of initiative and strategic leadership of the EEAS. For example, there has been much discussion about strategic partnerships, but it never resulted in EU strategies towards these partners. The papers produced by the EEAS are regarded as useful, but rather descriptive. In general, the EEAS has not managed to set priorities and focus on these. FAC meetings continue to host superficial discussions and have agendas that are too long.

Estonia argues that the lack of leadership is related to the tasks of the HR/VP, which it considers to be too extensive, and her competition with the presidents of the Commission and the European Council. Even more importantly, however, the member states continue to control foreign affairs, and the foreign ministers of member states, notably the larger ones, tend to overshadow the HR/VP. Being concerned about the influence of small member states, Estonia supports the idea of retaining a role for the presidency country, e.g. to replace the HR/VP whenever she cannot be present herself. The expectation of leadership from the EEAS does not mean that Estonia would be ready to compromise on national control. It would like the EEAS to be more active in presenting proposals and taking the initiative, but stresses the need for institutionalised debate and intergovernmental decision-making by the member states.

Estonia has doubts about the idea of preparing a new EU foreign policy/security strategy at this point in time. It is not principally opposed to the idea and agrees that in future the EU will need a new foreign policy strategy, but believes that whatever the EU needs to do globally can be done on the basis of the 2003 strategy for the time being. Estonian diplomats doubt that the EEAS is yet strong

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<sup>54</sup> Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Estonia (2011), 'Eesti välisesindused kuni 2015 ja 2015+', [www.vm.ee/sites/default/files/Eesti\\_esindatus\\_2015\\_ja\\_2015+.pdf](http://www.vm.ee/sites/default/files/Eesti_esindatus_2015_ja_2015+.pdf)  
See also Estonian Foreign Policy Institute (2011), 'Eesti välisesinduste võrgustiku olevik ja tulevik', November 2011, [www.evi.ee/lib/esindus.pdf](http://www.evi.ee/lib/esindus.pdf)

enough to undertake this task, and fear that attempts to push through a new strategy might flame further divisions between the member states.

As for the budget of the EEAS, Estonia is one of few countries ready to consider an increase, provided that it is clearly assigned to strengthening certain functions, such as the political sections of Delegations. This position indicates the relative importance of the EEAS to Estonia, which is in principle against increasing the EU budget.

## **8.5 ESTONIANS IN THE EEAS**

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Estonian diplomats have shown an active interest in serving in the EEAS, while the MFA has made strong efforts to promote Estonian candidates. This high interest results from the considerably higher level of income at the EEAS, as well as the temptation to be part of bigger 'games' with higher challenges. Estonia's track record in winning posts in the EEAS is good relative to the small size of the country: the MFA has sent six temporary agents to the EEAS, including one Head of Mission. Its goal is to send more people to key positions in the Headquarters, but it regards its nationals' relative lack of long-term EU experience in comparison to those of old(er) member states as a disadvantage in this regard. In the assessment of some Estonian diplomats, Estonia is also relatively weak at lobbying for its candidates, as a result of national characteristics and the small size of the country. The MFA has mostly advertised vacancies in the EEAS to all staff, but occasionally it has made targeted recommendations to certain staff members to apply for suitable positions. It has provided intensive support in the application process.

The presence of Estonians in EU structures is considered highly important for securing better access to the institutions, e.g. for receiving timely information and insider views. The MFA wishes to maintain active contact with Estonians serving in EU foreign affairs structures. It holds the view that although member states do make use of their own people in the EEAS, this has generally not been a problem and it has not taken the form of inappropriate promotion of national agendas through these people.

The MFA expects that many if not most of its staff who move to the EEAS will not come back, as they become 'domesticated' in the EU structures and apply for permanent positions. The principle of rotation is thus not expected to function quite as foreseen on paper. In some cases, the MFA uses targeted offers of interesting positions in order to attract its staff to return and be able to make use of their EU experience, but in principle those who return are on a par with other MFA staff. So far the MFA has not had to recruit new staff to replace those who have left for the EEAS and it has been able to re-allocate tasks, but if more people leave, it might need new recruitment. On the whole, the MFA considers that having good Estonian diplomats in the EEAS may be even more important than getting them back to the Ministry.

Although serving in the EU institutions, including the EEAS, is seen as an effective instrument of socialisation, many Estonian diplomats have doubts about the emergence of a common foreign policy culture and identity. Member states are believed to maintain their strong national foreign policy cultures and identities, which differ greatly in many respects including strategies, priorities and working cultures.

## 8.6 CONCLUSIONS

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Since EU accession, Estonia's attitudes towards the CFSP and EU external action more broadly have made a considerable leap from initial scepticism to increasing acknowledgement of its (potential) value. Estonia has adapted its foreign policy to the common framework of the EU, including in high priority areas such as Russia and the Eastern neighbourhood. EU membership has elevated Estonia's standing in and access to global and regional arenas. Nevertheless, there is no doubt about its continued strong adherence to national sovereignty and the perceived need to maintain national control in the field of foreign and security affairs. Estonia's foreign policy establishment shares a deep-seated view that national interests can only be safeguarded by Estonians themselves – with indispensable and highly valued support from allies and partners, but ultimately by Estonians themselves.

Estonia regained independence just over 20 years ago and had to work very hard to gain the respect of its partners and become a member of Western organisations. Historical experience has guided it to seek close integration with the West, but it is also a source of persistent suspicion towards big powers, including big member states of the EU. The perceived dominance of big member states weakens Estonia's trust in the EEAS. On the other hand, having Estonian officials in EU foreign policy structures seems to be an important way to increase a sense of ownership and trust and has been a priority for the MFA. Overall, Estonia's ability to make itself heard in the EU and have its concerns taken seriously is seen to have improved in recent years.

In line with its overall pragmatic and constructive EU policy, Estonia continues to be a supporter of the EEAS and is unlikely to block any efforts to strengthen EU foreign policy. It is in the interests of the MFA to develop a better understanding of how to make use of the EEAS and even to put more resources at the disposal of the Service. Looking at the performance of the EEAS so far, however, Estonia has rather low expectations regarding its added value and considers the impact of the EEAS on national diplomacy to have been very limited.

## **Quantitative data - Estonia**

### **MFA budget**

Year **2012**: Total budget: 46.4 mln €, of which:

- Administrative costs: 34.5 mln €

Year **2011**: Total budget: 49.8 mln €, of which:

- Administrative costs: 32.2 mln €

Year **2010**: Total budget: 46.0 mln €, of which:

- Administrative costs: 35.5 mln €

Year **2009**: Total budget: 47.5 mln €, of which:

- Administrative costs: 36.8 mln €

Year **2008**: Total budget: 46.6 mln €, of which:

- Administrative costs: 38.1 mln €

### **Number of missions**

Total: 46

Outside Europe: 10

Inside Europe: 36

Inside the EU (excluding Bulgaria, Cyprus, Luxemburg, Malta, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia): 19

### **Number of staff employed by the MFA**

Total: 650, of which:

- Staff in missions: 238
- Staff in the Ministry: 301
- Locally employed staff: 111

### **Number of staff seconded to the EEAS**

6 temporary agents from the MFA, including 1 Head of Mission (HoM)

### **Number of arrangements of cooperation/burden-sharing with diplomatic missions of other member states (sharing premises, consular services etc.)**

Three co-location arrangements with Finland, shared premises with Latvia in Cairo and interest to do more in Nordic-Baltic framework. Another Schengen country represents Estonia in consular issues in more than 80 locations where there is no Estonian mission.

*Sources: Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Estonia.*



# Portugal and the European External Action Service

**By Laura C. Ferreira-Pereira and Alena Vysotskaya G. Vieira**

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## 9.1 INTRODUCTION

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This paper points conclusively to a moderately supportive position of Portugal regarding the EEAS as well as to the country's endorsement of intergovernmentalism as the most fitting means of forging the consolidation and advancement of the new Service. Moreover, Lisbon's preferences, options and attitudes in the EEAS purview have been heavily influenced by the country's status as a small and peripheral player. This explains why the authorities have been endorsing the emergence of both a strong EEAS and a forceful High Representative. Indeed, the accomplishment of these goals is seen as a critical part of the credibility and respectability of the EU's role on the global stage. On the other hand, Lisbon's support for a strong European diplomatic service and vigorous leadership by the High Representative should be understood in light of growing concerns regarding the potential for the EEAS to be converted into a *directoire* composed of the 'most powerful' states. The Portuguese authorities endorse recurrently the principles of impartiality and neutrality with regard to member states, because they face a *de facto* unbalanced flow of information between the Service and the member states, which is particularly detrimental to small members like Portugal, which cannot simply rely on an expressive national contingent within the EU institutions.

From the Portuguese perspective, the EEAS cannot become an exclusive vehicle for the straightforward 'downloading' of European goals, procedures and rules to national diplomacies. On the other hand, it should not be converted into a mere platform for 'uploading' national interests

into the Union's foreign policy. In this sense, the dialectical process subsumed in the Europeanisation concept (i.e. top-down and bottom-up) presents itself as complementary and mutually reinforcing for the sake of the strengthening of the role of the EU as a political global actor. The EEAS is expected to emerge as an instrument for both the Europeanisation of national diplomatic strategies and for promoting national foreign policy-related interests within the EU.

## **9.2 PORTUGAL IN THE COMMON FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY: AN OVERVIEW**

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From the beginning of its formal participation in the European integration process, Portugal has perceived the EU as an international platform allowing it to amplify its voice on the international stage. This was considered instrumental for the country to mitigate its position as a small state on the southern fringes of Europe. Over time, the Portuguese authorities have become somewhat successful in 'uploading' major national foreign policy interests into the realm of the CFSP. This became especially noticeable during Portugal's tenures as president of the Council of Ministers, in 1992, 2000 and 2007.<sup>55</sup> In the context of the third presidency held during the second semester of 2007, in particular, the organisation of both the second EU-Africa Summit and the first EU-Brazil Summit constituted stark examples of this. Consequently, Portugal made a tangible impact on the institutionalisation and strengthening of the EU's Strategic Partnerships while strengthening the country's imprint on the EU's international relations.<sup>56</sup> The third presidency was also marked by a strong desire to reaffirm the country's steady commitment to the Union. This came to be reflected in the successful conclusion of the Treaty of Lisbon; and the vigorous engagement of a 'global Portugal'<sup>57</sup> which added a layer to the EU's endeavours to boost its influence on the international arena as an increasingly independent political and strategic actor.<sup>58</sup>

That being said, the authorities in Lisbon have always rejected communitarisation in the realm of foreign and security policy. From their point of view, the evolution of the CFSP should be able to accommodate national foreign policy specificities stemming from the existence of privileged relations with former colonies in the African continent and Latin America. Furthermore, by means of cultivating its relationship with both Lusophone African countries and Brazil, the country would be able to move away from its peripheral condition in continental Europe and assert itself as a bridge between Europe, Africa and Latin America. Another important idiosyncratic element of the Portuguese traditional foreign policy identity and culture is the centrality of the Atlantic Alliance to national defence policy; and, in connection with this, the weight ascribed to the maintenance of healthy relations with the United States. These two aspects combined account for Portugal's concern with paying due respect to the prime role of NATO within European collective defence. Along these lines, from the Portuguese point of view, the appropriate process by means of which the political integration process, encompassing the establishment of a European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), should be pursued is one that should be incremental, compatible with a leading role for NATO in collective defence, and flexible enough not to impinge on the specificities of the member states' foreign, security and defence policies.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Ferreira-Pereira, L. C. (2008b), 'Portugal e a Presidência da União Europeia (1992-2007)', in *Relações Internacionais*, No. 20, December 2008, pp. 131-143.

<sup>56</sup> Ferreira-Pereira, L. C. (2008a), 'Portugal and the 2007 EU Presidency: A Case of Constructive Bridge-Building', in *Journal of Common Market Studies (JCMS)*, Vol. 46, Supplement 1, September 2008, pp. 61-70(10).

<sup>57</sup> The expression 'global Portugal' draws on an article by the Portuguese Minister of Foreign Affairs. See: Amado, L., 'Estratégia, Perspectivas e Expectativas', in *Europa: Novas Fronteiras*, No. 21, Centro de Informação Europeia Jacques Delors Europa, Lisbon, pp. 25-29.

<sup>58</sup> Ferreira-Pereira, L. C. (2008a), *ibidem*.

<sup>59</sup> Ferreira-Pereira, L. C. (2007b), 'Between Scylla and Charybdis: Explaining Portugal's Approach to the European Foreign and Security Policy', in *Journal of European Integration*, Vol. 29, No. 2, May 2007, pp. 209-228.



Portugal has been contributing to the ESDP/CSDP since its inception and has been prioritising it in its official foreign policy strategy, thereby conveying the ambition to position itself within the group of the countries taking the lead in the advancement of the European security/defence project.<sup>60</sup> On the other hand, the evolving ESDP/CSDP has been appraised politically in light of its impact on the country's efforts to maintain its hard core of sovereignty.<sup>61</sup>

In the post-Lisbon landscape, besides the implementation of the new dispositions in the security and defence sphere (e.g. the new CSDP missions and the 'reinforced cooperation' and 'permanent structured cooperation' mechanism), the organisation and functioning of the EEAS has emerged as a new challenge for the Portuguese foreign policy strategy and diplomatic establishment.

### **9.3 PARTICIPATION IN THE EEAS: WHAT IMPACT ON NATIONAL FOREIGN POLICY STRUCTURES, RESOURCES AND PRIORITIES?**

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The early days of Portuguese participation in the EEAS should be appraised against the backdrop of some fundamental pillars that have historically conditioned Portuguese foreign and security policymaking, notably the centrality of the EU in the country's external strategy and the relevance of the Portuguese-Speaking Countries Community (*Comunidade dos Países de Língua Oficial Portuguesa – CPLP*). Equally important, nevertheless, is the critical political, economic and financial juncture that was inaugurated with the Portuguese government's request for financial assistance from the European Union and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in May 2011, which led to an emergency bailout to deal with soaring sovereign debt.

As a result of the general elections that took place in June 2011 against the backdrop of a financial aid programme entailing stringent austerity measures<sup>62</sup>, there was a shift in the governmental forces. The Social Democrat Pedro Passos Coelho took office as Prime Minister, while the Conservative Paulo Portas became the Minister of State and of Foreign Affairs.<sup>63</sup> While, from its inception, the views within the governmental coalition have not been fully consensual on such critical issues as economic and fiscal policies, the stance adopted by the coalition forces regarding the country's European strategy, including participation in the EEAS, did not differ fundamentally.

Incidentally, there is no specific reference to the EEAS in the new government's programme. Corroborating the traditional rhetoric concerning the general national approach to the European project, it is asserted that it was of crucial importance: "To secure the participation of Portugal in the frontline of the European construction...To develop a policy of diplomatic recruitment and active

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<sup>60</sup> The relevance ascribed to the ESDP became evident in the programmes of the XVII and XVIII Constitutional Governments put forward by José Sócrates in 2005 and 2009 respectively. Both documents stressed the political resolve to place Portugal "at the frontline of the Common Security and Defence Policy," including its participation in military missions under the command of the European Union. Cf. Program of the XVII Constitutional Government, p. 159 and Program of the XVIII Constitutional Government, p. 119. Both programmes were accessed at

[www.portugal.gov.pt/pt/o-governo/arquivo-historico/governos-constitucionais.aspx](http://www.portugal.gov.pt/pt/o-governo/arquivo-historico/governos-constitucionais.aspx) on 4 November 2012.

<sup>61</sup> Ferreira-Pereira, L. C. (2007a), 'Portugal and ESDP', in Brümmer, K. (ed.), *The South and ESDP: Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain*, Gütersloh, Bertelsmann Stiftung, March 2007, pp. 32-49, and Ferreira-Pereira, L. C. (2011), 'Portugal e o Desenvolvimento da Política Comum de Segurança e Defesa: Uma Década em Avaliação', in *Estratégia*, XX, 2011, pp. 307-325.

<sup>62</sup> This financial aid agreement was negotiated between the Portuguese authorities and an international troika composed of representatives of the European Commission (EC), the European Central Bank (ECB) and the IMF. The severe austerity measures were stipulated in a Memorandum of Understanding on Specific Economic Policy Conditionality, whose implementation came to be closely monitored by the EC-ECB-IMF troika.

<sup>63</sup> Prior to being nominated Minister of Foreign Affairs in Passos Coelho's government, Paulo Portas was the leader of the People's Party (CDS-PP). After the general elections, the latter became the junior party in the coalition government led by the Social Democratic Party (PSD).

support of applications to international posts that are relevant for the national interest and the prestige of Portugal in the world".<sup>64</sup>

The unfolding of the EU-IMF bailout programme was not without major consequences for the formulation and implementation of national foreign policy goals. As of 2011, in view of the reduction of the MFA's budget and the imperative of boosting export growth, the MFA has been undergoing profound internal restructuring. Indicative of this was the merging of several programmes and the reduction of the network of diplomatic representation. For instance, the Portuguese Institute for Development Support (*Instituto Português de Apoio ao Desenvolvimento – IPAD*) was merged with the Camões Institute (*Instituto Camões*), leading to the establishment of 'Camões – Institute of Cooperation and Language' (*Camões-Instituto da Cooperação e da Língua – CICL*). And, since 2011, seven embassies (Malta, Andorra, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Bosnia and Kenya) and five vice-consulates have been closed down.<sup>65</sup>

Given the identification of increasing national exports as a national imperative, in the accomplishment of which the country's foreign policy should be closely involved, the Portuguese Investment and Trade Agency (*Agência para o Investimento e Comércio Externo de Portugal – AICEP*) has seen its status elevated to a key foreign policy actor, while its own external representation network was merged with the diplomatic network. Furthermore, new embassies were opened in Abu Dhabi, Doha and Singapore, with the aim of promoting the country's economic interests in emerging prosperous regions of the world.<sup>66</sup>

All these changes introduced at the level of both the diplomatic network and the internal structures of the MFA were prompted by the severe impact of the economic and financial crisis on Portugal, rather than by the establishment of the EEAS.<sup>67</sup> Lisbon opted to close down five embassies that were operating in other EU member states (Malta, Andorra, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia). The five criteria to justify the closures included the presence of the Portuguese community in the host states, the attraction of investment from these countries to Portugal, the history of bilateral and multilateral ties, and the importance of the host countries' regional role as well as of their relationship with Lisbon.<sup>68</sup>

The harsh financial and economic crisis could have led to the immediate closure of the embassies existing in those countries where there is an EU representation. This possibility is, in principle, viewed by the national authorities in a positive light, should it enable the redirection of human and economic resources from some parts of the world to others according to the country's pressing strategy of promoting its economic interests abroad.

All in all, it can be said that, for the time being, the EEAS has not played a part in the political calculus made by the Portuguese authorities for re-engineering the diplomatic infrastructure. In fact, the circumstance that five of the seven embassies that were closed down were based in the EU's member states supports claims as to the marginal repercussions of the establishment of the EU Delegation network for Portuguese options as to the areas/regions that should receive prime diplomatic attention.

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<sup>64</sup> See Programme of the XIX Constitutional Government at [www.portugal.gov.pt/pt/o-governo/programa-governo/programa-governo.aspx](http://www.portugal.gov.pt/pt/o-governo/programa-governo/programa-governo.aspx) accessed on 4 November 2012.

<sup>65</sup> The vice-consulate of Frankfurt was transferred to Stuttgart and that of Osnabrueck to Düsseldorf, the vice-consulate of Clairmont-Ferrand was moved to Lyon, and those of Nantes and Lille to Paris.

<sup>66</sup> Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros (2012), 'Monitor', 15 June 2012. [www.portugal.gov.pt/media/635312/20120621\\_mne\\_monitor.pdf](http://www.portugal.gov.pt/media/635312/20120621_mne_monitor.pdf)

<sup>67</sup> Interviews at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lisbon, August-October 2012.

<sup>68</sup> Costa, F. (2011), 'Portas fecha 7 embaixadas e 5 vice-consulados', *Expresso*, 19 November 2011. <http://expresso.sapo.pt/portas-fecha-7-embaixadas-e-5-vice-consulados=f688052#ixzz2AbhWnFFf>

## 9.4 THE FUNCTIONS OF THE EEAS: HOPES AND FEARS, BUT NO BLUEPRINT

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The Portuguese stance regarding the EEAS has mainly been reactive, to the extent that it has been evolving according to the Service's gradual advancement. Indeed, the MFA has not hitherto issued any clearly defined strategy to guide the country's role and contribution in the framework of the EEAS. The evolution and activities of the latter, nevertheless, have featured both in the Annual Reports of the MFA, and the Reports of the Minister of Foreign Affairs presented to the Parliament.

National authorities like to describe the country as a consistent supporter of the EEAS. The Service is depicted as a step forward towards a stronger EU that speaks with one voice, which is essential for strengthening the EU's role as a global player.<sup>69</sup> From the Portuguese perspective, the economic and financial crises that have been encroaching on the Union's internal stability and external credibility may well become instrumental to the development of the EEAS, since it forces European leaders to better define the organisation's priorities and the limits of its external action. As a small and peripheral country, Portugal perceives that there are benefits springing from the assertion of the EEAS as a respected and credible institution capable of endowing EU foreign policy with further consistency and coherence.

The official position concerning the EEAS has been based on the principles of impartiality and neutrality with regard to member states.<sup>70</sup> These principles have informed the Portuguese position in favour of a wider interpretation of the letter of the Lisbon Treaty on the issue of the legitimacy of the Union to produce declarations in multilateral forums (on matters in which member states continue to retain national competence). Some countries, including Britain, advocated the continuation of the pre-Lisbon practice revolving around issuing declarations 'in the name of the EU and its member states. Yet, Portugal positioned itself with another group of states which supported the formula 'in the name of the EU' in formal declarations for the sake of an improved international assertion and visibility of the EU.<sup>71</sup>

On the other hand, since the process was launched, the Portuguese position has been heavily influenced by fear of EEAS being converted into a sort of a *directoire* of the big powers. Hence, the Portuguese officials stress recurrently the need for the Service to "guarantee an equal treatment to all member states".<sup>72</sup> This is symptomatic of a feeling of mistrust that still prevails towards the EEAS. Indeed, the risk of the EEAS being put at the service of some (of the most powerful and influential) member states to the detriment of others has been widely recognised by Portuguese diplomats.

When it comes to the eventual transfer of diplomatic tasks from national to European level, the possibility of such transfer in the domain of consular services has been identified and discussed internally. Although not presenting itself as a staunch opponent of the idea, Portugal is not actively encouraging such a development either. The country's authorities tend to welcome the idea of some cooperation in this sphere, namely in the case of major crises including natural disasters, which may well draw on the experiences of coordination in Tokyo and in the Middle East after the attacks in Libya. National authorities consider that in such cases, in which it is crucial to provide travellers with timely advice on how to secure their safety and eventual rescue, EU Delegations can represent an

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<sup>69</sup> Lourtie, P., Secretary of State for European Affairs (2010), 'Intervenção do Secretário de Estado dos Assuntos Europeus, Pedro Lourtie, na audição da Assembleia da República sobre o Programa Legislativo e de Trabalho da Comissão Europeia', Lisbon, 26 May 2010. [www.parlamento.pt/Paginas/XI12S\\_AudicaoPedroLortieCAE20101215.aspx](http://www.parlamento.pt/Paginas/XI12S_AudicaoPedroLortieCAE20101215.aspx), p. 8.

<sup>70</sup> Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros (2011), 'Portugal na União Europeia', Direção Geral dos Assuntos Europeus, p. 2.

<sup>71</sup> Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros (2011), *ibidem*, p. 2.

<sup>72</sup> Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros (2011), *ibidem*.

asset. In fact, coordination between the Union's Delegations and national representations conducive to the eventual transfer of tasks may well start here. On the other hand, Portuguese foreign policymakers have stressed that the deepening of consular cooperation should not lead to the disappearance of member states' consular services. It is, therefore, clear that they endorse the maintenance of some freedom of action for national services in addition to increased European consular cooperation.

Despite not having a blueprint for the country's participation in the EEAS, the Portuguese authorities tend to adhere to a type of engagement that is in harmony with the more general view of the relationship between Portugal's national foreign policy and the Union's CFSP/CSDP. Viewed from Lisbon, the major dimensions of Europeanisation, as acknowledged in academic literature (i.e. downloading and uploading), should be seen as complementary while contributing to the strengthening of the European integration process. Along these lines, the EEAS should become an instrument of the Europeanisation of national priorities as much as a means of promoting major national interests.

### ***Portuguese posts and officials in the EEAS***

According to the official view, Portugal has "actively participated since the beginning in the creation of the EEAS"<sup>73</sup>, while attempting to make an impact on the functioning of the Service both in Brussels and in EU Delegations based in third countries.

Portugal's participation has been marked by the endorsement of such principles as geographical balance and gender balance, in addition to merit criteria. The geographical balance, in particular, remains an aspect that Portuguese diplomacy has been highlighting continually, considering it to be a key element for sustaining the strength of the EU's global diplomacy and activism. The national authorities commend the Union's efforts to promote gender balance among top officials at the EEAS, especially at the level of EU Delegations. This is viewed as a constructive development to the extent that it helps to set an example to national capitals.

On the domestic front, the distribution of positions within the EEAS, especially with respect to those diplomats based at the MFA (such as the Head of the EU Delegation in Brasilia) rather than those working as permanent EU officials, has been the subject of close scrutiny and discussion in connection with the country's ambitions in terms of visibility within the EU as well as in international relations. This topic has attracted considerable media coverage. The appointment of António Cardoso Mota (in 2009), João Vale de Almeida (2010), Ana Paula Zacarias (2011) and João Gomes Cravinho (2011) to the positions of Head of the EU Delegations in Caracas, Washington, Brasília and New Delhi respectively are all cases in point.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Assembleia da República (2012), Resolução da Assembleia da República n.º 16/2012. <http://dre.pt/pdf1sdip/2012/02/03000/0066600667.pdf>, p. 5, and Assembleia da República, Comissão de Assuntos Europeus (2011), 'Parecer sobre o Relatório de acompanhamento da participação de Portugal na União Europeia em 2010'. [www.parlamento.pt/ActividadeParlamentar/Paginas/DetalheActividadeParlamentar.aspx?BID=91139&ACT\\_TP=PUE](http://www.parlamento.pt/ActividadeParlamentar/Paginas/DetalheActividadeParlamentar.aspx?BID=91139&ACT_TP=PUE), p. 666.

<sup>74</sup> José Manuel Ferreira Pinto acted as the Head of the EU Delegation to Ukraine until May 2012, when he moved to the EU Delegation to Cape Verde in the sequence of annual rotation of the Service. At the time of the writing this paper (November 2012), the Head of EU Delegation to Cameroon was Raul Mateus Paula; while the posts of Head of Delegation to Gabon and Cape Verde were taken by Cristina Martins Barreira and Manuel Pinto Teixeira respectively. Vanessa de Sampaio e Melo was put in charge of the Programme for S. Tomé e Príncipe. Below the level of Head of Delegation, several Portuguese officials have been placed in the EU Delegations in Angola, Mozambique, East Timor, Bangladesh, Thailand, the Comoros, Senegal, Georgia and Serbia.

The process for recruiting Heads of Delegation has been subject to politicisation with the Social Democratic Party, then in opposition, being the principal voice of criticism against the options made by the Socialist government.<sup>75</sup> After a significant number of appointments of Heads of Delegation had been publicised, in August and September 2011, the perceived ‘loss’ of Brazil, Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Mozambique as ‘natural’ posts for Portuguese Heads of Delegation turned into a hot political issue. At the time, while the MFA considered the Portuguese nominations in the EEAS’s purview as being ‘satisfactory’<sup>76</sup>, the Social Democrat opposition pointed to the ‘defeat of the Portuguese government’.<sup>77</sup> The Portuguese candidate to the post of Head of Delegation in Brazil, Luísa Bastos de Almeida, received particular attention. The Social Democrat Member of the European Parliament and Vice-President of the European People’s Party Mario David “vehemently condemned” not only the Portuguese government, but also the High Representative, for announcing publicly that the post of Head of Delegation in Brazil had not been awarded because none of the applicants had possessed the indispensable qualities for the post.<sup>78</sup>

Against this backdrop of general criticism, which became less pronounced after the nomination of Ana Paula Zacarias as Head of the EU Delegation in Brazil, in March 2011, the official point of view on nominations was that they represented an acknowledgement on the part of the EEAS of the Portuguese candidates’ merit and of the added value that the country’s diplomacy brings to the EU. Ultimately, such nominations represented tangible compensation for the national diplomatic service’s reduced visibility in the post-Lisbon Treaty landscape. The supportive approach of Passos Coelho’s government concerning the EEAS should be understood in the light of such perceptions.

The MFA had no specific strategy to guide the appointment of national candidates to the EEAS. Whilst the candidates did not receive any particular training, the State Secretary of European Affairs has overseen the recruitment process and issued recommendation letters. There has also been no clearly defined plan as to how to maximise the competences, skills and know-how acquired by those diplomats who, after having been posted to EU Delegations, return to Lisbon to give continuity to their professional careers.

### ***The role of the EU Delegations***

Viewed from Lisbon, EU Delegations stand out as a generally positive experience in terms of the EEAS’s cooperation with member states. The Portuguese authorities consider the support provided by EU Delegations for official visits of member-state Foreign Ministers as an asset. The fact that meetings with the highest authorities of third countries are preceded by a briefing by the Head of Delegation to the Foreign Minister is seen as a particularly welcome expedient. Like other member states, Portugal thus recognises the benefits that spring from the ‘economy of scale’ generated by the EEAS. Incidentally, Portuguese Foreign Minister Paulo Portas experienced some of these benefits in June 2012 when visiting Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan.

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<sup>75</sup> David, M. (2010), ‘Eurodeputado Mário David critica que Portugal perca Delegações de Brasil, Angola, Moçambique e Guiné’, MEP Mario David’s official website, [www.mariodavid.eu/noticias/eurodeputado-mario-david-critica-que-portugal-perca-delegacoes-de-brasil-angola-mocambique-e-guine](http://www.mariodavid.eu/noticias/eurodeputado-mario-david-critica-que-portugal-perca-delegacoes-de-brasil-angola-mocambique-e-guine)

<sup>76</sup> Amado, L. (2010), cited in: ‘UE/Diplomacia: Representação de Portugal no Serviço Europeu de Ação Externa é “satisfatória”’, Expresso, 15 September 2010. <http://expresso.sapo.pt/uediplomacia-representacao-de-portugal-no-servico-europeu-de-acao-externa-e-satisfatoria-luis-amado=f603950#ixzz2Adc2K8Fy>

<sup>77</sup> David, M. (2010), *ibidem*.

<sup>78</sup> David, M. (2010), *ibidem*.

While from the national authorities' point of view, EU Delegations should endeavour 'to create synergies between the national diplomatic network and the newly created European one'<sup>79</sup>, they accept that for the time being, cooperation has been confined to informal contacts, ad-hoc collaboration and support for particular projects. Furthermore, there are no expectations in Lisbon as to any eventual engagement of the EU Delegations in promoting member states' economic interests, including Portugal's. The fact that the country's economic interests have traditionally competed with those of three big powers, notably Spain, France and Italy, largely explains such scepticism. Ultimately, there is no clear idea as to how the EU Delegations may be helpful in this critical respect without prioritising the interests of certain countries to the detriment of others: something which makes any development in this respect unlikely.

## **9.5 INTERACTION BETWEEN LISBON AND BRUSSELS**

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Portuguese officials tend to highlight increased contact with Brussels and the growth in the number of circulated documents as one of the most immediate effects of the EEAS on their daily work. Furthermore, the establishment of the EEAS has also meant that there are more people in Brussels able and capable of supplying national MFAs with necessary information. Consequently, the increased predictability is also identified as a benefit engendered by the EEAS.

However, it is clearly discernible that, in order to access information, countries' representatives have to take a proactive stance and establish indispensable contacts and links, since the information flow is not automatic or 'natural'. In this sense, while highlighting the competence and professionalism of EEAS officials, Portuguese diplomats widely note that changes to the level of exchange of information between the MFA and EEAS are required. In their view, information exchange needs to be strengthened and the information flow from the EEAS to member states needs to take place in a more open and transparent manner.

The problem with the information flow is intimately linked to the well-known existence of asymmetry in terms of leverage between national contingents/representations of small and big member states in Brussels, in general, and within the EU institutions (i.e. the European Commission and the European Parliament), in particular. This asymmetry implies that early drafts of documents are firstly, and sometimes exclusively, shared between representatives of larger member states and their colleagues in the EU institutions (long before they are distributed through the formal EEAS channel). As a result, a practice of 'bypassing' the EEAS, cultivated by the larger member states, has now been established, with tangible negative implications for information flow among member states. Countries with large representation in the Union's institutions have much earlier access to relevant information, which creates disadvantages for those member states that do not possess a wide network of national officials working in Brussels. Portuguese officials, who surely see themselves in the latter group, have been receiving "well-done documents, but at the last stage of the process."<sup>80</sup>

There is a general understanding among Portuguese diplomats of the temporary difficulties stemming from the fledgling EEAS; and they admit that expectations with regard to the Service are sometimes even higher than those held towards the Presidencies before the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. As a reflection of this understanding, Portuguese criticism of the EEAS, e.g. regarding the belated distribution of documents, is expressed in very careful wording. This, however, is not to say that Portuguese officials do not realise the implications of the difficulties surrounding the EEAS.

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<sup>79</sup> Assembleia da República, Comissão de Assuntos Europeus (2011), *ibidem*, p.5.

<sup>80</sup> Interviews with Portuguese diplomats, September 2012.

On the contrary, they express concern that the working methods of the Service, such as the delayed distribution of documents, will eventually increase the probability of a member state blocking a proposal which it did not have sufficient time to access.

That being said, Portuguese officials think that member states have been very tolerant of serious errors that have been made. An illustrative example is a leak of information from the EEAS to a regional organisation regarding the (diplomatic) positions of individual member states in summer 2012. According to them, such a mistake by an EU Presidency holder would never have been forgiven, and it was inappropriate that the EEAS did not even apologise for the episode.

In spite of the prevailing sympathy for the early difficulties of the EEAS, the aforementioned asymmetrical access to information is seen as a serious flaw. Many people are convinced that this asymmetry could be overcome if Portuguese nominations were more actively promoted both within the EEAS and the major EU institutions. On the other hand, it is broadly acknowledged that not even the most active policy could mitigate a major structural problem facing the EEAS, namely the unbalanced/selective flow of information. For this reason, the legitimacy of the Service remains questionable.

## **9.6 THE HIGH REPRESENTATIVE'S LEADERSHIP VIEWED FROM LISBON**

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The Portuguese standpoint on the leadership exercised by the High Representative mirrors the country's general stance regarding both the EEAS and the developing coordination between Lisbon and the European diplomatic service, as alluded to earlier. The position is informed by concerns over the autonomy of the EEAS and its leadership: a stronger voice for the High Representative would be welcome and should convey the EU common voice, rather than that of big EU member states.

Moreover, as viewed from Lisbon, the High Representative's role should be more than simply a coordinator of member states' positions. It should take on a true leadership role, although the Portuguese authorities acknowledge the fact that the quality of the High Representative's leading role depends very much on member states' ability to forge consensus while avoiding a veto culture. Incidentally, this was the general position that Portugal endorsed in the Final Report of the 'Future of Europe' group, published on 17 September 2012. This Report called for a substantial strengthening of the High Representative's role. In particular, it stressed the necessity for the High Representative to be rendered responsible for such key external action areas as the Neighbourhood Policy and Development Cooperation; to assume her full role of coordinator within the Commission; and to assume a leading role in improving the effectiveness of the EU's relations with its strategic partners.<sup>81</sup>

From the Portuguese point of view, there is still some room for improvement of the High Representative's role and profile. Indeed, the latter's difficulties in pushing forward a number of pertinent proposals tabled by some member states during the Council meetings (for instance, on the issue of sanctions) has been referred to as symptomatic of this lack of forceful initiative. Too often, the only outcome of the discussions taking place between member states boils down to the Conclusions of the Council, with no actions taking place to follow up political declarations. Hence, there is an urgent need for the High Representative to take the lead in translating Council Conclusions into real action.

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<sup>81</sup> This group was composed of representative of the following states: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Italy, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal and Spain. The Final Report is available at: [www.statewatch.org/news/2012/sep/eu-future-of-europe-report.pdf](http://www.statewatch.org/news/2012/sep/eu-future-of-europe-report.pdf)

As far as the High Representative's coordination efforts are concerned, the Portuguese position is marked by continued insistence on a more equal approach towards all member states. All efforts to glean the views of the member states through *tours des capitales* are positively viewed. So far, the perception in Lisbon is indeed that the High Representative has been showing a preference for the most powerful members to the detriment of small and more peripheral ones, since her *tours des capitales* have prioritised bigger member states.

## 9.7 CONCLUSIONS

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As the present study has attempted to demonstrate, Portugal's stance regarding the EEAS has not hitherto been guided by a clear-cut blueprint for how the country should explore the EEAS as an instrument to project the country's national image and power and how it could contribute, in a tangible way, to the new Service's endeavours to endow the EU with a more consistent and coherent foreign policy strategy. As a result, the Portuguese involvement within the new Service has been following a reactive rather than a pro-active line. This reactive approach has been informed by the belief that the EEAS should supplement, but never supersede, national foreign policies.

While, in general terms, national authorities describe the country as a supporter of the EEAS, two main features characterising the Portuguese perspective should be emphasised. Firstly, the country advocates that the principles of impartiality and autonomy with regard to member states should govern the Service's profile and performance. This position largely springs from the fear of seeing the conversion of the EEAS into a *directoire* orchestrated by the most powerful countries, with all that this implies for small states' capacity to influence both decision-shaping and decision-making processes. The prevailing *de facto* asymmetrical access to information, in addition to the unbalanced attention paid by the High Representative to national diplomacies, only reinforces such fears of a *directoire*. There is a perceived risk of relevant information being confined within a conclave composed of the big powers, and the ensuing transformation of the EEAS into a European selective club, rather than a genuine collective and all-encompassing institution. Efforts undertaken by small states, such as Portugal, to appoint more nationals to the EEAS are not seen as a plausible measure to bypass the existing hurdles linked to access to key information at the earliest stages of the process. This option is considered neither financially viable, nor appropriate to resolve the current difficulties, which seem to be structural given that it would be virtually impossible for a small country like Portugal to gain 'representational' leverage equivalent to that of big states such as Britain or France within the EU institutional apparatus, including the EEAS.

Secondly, the Lisbon authorities promote full complementarity between the EEAS's activities and national foreign policies. This should be intimately linked to concerns over the gradual replacement of national diplomacies by a European common diplomacy as the outcome of an incremental process starting with the short-term transfer of diplomatic tasks (from the national to the European level), which eventually might put an end to national sovereignty in terms of foreign policy definition and implementation. Moreover, support for complementarity between the EEAS and national diplomacies should be seen against the backdrop of Portugal's longstanding endorsement of what can be described as a virtuous and balanced combination between the promotion of European and national interests. In this sense, as has been the case with the CFSP throughout much of the past two decades, the new-born EEAS should also present itself as a venue for the legitimate 'uploading' of national interests, in addition to the expected 'downloading' of putative European common interests.

Paradoxically as it may seem, the Portuguese position favours the emergence of a strong leadership exercised by the EEAS, while at the same time there is a continued insistence upon the strict division



of labour between national and EU foreign policy, linked to widespread concerns about loss of sovereignty. This somewhat contradictory stance should be understood in light of the country's nature as a small state and its fear of a European *directoire* which has traditionally moved the Portuguese authorities to advocate a strong Commission.

There has been no direct connection between the profound restructuring that the Portuguese MFA has been undergoing since 2011 and the establishment of the EEAS. Rather, the restructuring was a by-product of the severe economic and financial conditions afflicting the country against the backdrop of the EU-IMF financial assistance programme. That being said, the closing down of some embassies in countries where EU Delegations are fully operational so as to enable both (national) human and material resources to be redirected to regions of the world that are considered more strategically important for the accomplishment of the country's foreign policy goals has been acknowledged as a possible scenario. What is more, cooperation with EU Delegations in those countries where there is no Portuguese diplomatic representation has been viewed in a positive light.

Portuguese diplomats have been showing understanding of the still fledgling nature of the EEAS. There is a consensus over the need for enhanced working procedures and methods, and better division of labour and greater coordination between the Service and national capitals. On the other hand, there is still criticism regarding lack of leadership and steering, generally reflected in the High Representative's difficulties in finding a pattern of alignment between words and deeds. Be as it may, the Portuguese authorities' willingness to see the High Representative exhibit forceful leadership, notably in pushing forward relevant proposals tabled by some member states during Council meetings, can be considered a manifestation of the country's supportive position regarding the EEAS.

## **Quantitative data - Portugal**

### **MFA budget**

Year **2012**: Administrative costs: 229.5 mln €, including for offices of Government's members, general support services, research, coordination and representation, and investment.

### **Number of missions**

Total: 128

### **Number of staff employed by the MFA**

Total: 2,039

### **Number of staff seconded to the EEAS**

Total of seconded diplomats: 7

Total number of Portuguese officials: 34, including:

- 27 at AD level, of which 7 from the MFA
- 7 SNEs, of which 1 from the MFA

Among these, there are seven Heads of Delegations, of which two from the MFA.

### **Number of arrangements of cooperation/burden-sharing with diplomatic missions of other member states (sharing premises, consular services etc.)**

N.A.

*Sources: Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Portugal.*

## The glass is half full: The EEAS through Dutch eyes

**By Louise van Schaik**

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### 10.1 INTRODUCTION

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On 5 November 2012 a new government took office in the Netherlands. In comparison to the previous conservative right-wing government, it is expected to be slightly keener to work towards consensus on EU issues. This viewpoint is confirmed in the recently published ‘state of the Union’ document which expresses the objective to strengthen the bridge-building role of the Netherlands within the EU.<sup>82</sup> However, it is still rather early to give an overview of specific positions on EU foreign policy, and the general public continues to follow EU affairs critically. With regard to the vote on Palestine’s membership of the UN General Assembly, the Netherlands abstained, whereas the previous government voted against Palestinian UNESCO membership last year. This indicates that the Dutch can be expected to take a somewhat more moderate position on the Middle East. In general, EU foreign policy does not receive much attention in Dutch media. The European External Action Service (EEAS) is primarily judged by the government for its potential to rationalise budgets and the tasks of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A specific point advocated by the Netherlands is a potential takeover of consular tasks by EU Delegations. The new EU foreign policy actors are considered to be of added value and receive support from the government, but there is some ambiguity about how this is related to a (perceived) decline of Dutch influence in the world. For the last two years, the Netherlands seemed almost in a state of denial about the need to rethink EU foreign policy questions strategically, to set priorities for this agenda and to redefine the division of labour between Dutch

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<sup>82</sup> The Government of the Netherlands (2013), Staat van de Unie “Bruggen slaan in Europa” (State of the Union: building bridges within Europe), 15 February 2013.

and European diplomacies, and it would be good if the new minister were to devote more attention to this matter.

This contribution will discuss the relationship between EU and Dutch diplomatic actors. Firstly, it gives a general overview of Dutch foreign policy orientations. Secondly, it discusses the structure of Dutch diplomacy and, in particular, budget cuts and the organisational division between the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and other external relations, such as trade, aid and neighbourhood policy. Thirdly, it gives an overview of Dutch views on specific EEAS issues, such as consular tasks and the co-location of diplomatic missions. Fourthly, it devotes attention to what the Netherlands does to promote Dutch diplomats and how the latter view their posting to the EEAS. Fifthly, it touches upon perceptions of Ashton's performance so far and what to expect from new Dutch Foreign Minister Frans Timmermans. Finally, the sixth section draws some general conclusions.

## **10.2 THE MERCHANT AND THE VICAR**

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The Netherlands has a long tradition of linking its international diplomatic presence to promoting Dutch products and values. Since the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, the notion of the 'merchant and the vicar' characterised the image of Dutch diplomacy. Even though since then the relative size of the Dutch economy has downsized, the Netherlands still ranks 17<sup>th</sup> in terms of the size of its economy.<sup>83</sup> It is a large investor in third countries and has an open export-dependent economy.<sup>84</sup>

Promoting 'Merchant Holland' has regained importance in the current economic crisis. Nevertheless, the Netherlands is also still keen to continue with its long tradition of promoting values such as human rights and the rule of law. The Hague likes to refer to itself as the legal capital of the world and is the hometown of the Peace Palace, several tribunals, Europol, Eurojust and the International Criminal Court. Another element of the Dutch 'vicar attitude' is the emphasis on the need for EU conditions for enlargement to be "strict and fair".<sup>85</sup>

More generally, the Netherlands does not see itself a small country, and has convictions and positions on a wide range of foreign policy issues. Its contribution to development cooperation and international missions, not to mention the level of ambition of its armed forces, is still relatively high, despite severe budget cuts in recent years. This has not prevented the exclusion of the Netherlands from G20 meetings. The country lacks a seat on the UN Security Council and recently decided to share its seat on the IMF Executive Board with Belgium to make room for emerging economies. The government that entered office in autumn 2012 has restated its support for European cooperation in general, and for a larger degree of EU involvement in foreign policy and defence matters in particular. This can be seen – at least partially – as a compensation for the perceived loss of Dutch international influence. On the European continent, the Netherlands is one of the most pro-transatlantic countries in its orientation.

With regard to the Dutch position on European integration, the 'no vote' on the Constitutional Treaty in 2005 can be considered as a turning point. From then onwards, the Dutch government changed its

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<sup>83</sup> According to the Central Intelligence Agency World Factbook of 2011 and comparable lists of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

<sup>84</sup> Knapen, B., Arts, G., Kleistra, Y., Klem, M. and Rem, M. (2010), 'Attached to the World: On the Anchoring and Strategy of Dutch Foreign Policy', Scientific Council for Government Policy, The Hague, [www.wrr.nl/fileadmin/en/publicaties/PDF-Rapporten/Attached\\_to\\_the\\_world.pdf](http://www.wrr.nl/fileadmin/en/publicaties/PDF-Rapporten/Attached_to_the_world.pdf)

<sup>85</sup> The Government of the Netherlands (2011a), 'Staat van de Europese Unie 2011-2012', 'Nederland in Europa, Europa in de Wereld – Realistisch en Doelgericht', The Hague.

attitude from being a frontrunner in the integration process towards a more critical and reluctant stance. Points of criticism recurring in Dutch public debates on the EU include the Netherlands paying a relatively high share of the EU budget compared to the amount of EU funds it receives, the EU institutions being overly bureaucratic and keen on generating red tape, the inefficiency of having the European Parliament travel to Strasbourg for its plenary sessions, transfers and guarantees for Southern European member states since the euro crisis, and the transfer of competences on an ever-increasing number of issues to Brussels. Dutch citizens and politicians emphasise, in particular, that health care, education and pensions are topics in which Brussels should not intervene.<sup>86</sup>

During the election campaign in August and September 2012, Europe was a leading topic. The outcome was considered pro-European, since the most Eurosceptic parties – Geert Wilders’ Freedom Party (PVV) and the Socialist Party (SP) – lost vote shares and ‘only’ received about 20% of the vote. At the same time, very outspoken pro-European parties, such as D66 and the Green-Left (Groen-Links), did not win much either. The big winners, the Conservative Liberals (VVD) and the Labour Party (PvdA), cannot be described as anti-European, but neither can they be considered ‘EU-lovers’. Their position on European integration in the last decade has followed the general trend in public opinion. Prime Minister Mark Rutte of the largest party, VVD, has, for instance, indicated his lack of interest in prospective thinking (‘vergezichten’) on European integration. Therefore, the Netherlands can be expected to stick to its slightly Eurocritical tone in policy debates, for example on the future of Europe.

### 10.3 THE EEAS AND DUTCH DIPLOMACY

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Many questions remain as to the impact of the EEAS on the size of Dutch diplomacy. Initially, the Ministry of Finance saw the establishment of the EEAS as a means of justifying the closure of embassies and of handing over consular and visa affairs to EU Delegations. In previous rounds of cuts, which amounted to a 55 million euro reduction of the budget for diplomatic representation, the number of diplomats was slashed from over 3,000 to 2,500 in 2014. Further cuts of 40 million euros are foreseen to a total budget of 760 million euros. Several diplomatic missions were closed and more closures are expected. This is commensurate with a considerable reduction in development funding, which will bring down the Dutch ODA contribution from 0.7% to 0.6% of GDP in the coming years. As a consequence, diplomatic staff in third countries will be reduced in number from 1,138 in 2012 to 885 in 2015. The number of *attachés* will also be reduced and they are expected to number around 285 in 2015.

At the same time, it is recognised that it is still too early to rely on the EEAS and EU Delegations to take over a substantial proportion of national embassies’ tasks, and the Netherlands opposes an expansion of the EEAS budget. Nevertheless, the Netherlands still aims to explore the possibility of delegating tasks in the area of consular affairs and visa applications to EU Delegations in the years to come.<sup>87</sup> This point is reiterated in policy documents and debates with Members of Parliament, also in the context of further budget cuts to the diplomatic network of the Netherlands.<sup>88</sup> The option of co-locating embassies with EU Delegations is also considered as a viable one for those countries in which the Netherlands has a small diplomatic service. In cooperation with the Danish EU Presidency, a conference

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<sup>86</sup> Clingendael (2012), ‘Rijk Achter de Dijken’, ‘Magazine on EU and International Affairs for the Election Campaign, Clingendael – Netherlands Institute of International Relations, The Hague.

<sup>87</sup> The Government of the Netherlands (2011), ‘Beoordeling Nieuwe Commissievoorstellen Fiche Over: Mededeling Consulaire Bescherming EU Burgers in Derde Landen’, The Hague, and The Government of the Netherlands (2012), ‘Verslag van de Informele Raad Buitenlandse Zaken (‘Gymnich’) van 9 en 10 maart 2012’, The Hague.

<sup>88</sup> The Government of the Netherlands (2011), *ibidem*, and The Government of the Netherlands (2012), ‘Answer Regarding Motie Ten Broeke c.s. and Motie Ormel and Ten Broeke’, The Hague.

for the European External Action Service was convened on this topic in The Hague in March 2012. Together with the Benelux partners and the Baltic states further progress on this topic is explored and the Netherlands aims to take part in a pilot-project to have a joint EU-visa office at Cape Verde.<sup>89</sup>

Within the Ministry's structure, responsibility for EU neighbourhood policy, EU development cooperation and other topics on the agenda of the former EU external relations commissioners and services fall within the Directorate-General for European Cooperation. Responsibility for developing Dutch positions on Common Foreign and Security Policy issues, including the tasks of the European Correspondent and the Common Security and Defence Policy, falls within the Directorate-General for Political Affairs. The two main aspects of EU external action are thus the responsibility of two divisions of the Ministry that fall within different organisational entities of the same ministry. On EU external action, these divisions also coordinate regularly with other units of the Ministry, such as the Department in charge of multilateral affairs regarding EU representation in UN bodies, and the Directorate-General for International Cooperation for EU donor coordination and aspects of EU development cooperation policy, such as aid effectiveness, on which the Netherlands has its own viewpoints and considerable experience. There is also a considerable amount of coordination with the recently added Directorate-General for foreign economic relations that was transferred from the Ministry of Economic Affairs to allow a single minister to be responsible both for aid and trade policy issues. This minister, Lilianne Ploumen, is also a Social Democrat, just like Foreign Minister Timmermans.

The fact that issues falling within the remit of the Foreign Affairs Council and the EEAS are prepared by different organisational sub-entities within the Ministry risks undermining the Dutch objective of coherence in EU external policies, and it is the source of a considerable amount of intra-ministerial coordination. This aspect might be taken into account by a group of 'wise men' that is currently advising the minister on how to modernise Dutch diplomacy.

#### **10.4 NATIONAL VIEWS ON THE FUNCTIONS OF THE EEAS**

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After the 'no vote' in the referendum on the Constitutional Treaty in 2005, the Dutch government supported the British position of no longer using the title 'EU Foreign Minister' for the upgraded position of High Representative. Despite the removal of this symbolism, the Netherlands did not oppose the idea of setting up a European diplomatic service and combining foreign policy tasks previously performed by the EU Commissioner for External Relations, the High Representative and the EU Presidency. A letter to parliament in 2010 on the establishment of the EEAS mentions that gains are to be expected with regard to the quality and coherence of decision-making in the area of EU foreign policy.<sup>90</sup> It also refers to the need to increasingly speak with one European voice due to the shifting tectonics of world order, and the emerging economies being increasingly assertive to the detriment of the EU's international influence.

Dutch support for the EEAS was also demonstrated by a high-level seminar organised by the Clingendael Institute in October 2010, in close cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The event brought together senior policymakers from over 17 EU member states with academic experts to discuss how the EEAS could be turned into a success.<sup>91</sup> More in general, the Netherlands is among

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<sup>89</sup> The Government of the Netherlands (2013), Staat van de Unie "Bruggen slaan in Europa" (State of the Union: building bridges within Europe), 15 February 2013.

<sup>90</sup> The Government of the Netherlands (2010), 'Kamerbrief Inzake Europese Dienst voor het Externe Optreden', The Hague.

<sup>91</sup> Van Ham, P. and Van Schaik, L. (2012), 'Heeft Nederland Nog Wel een Eigen Buitenlands Beleid (Nodig)? Of Zou de Europese Unie dit Moeten Overnemen?', Clingendael – Netherlands Institute of International Relations, The Hague.

the strongest proponents of a role in consular affairs and visa services for EU Delegations. The Dutch government has strongly advocated this, but it also realises that a transfer of this task to EU Delegations is unlikely to happen overnight, given the opposition of key EU member states, including the UK, France and Germany. A recent letter to parliament mentions seconding a Dutch diplomat to the EEAS to work specifically on strengthening possible EEAS contributions in the area of consular crisis management and consular protection of EU citizens in third countries.<sup>92</sup> Together with the Benelux partners and the Baltic States, an announcement was made in Brussels in December 2012 to underline the common desire for a larger European role in consular affairs.<sup>93</sup>

The Netherlands has emphasised that local EU statements should always be made by the EU Delegation, preferably by the Head of Mission. Member states, particularly the ‘big three’, should not all of a sudden step in when offences are grave and they are willing to make a mark. The Netherlands also accepts a (leading) role for EU Delegations in coordinating development cooperation and (passively) follows the EU’s policy in countries where it has no embassy of its own. The Netherlands is very much interested in obtaining access to the political reports of EU Delegations, including those with politically sensitive information. It realises the need for considerable investment in IT to ensure the safe transmission of data and it is willing to advise the EEAS on this matter and to provide technical support. At the same time, any additional funding for this matter would not be necessary, in line with the Dutch position on EU budget matters.

With regard to the issue of the EU’s external representation in multilateral bodies, the Netherlands is pragmatic with regard to whom should represent the EU. EU coordination and external representation practices should be brought in line with post-Lisbon rules, but it is recognised that these can be interpreted in different ways. It also matters how far apart the interests and preferences of EU member states are, and whether the rules and culture of the relevant international organisation allow for a unified EU external representation. In practice, this means that the Netherlands does actively contribute to achieving common EU positions on most international issues, but not on those issues where it has strongly-held policy positions and consensus is difficult to achieve. An example is the agenda on sexual and reproductive rights, where the EU has trouble agreeing on common positions due to religious-ethical considerations in a minority of (Catholic) EU member states, whereas the Netherlands prefers a progressive policy and also openly advocates this position.

Together with Belgium and Luxembourg, the Netherlands drafted a non-paper in April 2011 in which it advocated:

- better cooperation with third countries and international organisations;
- increased information-sharing and joint analyses;
- consular cooperation;
- streamlined foreign policy decision-making with a strong role for the Political and Security Committee;
- logistical support in times of crisis;
- joint travel advice and cables;
- common communication;

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<sup>92</sup> The Government of the Netherlands (2012), ‘Answer Regarding Motie Ten Broeke c.s. and Motie Ormel and Ten Broeke’, The Hague.

<sup>93</sup> Government of the Netherlands (2012), ‘Benelux en Baltische Staten willen meer consulaire samenwerking in Europa, 10 December 2012’, The Hague. Cf: [www.rijksoverheid.nl/nieuws/2012/12/10/benelux-en-baltische-staten-willen-meer-consulaire-samenwerking-binnen-europa.html](http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/nieuws/2012/12/10/benelux-en-baltische-staten-willen-meer-consulaire-samenwerking-binnen-europa.html) [accessed 24 January 2012].

- more coordination between the EU and national development cooperation programming; and
- common training of EU and national diplomats.

At the same time, the Netherlands has underlined its longstanding demand for the budget of EU's external action to stay within the limits of the overall budget, which, in light of the economic crisis, should not be increased at this point in time.<sup>94</sup> This demand is consistent with the objective of budget neutrality as enshrined in the decision on the establishment of the EEAS.<sup>95</sup>

At the beginning of 2012, the Netherlands asked for more clarity on the status of certain internal EEAS documents, such as Heads of Mission (HoMs) reports that are agreed upon in third countries by the Heads of Embassy of EU member states and the EU Delegation. This matter arose after an incident in which the (former) minister was displeased at the leaking of a HoMs report in Gaza.

In December 2011, the Dutch Minister for Foreign Affairs, together with 11 colleagues from other EU member states, co-signed a three-page letter to Catherine Ashton on the EEAS.<sup>96</sup> Some observers viewed this as a criticism of the Service, even though ministers emphasised their objective of being constructive and supportive. The letter mentions, amongst other things, that “the setting up of a secure communications network should be a major priority” and that “the creation of defence and security *attachés* in EU Delegations ... should be considered”. In response, Ashton presented a report in which she pointed to the administrative and budgetary challenges facing the EEAS and highlighted achievements made thus far.<sup>97</sup>

It seems as if Dutch criticism focused mainly on organisational aspects. For instance, in October 2011, the Minister of Foreign Affairs assured the parliament that HR/VP Ashton had made an active and valuable contribution to international policies, including to the Middle East peace process, the relationship between Serbia and Kosovo, and in the Arab region<sup>98</sup>. In an informal meeting of the Foreign Affairs Council in March 2012, he underlined the need for “more synergy between the EEAS and Member States’ diplomatic services”.<sup>99</sup>

In the most recent policy statement on EU policy the EEAS is said still to suffer from birth pains, even though it has passed the stage of early birth. According to the Dutch government the service seems to be suffering from obligatory expenses eating up most of its budget, limited political room to manoeuvre, bureaucratic internal structures and processes, turf wars and call for more external visibility.<sup>100</sup> It expresses its intention to actively contribute to the mid-term review of the EEAS foreseen for this year. In terms of policy priorities the contribution to promoting human rights is highlighted. At the same time it is recognised that the times at which the EU could base its international position on normative objectives and international payments are over. The EU needs to become more focused on promoting its interests in the world. Topics such as non-proliferation, raw materials, climate change, water and energy require global answers given their destabilising effects. The Common Foreign and Security Policy can be expected to concentrate on the neighbourhood

<sup>94</sup> The Government of the Netherlands (2011), ‘Verslag van de Raad Buitenlandse Zaken van 12 April 2011’, The Hague.

<sup>95</sup> European Union (2010), ‘Council Decision of 26 July 2010 Establishing the Organisation and Functioning of the EEAS’, 2010/427/EU, Brussels.

<sup>96</sup> Reitman, A. (2012), ‘Ministers Identify Glitches in EU Diplomatic Service’, EU Observer, 6 January 2012.

<sup>97</sup> High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (2011), ‘European External Action Service: Report by the High Representative to the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission’, Brussels.

<sup>98</sup> Parliament of the Netherlands, ‘Modernisering Nederlandse Diplomatie, Lijst van Vragen en Antwoorden’, Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 32 734, No. 2, The Hague.

<sup>99</sup> Bulletin Quotidien Europe 10571, 2012.

<sup>100</sup> The Government of the Netherlands (2013), Staat van de Unie “Bruggen slaan in Europa” (State of the Union: building bridges within Europe), 15 February 2013.



countries and the broader circles of countries surrounding them, notably the Western Balkans, the Middle-East and North-Africa, the Sahel region, the Horn of Africa, the Eastern neighbourhood countries and Iran.

### ***Frequent contacts with the EEAS, but hesitation to join the service***

In general, the attention given to the CFSP has not increased, but diplomats at the Ministry are in contact more often with diplomats from the EEAS and EU Delegations, which may slowly create greater awareness. This is particularly the case for regional departments and country desk officers. The 'EU coordination' reflex is on the rise; more often Dutch diplomats realise the need to ask whether an EU position on a particular issue exists or should be developed. Some complain about the obligatory character of EU coordination and preparatory documents for Council meetings arriving from the EEAS being late or of low quality. More recently, this is said to be improving.

A small group of people within the Ministry are really interested in EEAS matters; they would also be the people one would expect to join the EEAS at a certain point in their career. Positions in the EEAS feature in regular postings of jobs linked to the rotating system applied within the Ministry (with career diplomats and some of the support staff having to rotate every four years). One senior staff member at the Permanent Representation to the EU is responsible for promoting Dutch nationals in senior EU positions, including those within the EEAS. This person aims to increase the number of Dutch nationals at EEAS Headquarters.

It is not clear whether taking up a position in the EEAS is beneficial for national career prospects. In general, being outside the core structure of the Ministry is considered less beneficial for the career path and stories about a bad working atmosphere at the Service with many turf wars and less interesting tasks for seconded national diplomats are no recommendation. It would furthermore be difficult to obtain a management position, whereas experience with supervising diplomats is a requirement for further promotion within the Dutch system. An extra complicating factor is that the new government decided to include top positions at the Dutch MFA in a rotating pool of top officials working for Dutch government institutions. Senior staff with experience in other ministries are less likely to move on to the EEAS, since they lack long-standing experience in diplomacy, which is a typical requirement for EEAS positions. Dutch diplomats who are still interested emphasise that a posting at the EEAS provides an extraordinary opportunity to learn from other diplomats and to help shape EU positions on sensitive foreign policy matters, somewhat out of reach of direct Dutch influence. Joining the EEAS would provide a steep learning curve and would therefore be considered a good step in a balanced career path, similar to being based for instance at the Dutch Permanent Representation to the EU.

## **10.5 LONG LIVE ASHTON! WHO DO YOU MEAN?**

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Ashton is rather invisible in Dutch media sources. The CFSP plays only a marginal role in debates on foreign policy, which centre around the Dutch position on the euro crisis, the budget and effectiveness of development aid, cuts made to the defence budget, and the need for economic diplomacy to promote the Dutch business sector.

According to the Dutch government, Ashton could be more assertive in setting the EU foreign policy agenda on specific issues, such as the relationship with strategic partners. The previous Dutch government had little appetite for a revision of the European Security Strategy as it believed there was no need for new strategies, but rather new policy activities in specific fields. It is not yet clear whether the new government will depart from this position, but a radical change appears unlikely.

On the Middle East peace process, the position of the Netherlands was expected to change when pro-Israel Minister Rosenthal (backed by the Freedom Party of Geert Wilders) left his position. The new minister, Mr Timmermans, was expected to take a more pro-Palestinian position on the basis of viewpoints expressed during his term as a Member of Parliament. Nevertheless, on the initiative of a small radical Christian party (SGP), a resolution was adopted in parliament in which the continued support of the Netherlands for Israel was emphasised.<sup>101</sup> Whereas the Netherlands voted against Palestinian membership of UNESCO in 2011, it abstained from voting at the UN General Assembly when the same matter arose in November 2012. Minister Timmermans explained on Dutch television that, despite having advocated a different position before, he now had to respect the majority wishes of the parliament.<sup>102</sup> He also hinted that the Dutch had persuaded Germany too to abstain that time around. It thus appears that the Dutch position has only become slightly more moderate with regard to questions concerning the Middle East peace process, and that Timmermans attaches more importance to the Dutch position being in line with those of other EU member states. In general, he seems keen to underline the need for European consensus.

The issue resurfaced in the debate on the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs held on 18 and 19 December 2012. Minister Timmermans stressed the need for a united EU position on the Middle East peace process and the EU's role in establishing a better labelling system with regard to products from illegal settlements in Palestinian territories. In his view, the Netherlands will not be able to play an influential role on these matters on its own. Regarding the issue of human rights violations, *inter alia* in Tibet, he also referred to EU efforts given the lack of a diplomatic presence for the Netherlands in many parts of the world. Members of Parliament referred to cooperation with other EU member states and the EEAS in relation to the increased need for co-location in order to save costs.

According to the foreign policy scorecard of the European Council on Foreign Relations the Netherlands punched above its weight on EU foreign policy matters in 2012 pointing to a sustained contribution to promoting human rights (e.g. towards Russia), humanitarian assistance and its willingness to share its IMF Executive Board position with a view of reducing Europe's overrepresentation in this body.<sup>103</sup> This may point to the Netherlands doing better on the ground than in terms of its contribution to the strategic thinking and is likely due to the choice of topics looked at. With the ongoing budget cuts in the area development cooperation and diplomatic staff the picture is likely to be less positive in the future.

## 10.6 CONCLUSIONS

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When talking to Dutch diplomats and foreign policy specialists more generally, as well as when bearing in mind Dutch media, the Netherlands does appear still to be downplaying the potential of the new HR/VP position and the EEAS. The country almost seems to be in a state of denial with regard to rapid developments in the field of EU foreign policymaking. For instance, it is not participating in the European Global Strategy initiative launched by Sweden, Poland, Italy and Spain. Government officials use the perception of the EEAS not functioning very well as an excuse to justify the limited amount of strategic thinking. However, sooner or later the transatlantic middle-power will have to decide its course on EU foreign policy and the implications of the new structures for the

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<sup>101</sup> Parliament of The Netherlands (2012), 'Motie van het Lid van der Staaij' (Resolution on Dutch Support to Israel), Kabinetsformatie, 33410, Nr. 55, The Hague.

<sup>102</sup> Interview with Minister Timmermans at Pauw & Witteman (a Dutch late night show), 29 November 2012.

<sup>103</sup> Vaisse, J. and Dennisson, S. (2013), European Foreign Policy Scorecard 2013, European Council on Foreign Relations, London.

tasks and scope of Dutch national foreign policy.<sup>104</sup> We are still waiting to hear the views of new Foreign Minister Timmermans on many issues of EU foreign policy. Given his background as a career diplomat, a Social Democrat and Minister for Europe (which is now combined with Foreign Affairs), he can be expected to be more keen on supporting an active EU foreign policy in comparison to his predecessor, but only time will tell.

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<sup>104</sup> Van Ham, P. and Van Schaik, L. (2012), *ibidem*.

## Quantitative data – The Netherlands

### MFA budget

Year **2011**: Total budget: 11 bn €, of which:

- Contribution to the EU: 6.8 bn €
- Administrative costs: 720 mln €

### Number of missions

Total: 158

Outside the EU: 127

Inside the EU: 31

### Number of staff employed by the MFA

Total: 2,500, of which

- Staff in missions: 997

### Number of staff seconded to the EEAS

Total number of Dutch nationals: 31, of which:

- 8 seconded national diplomats
- 23 officials (AD level)

These include:

- 7 Heads of Delegation
- 1 Director for Security
- 1 Head of EU Military Staff
- 1 Head of Legal Service

In addition: 26 SNEs

### Number of arrangements of cooperation/burden-sharing with diplomatic missions of other member states (sharing premises, consular services etc.)

- The Netherlands shares its premises with Denmark in Harare (Zimbabwe) and Vilnius (Lithuania). In Astana (Kazakhstan) one Belgian diplomat is located at the Embassy of the Netherlands. Currently, several other options for co-location are being negotiated or investigated.
- One Dutch diplomat was incorporated in the staff of the EU Delegation in Damascus (Syria) after the Dutch Embassy closed down. This lasted until the Syrian Embassy in The Hague stopped to be operational.
- In countries where Dutch embassies were closed, the handing out of Schengen visas is delegated to other EU member states. In Burkina Faso, Ecuador, Cameroon, Zambia, Guatemala, Bolivia and Uruguay, visas are handed out by Belgium, Spain and Sweden.

*Sources: Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands; European External Action Service (2012). 'Staffing in the EEAS'. Brussels .*

# Slovenia and the European External Action Service

*By Sabina Kajnč Lange*

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## 11.1 SLOVENIAN AND EUROPEAN FOREIGN POLICY

Slovenia became an independent state in 1991. Its foreign policy saw a sharp discontinuity with the former Yugoslav foreign policy. After the new country had gained the recognition of the international community and restored good neighbourly relations, the main goal of Slovenia's foreign policy was to join the Euro-Atlantic community. Membership of the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) were viewed as the primary tools to achieve this, though the decision to pursue NATO membership came about later than the more 'natural' decision to apply to join the EU.<sup>105</sup> On the 'negative' side, Slovenia's foreign policy has become characterised by what some analysts have called 'the flight from the Balkans'.<sup>106</sup> It was only in the late 1990s when, by participating in various post-conflict initiatives in the region<sup>107</sup>, including in the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, that Slovenia's foreign policy looked at the Balkans again: but this time from

<sup>105</sup> For further information on Slovenian foreign policy with respect to the EU, see Kajnč, S. (2011), 'Slovenia: Searching for a Foreign Policy Identity via the EU' in Wong, R. and Hill, C. (eds.), *National and European Foreign Policies: towards Europeanisation*, Routledge, London, pp.189-209. The first part of this report is largely based on this publication.

<sup>106</sup> Bojinović, A. (2005), 'Geographical Proximity and Historical Context as a Basis of Active Foreign Policy Strategy of Small European States – The Case of Austria and Slovenia Regarding the Western Balkans', in *Politics in Central Europe*, 1(1), Metropolitan University Prague, Plzeň, pp. 8-29; Bučar, B. (1994), 'Slovenska zunanja politika med Evropo in Balkanom' ['Slovenian Foreign Policy between Europe and the Balkans']. *Teorija in praksa*, 31(11/12), University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana, pp. 1063-1068.

<sup>107</sup> Slovenia joined the South-Eastern Co-operation Initiative (SECI) in 1997, the Royaumont Initiative and set up an International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

the position of an actor from outside the region. It put the region at the top of its foreign policy interests in geographic terms in its 1999 'Declaration on Foreign Policy' and has been a fervent supporter of the Balkans' importance to the EU since becoming an EU member itself.<sup>108</sup>

Thematically, Slovenia is a strong supporter of human rights, with a recognisable focus on women and children in conflict and post-conflict rehabilitation. A newer thematic focus, which is visible due to the creation of a unit in the Ministry as well as the country's active participation in relevant international networks, is 'green diplomacy'. The third recognisable strain of Slovenian foreign policy is its project-type nature, by virtue of a series of 'Chairmanships' and 'Presidencies', and United Nations Security Council membership as a non-permanent member (and candidacy for it). The last strategic document on Slovenian foreign policy, passed by the National Assembly, dates from 1999.<sup>109</sup>

Slovenia joined the EU together with seven other Central and Eastern European countries, Malta and Cyprus in May 2004. Accession negotiations over the Common Foreign and Security Policy chapter went smoothly.<sup>110</sup> In the first years of its EU membership, Slovenia worked on earning recognition of its expertise in the Western Balkans and generally supported human rights, but was otherwise a 'quiet' member.

The intensity of the attention paid by Slovenian foreign policy to the CFSP peaked at the time of the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the EU in the first half of 2008. During this period, the Slovenian Foreign Ministry had to become 'global' in the sense of dealing with every issue on the agenda, many of which did not concern its national foreign policy agenda. After the Presidency, this global interest quickly faded away, only to be raised again during Slovenia's candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council (2012-2013). Again, this quickly gave way to more strictly national issues after the unsuccessful vote in the General Assembly (Azerbaijan was voted into the non-permanent seat). Bilateral policy seems very detached from EU external action, and at most takes the CFSP into consideration in dubious cases or, at worst, takes advantage of it for shifting responsibility. The CFSP is seen by the Foreign Ministry as the core of the EU's external action, with the European Commission's external policies rarely getting the same attention (with the exception of enlargement policy, especially towards the countries of the Western Balkans).

The economic and financial crisis has contributed to reducing Ljubljana's interest in the CFSP. Consequently, a new or strengthened focus on economic diplomacy has lowered trust among member states, while at the same time the CFSP does not (and cannot) play a role in bilateral relations in view of strengthening economic ties, especially in unchartered territories, like the BRIC countries, where each member state is playing on its own advantage, be it due to historic special relations or newly-developed ties.

Several snapshot observations seem to prevail among 'Europeanists' and 'bilateralists' in the Foreign Ministry alike. It continues to be observed that issues sensitive for member states are left for the EU to deal with (especially controversial issues of human rights abuses). At the same time, less inclination to compromise in order to come to a common position or policy has been detected. 'Uploading' is still

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<sup>108</sup> National Assembly (1999), 'Deklaracija o zunanji politiki Republike Slovenije' (Declaration on the Foreign Policy of the Republic of Slovenia), adopted by the Slovenian Parliament on 17 December 1999, available at:

[www.gov.si/mzz/zunanja\\_poli/deklaracij\\_o\\_zuna\\_poli\\_repu\\_slov.html](http://www.gov.si/mzz/zunanja_poli/deklaracij_o_zuna_poli_repu_slov.html)

<sup>109</sup> National Assembly (1999), 'Deklaracija o zunanji politiki Republike Slovenije' (Declaration on the Foreign Policy of the Republic of Slovenia) adopted by the Slovenian Parliament on 17 December 1999, available at:

[www.gov.si/mzz/zunanja\\_poli/deklaracij\\_o\\_zuna\\_poli\\_repu\\_slov.html](http://www.gov.si/mzz/zunanja_poli/deklaracij_o_zuna_poli_repu_slov.html)

<sup>110</sup> In the period prior to accession, Slovenia adhered to all but one of the declarations and demarches to which it had been invited. The one exception was with respect to CFSP declarations on the flight ban against Montenegro airlines.

possible, only the process has changed. Instead of persuading the Presidency, one needs to bring together a sufficiently large coalition to be able to push through the inclusion of a subject on the agenda. The process is seen as more time-consuming and less efficient than the pre-Lisbon system.

## **11.2 STRUCTURE AND RESOURCES OF THE SLOVENIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY**

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Changes were made to the organisation and structure of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs following the general elections in 2008, and again due to early elections in 2011. These changes were motivated by the economic and financial crises and the resulting budget cuts, the strengthened focus on economic diplomacy as well as the more global orientation of Slovenian foreign policy following its EU Council Presidency in 2008 and elections in the same year, which saw a shift in the government to a (centre)-left coalition (which changed again to (centre)-right after 2011). The existence of the European External Action Service does not figure in these changes – nor does it figure in considerations regarding the expansion of Slovenia’s diplomatic network. Four new diplomatic missions are planned, with the embassy in Brasilia opening first (no decisions have been announced yet as to the other new missions). A new mission was opened in Tirana and staffed with a *chargé d'affaires*. Diplomatic missions have been closed down in Helsinki, Stockholm, Dublin and Lisbon. Consulates in New York and Düsseldorf have also been shut. The most drastic closures are those of the embassies in Sweden and Finland, thus leaving the embassy in Copenhagen covering all of Scandinavia and two Baltic states (the embassy in Berlin covers Latvia).

Major changes to the organisation of the MFA include strengthening economic diplomacy and development cooperation (both now have their own Directorate-Generals), setting up a unit for global challenges (which mostly, but not exclusively, deals with climate change policies), and, following the last elections, incorporating the previously separate Government Office for Development and European Affairs into the Foreign Ministry structures, almost 15 years after it left its original base in the Foreign Ministry (the State Secretary for European Affairs is, however, located in the Prime Minister’s Office, while there is a State Secretary responsible for European policies and bilateral relations in the MFA as well). These internal changes are also reflected in staffing in embassies. Many more economic *attachés* have been appointed and the budget for economic diplomacy has grown. Slovenia has no burden-sharing arrangements with other countries.

The MFA’s budget was curtailed first by the 2012 budget and then further in the rebalancing of public finances in 2012. The diplomatic and consular network has seen 5.4 million euros of cuts due to the rebalancing. Other cuts affected multilateral development cooperation, multilateral international obligations and economic diplomacy.

## **11.3 SLOVENIAN VIEWS ON SETTING UP AND ON THE FUNCTIONING OF THE EEAS**

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Slovenia’s support for the EEAS was shaped by its position as a small EU member state and its recently gained knowledge of the functioning of the CFSP, acquired during the first semester of 2008 when Slovenia held the rotating Presidency of the Council. It saw the EEAS as infusing consistency and sustainability into the CFSP, provided that it was based on principles of transparency, joint ownership and flexibility, and that it was rather coordinative in spirit. Slovenian Foreign Minister Samuel Žbogar, together with his colleagues from Latvia, Lithuania and Cyprus, wrote a letter to the High Representative when the Service was being established, calling for transparency in the process of shaping the Service, ensuring information-sharing, and for observing the ownership principle by paying particular attention to the staffing issue.

The Slovenian view of the EEAS in terms of its scope was fairly narrow. It saw the aims of the Service as being to ensure greater flexibility of EU action under the CFSP and to balance the influence of big member states, but it otherwise saw the Service as modelled on the past work of the Council Secretariat and the role of the rotating Presidency of the Council. This initial view did not see it expanding beyond the CFSP. The 'Commission component' was not considered to be necessary and was rather unwelcome. Although not much emphasis was paid to the delimitation of the role of the new Service and the Commission in development cooperation, a preference for a bigger role for the EEAS quickly evolved. With the focus on the CFSP and enlargement policy, Slovenia did not set out its position on the placement of the CSDP and its structures within the new Service. Unlike its position on the roles of the EEAS and the Commission in the programming stages of the development cooperation instruments, which was developed later, with regard to CSDP there was a feeling that big member states had clear ideas as to how they wanted these structures to work, and further ideas in Ljubljana were not developed.

When the decision on establishing the EEAS was adopted, Slovenia's MFA focused publicly on the issue of staffing, while more privately becoming disenchanted and sceptical about the Service in general. No post of Head of Mission (and no other management post in the Service) was awarded to candidates from the Slovenian MFA in the 2010 and 2011 rotations of Heads of Mission, which triggered public dissatisfaction not only in the MFA (which was very loud in its condemnation in 2010, although rather more subtle statement was issued in 2011), but also by Prime Minister Borut Pahor, and the President of the Republic, Danilo Türk. The MFA's rather mellow reaction in 2011 was explained by the fact that then-Foreign Minister Samuel Žbogar was nominated as Special Representative and Head of the EU Office in Kosovo. Not long after, Slovenia's first Head of Mission, to Montenegro, was also appointed and critical voices with regard to staffing faded away.

Slovenia's MFA was not vocally critical of other aspects of the EEAS or of the work of the High Representative. The minister viewed the EEAS as evolving, using the High Representative's metaphor of "a plane without wings".<sup>111</sup> It turned to the strategy of weaving good relations with the EEAS leadership in order to promote its interests regarding the staffing and functioning of the EEAS and to make its voice heard on policy questions.

Minister Žbogar even set out closer cooperation and active promotion of the EEAS among his professional objectives for the second half of his mandate.<sup>112</sup> Earlier, he expressed his views on the role of the Service as that of promoting the external action of the EU and, by definition, thus not replacing bilateral relations of member states, and above all not economic or consular relations.<sup>113</sup> However, it must be stated that a consular role for the EEAS, once all other prerequisites have been met, would be warmly welcomed by the Slovenian MFA.

While the view is that the EEAS will neither replace bilateral relations nor, realistically, economic bilateral relations, the MFA's views on the representational function of the EEAS are more subtle. Representation and the activities of EU Delegations in international organisations are viewed very positively, however, with an awareness that very little can really be done given the lack of will and open disaccord of certain member states. In addition, often the question regarding the EEAS's representational role in various international forums is about its mandate. What is the mandate of EEAS representatives in certain forums? How did that mandate come about? The lack of policy documents in many areas as well as the lack of transparency in the functioning of the EEAS gives rise

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<sup>111</sup> Interview with Minister Žbogar, 26 March 2011 for *Vsobotno* (Saturday supplement of *Večer*).

<sup>112</sup> Interview with Minister Žbogar for *Sobotna priloga* (Saturday supplement of *Delo*), 20 November 2010.

<sup>113</sup> Interview with Minister Žbogar, 26 March 2011 for *Vsobotno* (Saturday supplement of *Večer*).



to such questions. As a small country, Slovenia also believes that particularly in third countries where not all member states are represented by a residential ambassador, representation and the other diplomatic roles of the EU Delegations are most vital and should be performed for all member states. In capitals where both a Slovenian bilateral embassy and an EU Delegation are present, various forms of soft division of labour seem to exist, largely depending on the institutional background of the EU Head of Mission and the personal character of both the EU Head of Mission and the Slovenian ambassador. A Slovenian ambassador commented that one cannot and should not compete with the EEAS to provide better classical political reporting: the EEAS has better resources for this. But by accepting that some tasks, even core diplomatic tasks, are better performed by the EEAS, the bilateral embassy can focus on what is bilaterally most vital: on specific issues in political relations and on economic diplomacy.

As already indicated, first and foremost reporting and the analytical function of the EEAS as a diplomatic service were initially seen as the biggest added value of the Service. Due to technical impediments, this is only slowly taking place on a systemic level, but lack of trust is an additional issue, which technical solutions cannot tackle. In some areas, member states do not share information for fear of compromising national and/or EU security. It has been observed, though, that by fostering relations with their counterparts in the EEAS, irrespective of their nationality or institutional background, more information is available simply on request. Such information feeds into foreign policy actions, mainly as talking points or background information for visits where there is less national expertise, but also into preparations of Foreign Affairs Council meetings and into considerations about development cooperation projects. Regular and cyclical reports from meetings of Heads of Missions are deemed to be high quality, but there is a desire to be able to place requests for certain specific information and diversify the nature of reports beyond political reporting. Information on the economic and financial situation in third countries would be most welcome. Such a possibility should not only be viewed as helping member states with their bilateral relations, but also primarily as contributing to their preparations for Foreign Affairs Council meetings, in order to be able to take an active part and shape decisions, also based on information received by the EEAS. The danger, however, is to depend solely on information from the EEAS, while this information is not believed to be impartial. While there is little possibility to verify precisely the information on those issues and situations where there is no bilateral representation and little desk support, it has been observed, in areas where national expertise was available, that reporting on behalf of the EEAS is not interest-free. In other words, only by knowing the constellation of interests by member states in certain areas, one is able to analyse information coming from the EEAS. However, there are a very limited number of policy areas or issues where small MFAs are able to cross-check information from the EEAS or are even fully familiar with member states' positions on the issue prior to debates in the Council structures without seeking information bilaterally from other member states.

It follows that an independent, neutral and objective analysis provided by the EEAS (INTCEN), and strongly advocated by the Slovenian MFA, would enable many member states which do not have the capacity to invest in reporting and analysis on all EU policies to be objectively informed when joining in decision-making processes. This would prevent situations in which just a few member states with their own sources of information and analysis and their particular interests provide the only analysis, and would enable the EEAS to act as an independent information source where opposing reporting and analysis appears from (a smaller number of) member states. With such independent information and analysis, decisions would be taken on the basis of informed consent and would lower the possibilities of a stalemate which otherwise occurs in such situations. It needs to be added that, while reporting and analysis from the EEAS is viewed as highly desirable and the Slovenian MFA would like to see the independence (neutrality) of the EEAS strengthened in this respect, this is not understood as replacing national analytical capacities, but as complementing them.

Beyond the diplomatic functions of the new Service, EU Delegations are also in charge of coordination between member states in third countries and in international organisations. For the most part, coordinating meetings in third countries and in international organisations have not changed much; there is continuity in practice from before. However, it has been observed (though one should caution against generalisation) that Heads of Mission who are former Commission officials are in general less inclined to engage in informal cooperation, consultation and contacts beyond official meetings, in comparison to Heads of Mission originating from the MFAs of member states or those coming from the Council Secretariat, though a lot depends on the personality of Heads of Mission. Rather than coordinating those present, the issue observed by the Slovenian MFA is how to include those member states which do not have a residential ambassador in the capital or indeed no designated ambassador at all. It should be mentioned that Slovenia has no burden-sharing arrangements with other member states. There were some arrangements, mostly stemming from the helpful attitudes of other member states during the 2008 Slovenian Presidency of the Council, but these arrangements have disappeared in recent years.

It has also been observed, however, that in cases where member states' policies towards a third country are highly diverse, the agendas of Heads of Missions' meetings are rather thin, in an attempt to avoid debating contentious issues and, consequently, attendance at meetings is lower. This is not directly related to the EEAS or EU Delegations in their coordinating function as such, but it shows that the new format did not magically do away with old differences.

Finally, in relations between EEAS Headquarters and the MFA, two distinct types of relations seem to have evolved. On the one hand, there are fairly good relations, with regular contacts at operational level. It follows its own initiative, but it is deemed to be correct. Permanence of desk officers in Brussels helps to establish regular contacts and efficient working relations which contribute to efficiency when preparing positions and other actions. On the other hand, permanence at the higher level acts against the principle of checks and balances. At the highest level (High Representative, Cabinet, Managing Directors), there is hardly any contact with the MFA and the main criticism concerns unresponsiveness when questions arise ahead of Foreign Affairs Council meetings. More contact, such as a type of a regular dialogue at the level of Managing Director, is seen as missing and would be very much welcome. As a consequence of a lack of such higher- and highest-level contact, countries like Slovenia are seeking support from other member states in order to achieve a critical mass of EU countries that can propose the inclusion of a specific item on the agenda. One Slovenian diplomat commented that while there was once solidarity with the chair, it was now all about building coalitions against the chair.

#### **11.4 SLOVENES IN THE EEAS**

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Staffing was seen as a major issue in establishing the Service. In the letter by the then-Foreign Minister and his Lithuanian, Latvian and Cypriot colleagues, it was singled out as the one issue which would ensure the feeling of ownership by member states. The ministers called for posts in the Service to be open to all three sources from day one. Publicly the issue was mostly concentrated on the highest-level appointments (Heads of Mission), which were seen as a symbolic act on behalf of the High Representative as a means of showing respect for and ownership by member states. At the same time, Minister Žbogar pointed out that the issue went beyond symbolism. He said in an interview that there were positions in the EEAS to which Slovenian diplomats could bring an added value to the Service and where Slovenian appointments to those positions would also present added

value to Slovenia.<sup>114</sup> He also acknowledged that there were structural disadvantages preventing candidates from the MFA from being successful in applying for Head of Mission positions. He specifically mentioned that few Slovenian diplomats were highly specialised, and few of them spoke Chinese or Arabic or had experience of working in Africa and elsewhere in the developing world, where the EEAS was filling positions. This comment also served as a response to those who questioned why so many Slovenian candidacies were placed in Western Balkan countries.

The minister also pointed out that there are vacancies at other levels for which younger diplomats are proposing their candidacies.<sup>115</sup> The Ministry invited the Managing Director for Administration and Finances of the EEAS, Patrick Child, to visit Ljubljana to discuss the issues and organised training in financial and human resource management as well as in the EU's (EEAS's) administrative procedures.<sup>116</sup> Beyond this, active lobbying took place once candidates had passed the first hurdles, when invited to interview, or after interview with the Consultative Committee on Appointments (CCA). A new strategy for personnel policy with regard to international organisations, including the EU and the EEAS, is being planned.

There are currently six Slovenian diplomats in the EEAS, coming from all three institutional sources. There are also four seconded national experts (SNEs). This is not much, but in the words of one diplomat, "we have the priorities covered". Contacts with them are reported to be regular, and in some cases even on a daily basis, although they are visibly more with those originating from the MFA, not only due to personal acquaintances, but also because temporary agents and SNEs from the Ministry "know what we need, understand what is a valuable information to us, know and understand our policies and priorities". The Permanent Representation of Slovenia in Brussels has so far organised one policy debate with Slovenes in the EEAS and is considering organising more.

It is too soon to talk about the long-term effects of the rotation policy on the 'Europeanisation' of diplomats. Observations of the effect of the EU on foreign policymaking vary, ranging from taking the EU's external action more into consideration as a context in which Slovenian foreign policy operates, to losing this instinct once back in the MFA machinery and to instrumental use of the EU in responsibility-sharing. There seems to be a common understanding, however, that a few temporary agents in the EEAS are not sufficient for any kind of 'Europeanisation' to take place. A number of further policies should be devised, including a rule of serving a term in Brussels in the course of a diplomatic career, exchanges between member states' Foreign Ministries on a greater scale, and more attention paid to the EU and its external action in the education and training of diplomats, also with the possibility of a common EU module shared between member states' Foreign Ministries.

## **11.5 EUROPEAN FOREIGN POLICY LEADERSHIP**

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Slovenia envisaged the new High Representative to have more of a coordinating role, building upon the former rotating Presidency's approach based on neutrality, and infusing continuity and sustainability into it. A coordinating approach was also seen as more flexible and transparent, as well as by definition ensuring more information-sharing.

What is currently being observed is a more creative kind of approach to policy, dominated by lack of transparency, big member states' influence and, consequently, no neutrality and only limited

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<sup>114</sup> Interview with Minister Žbogar for Sobotna priloga (Saturday supplement of Delo), 20 November 2010.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibidem*.

information-sharing. The influence of big member states is a reality and, in this respect, the continuity or permanence is viewed negatively, because the system of checks and balances which was in place before through the rotating Presidency is gone. Lack of transparency, on the other hand, is not only related to the influence of big member states, but also to concrete actions undertaken by the High Representative which do not seem to be grounded in previous agreements between member states, nor are they sufficiently reported on afterwards (for example, meetings with third countries are undertaken without prior discussion of the main messages, even if the issues at hand are on the Foreign Affairs Council agenda, nor are debriefings satisfactory).

Relations at the highest level, between the Minister and the High Representative, are scarce, but this is also due to the agenda and the style of the current Slovenian foreign affairs minister. The previous foreign minister, who became EU Special Representative to Kosovo, had regular contact with the High Representative, also in the context of Slovenia's candidacy for a non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council for 2012-2013. It has been observed, however, that some ministers took on a practice whereby they present themselves as envoys of the High Representative in their bilateral actions, while such mandates clearly do not stem from discussions in the Foreign Affairs Council, but may even be formalised when they are accompanied by staff from the EEAS. Almost as a countermeasure, there seems to be a new development whereby small groupings of foreign ministers undertake visits to third countries pursuing their own, if convenient, joint agenda. As for the role of the rotating Presidency, in the words of one diplomat: "There is no role, there is just ambition." However, Poland has been singled out as having successfully channelled that ambition into the EU's Neighbourhood Policy.

## **11.6 CONCLUSIONS**

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It is too soon to talk of the impact of the EEAS on national diplomacies in general or on Slovenian diplomacy in particular. The Service has come into being in particularly challenging times, with the economic and financial crises pushing member states towards more economic diplomacy, which by definition entails competition between member states and does not include pooling resources into the EEAS.

One can draw three conclusions with regard to the observations on relations between the EEAS and Slovenian MFA. Firstly, the influence of big member states can clearly be observed, contrary to the ideas and motivation behind the initial support for the Service. Permanence of the High Representative and other high-ranking staff only exacerbates the problem. Secondly, lack of trust is preventing information-sharing and cooperation. Information-sharing and analysis was perceived as the biggest added value of the Service, but lack of trust (assuming that the initial operational difficulties of the EEAS have been overcome) seems to act as the biggest obstacle. Thirdly, lack of transparency in the functioning of the EEAS is causing distrust of the Service. Creative policy or assuming a leadership role cannot be traced to agreed political lines, casting doubts as to the interests that are being represented and pursued on behalf of the EEAS. In parallel, new groupings of Foreign Affairs Ministers undertake joint actions.

## Quantitative data - Slovenia

### MFA budget

Year **2012**: Total budget: 79.97 mln €, of which:

- Headquarters and 'political diplomacy': 33.81 mln €
- Missions abroad: 35.66 mln €
- Economic diplomacy: 0.39 mln €
- Bilateral development cooperation: 10.04 mln €

Note: initial 2012 budget for the MFA was 72.08 mln €. Following the elections, the 'European' part of Government Office for Development and European Affairs joined the MFA (budget: 6.43 mln €).

Year **2011**: Total budget: 76.29 mln €

- Headquarters and 'political diplomacy': 23.3 mln €
- Missions abroad: 41.8 mln €
- Economic diplomacy: 0.24 mln €
- Bilateral development cooperation: 10.4 mln €

Year **2010**: Total budget: 74.21 mln €

- Headquarters and 'political diplomacy': 23.88 mln €
- Missions abroad: 44.26 mln €
- Bilateral development cooperation: 6.03 mln €

### Number of missions

Total: 58

### Number of staff employed by the MFA

Total: 861

### Number of staff seconded to the EEAS

Total of seconded diplomats: 3

### Number of arrangements of cooperation/burden-sharing with diplomatic missions of other member states (sharing premises, consular services etc.)

N.A.

*Sources: Annual Reports of the Slovenian Ministry for Foreign Affairs; Budget and rebalanced budget presented by the Slovenian Government; European External Action Service (2012), 'Staffing in the EEAS', Brussels.*



## **Greece and the European External Action Service**

***By Ruby Gropas and George Tzogopoulos***

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### **12.1 EU MEMBERSHIP AND THE EUROPEANISATION OF GREEK FOREIGN POLICY**

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Greece joined the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1981 and, undoubtedly, EEC/EU membership has had a significant overall impact on the country and on its foreign and defence policy in particular. Since its accession to the EEC, Greek foreign policy can be characterised as having fallen into four main periods.

The first period, between 1981 and 1985, covered EEC accession and the coming to power of PASOK (the Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement). This was a difficult period as the leader of PASOK, Andreas Papandreou, resisted – at least with very strong, populist rhetoric – Greece’s membership of Western organisations. Relations with the EEC as well as relations with NATO and the US were strongly tested. Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou forged links with Yasser Arafat and the PLO (as well as with other radical regimes elsewhere in the Middle East, such as Libya and Syria); he was a founding member of the ‘Group of Six Peace Initiative’ led by Sweden’s Prime Minister Olaf Palme; and he actively promoted a Balkan nuclear weapons-free zone. Thus in the early 1980s, ‘Europeanisation’ was intentionally resisted and many Greek foreign policy initiatives were at odds with efforts to coordinate European foreign policies through EPC (European political cooperation).

The second period covers the decade between 1985 and 1995, and was characterised by a significant degree of adaptation and change. The dynamics of European integration had started to influence Greek foreign policy and in fact, EU membership began to be considered as a means through which to pursue Greece’s national foreign policy priorities. Greece positioned itself in favour of extending the scope of EPC to security matters for a number of reasons. Most importantly, Greece’s EU

membership had strengthened its negotiating advantage in bilateral relations with Turkey, which constituted the country's fundamental national security concern. Moreover, at a time of détente between East and West, the enhancement of Europe as a foreign policy player was viewed in a positive manner, as a sort of third pole between the USA and the USSR. Finally, there was a clear realisation that EEC/EU funds (Structural Funds, Cohesion and Regional Funds, etc.) were vital for the Greek economy and the country's modernisation. However, Greece was not particularly influential in the formulation of EPC positions and was often isolated from the other member states on some of its core foreign policy priorities (for instance, by vetoing the EU's Customs Union with Turkey until 1994, or on the matter of the name dispute with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia).

The period between 1996 and the outbreak of the crisis in 2010 was the third phase that was defined by deeper Europeanisation. International affairs were approached from the perspective of the EU. Greece became a staunch supporter of 'more Europe' and was driven by a desire to be part of 'core Europe' (from Political Union, to the euro zone, to security and defence policy). Its strategic national priorities – in particular relations with Turkey, the Cyprus problem, and relations with the other countries of South-East Europe and the Mediterranean – were consistently framed from an EU perspective. This was largely made possible by cross-party consensus between the two main governing parties – PASOK and New Democracy – on the core axes of the country's foreign policy. Contrary to the previous period, in this phase, Greece was quite successful in pursuing its national foreign policy agenda. Indeed, it guaranteed Cyprus's EU membership and took an active role in promoting the accession of the Western Balkans to the European Union, notably at the June 2003 Thessaloniki Summit. This is not to say that this transformation was consistent across Greek governing elites or public opinion. In fact, reactions to NATO's Kosovo campaign in 1999 or the 2003 war in Iraq suggest both continued resistance to transatlantic security structures and to their interventionism in South-East Europe and the wider Middle East.

The fourth period started with the onset of the crisis (which started to manifest itself in late 2009 and broke out fully in 2010) and continues to the present. The steadily worsening economic situation, and severe austerity and its impact on the country's social cohesion, have deeply shaken Greek political life and have compromised Greece's foreign policy capital and its influence in regional, European and global affairs. Although the mainstream political parties remain attached to the EU, there has been an outburst of Euroscepticism from the far right and the far left alike. Governmental instability, political uncertainty (notably due to the 'Grexit' scenarios) and social unrest have characterised Greek life over the past three years, and have left little room for a creative, resourceful and meaningful foreign policy to be pursued. Naturally, this has restricted Greece's ability to influence policies and processes in the EU, including the EEAS.

In an attempt to take stock of the impact of the crisis, the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) sought to analyse European foreign policy in these challenging times. The ECFR offered an assessment of member states' performances through its *European Foreign Policy Scorecard*; the study reveals which countries prevent common initiatives, water them down, or do not provide adequate funding as 'slackers'. In the *2013 Scorecard*, Greece tops the list of 'slackers' with five hits, along with Latvia, Romania and Spain.<sup>117</sup> The effects of the economic crisis on Greek foreign policy have significantly contributed to this categorisation.

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<sup>117</sup> Vaisse, J. and Dennison, S. (2013), 'European Foreign Policy Scorecard 2013', European Council on Foreign Relations, London.



Greece nonetheless actively supported the majority of European initiatives taken in 2012.<sup>118</sup> It has, for example, completely supported EU policy in terms of streamlining its strategic partnership with China and attempting to persuade Russia to play a constructive role in resolving protracted conflicts in the Eastern Partnership region. It also fully respected the decision of Brussels to impose sanctions on Tehran, although Athens had initially pressed the EU to ease sanctions.<sup>119</sup> In another remarkable case, the Hellenic government supported Palestine's request for observer status at the UN on 29 November 2012, agreeing with the majority of European states.<sup>120</sup> All in all, evidence suggests that in spite of a few diversions – which are not a Greek phenomenon *per se* – the nature of its foreign policy is largely Europeanised, or more aptly, normalised.

To summarise, Greek foreign policy has been 'Europeanised', 'modernised' and 'Westernised' since the 1980s. EU membership has been significant as it has served both as a diplomatic lever and a restraining mechanism, and it has contributed to reframing national security issues. At the same time, however, core items on the national agenda, such as Greek-Turkish relations, the Cyprus Question and the name dispute with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, along with notable anti-Americanism, have remained unresolved, sensitive topics. Moreover, to a large extent a common European foreign policy has been perceived more as an opportunity through which to pursue national foreign policy priorities than a platform through which to engage in wider 'European' foreign policy goals. There have been a couple of exceptions to this, for instance Greece's involvement in humanitarian assistance missions (to Haiti after the destructive earthquake, or in response to the 2006 Lebanon war), and its active contribution to a high-level policy debate on the effects of climate change on human security (2007). Nonetheless, these were exceptions rather than indications of a desire to adopt a more global, normative engagement in international affairs through the EU's common foreign policy.

## 12.2 STRUCTURE OF GREEK DIPLOMACY

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The Greek MFA is composed of the following General Secretariats: a Secretary-General for European Affairs; a Secretary-General for International Economic Relations and Development Cooperation; a Secretary-General for Greeks Abroad; and a Special Service for the Coordination and Implementation of Funding and Investment Programmes. Its Directorates are assigned according to geographic areas of interest and thematic priority areas. Furthermore, the MFA has a Department for International Relations in Thessaloniki and an Office for Economic and Trade Issues in Northern Greece; three Offices for Political Affairs in the cities of Xanthi, Komotini and Alexandroupoli (where the country's native Muslim minority is concentrated); and an Administration for Mount Athos. Moreover, the Directorate-General of International Development Cooperation-Hellenic Aid of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs shapes and coordinates Greek development policy.

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<sup>118</sup> The conclusion is based on the questionnaire completed by George Tzogopoulos who represented Greece on behalf of ELIAMEP in the European Foreign Policy Scorecard 2013.

<sup>119</sup> It is important to note that the country is largely dependent on Iranian oil (which accounts for approximately 23% of its crude imports), and it has enjoyed favourable payment methods by credit. In the context of the severe socio-economic crisis that was unfolding throughout 2012, these economic considerations naturally led it voice reservations as regards the sanctions on Iran in order to gain time and look for energy alternatives. Nonetheless, it did not obstruct negotiations and supported the common European decision.

<sup>120</sup> There is continuity in Greek policy on the matter, and Greece had in fact also voted in favour of Palestinian membership of UNESCO in 2011. In the voting procedure of 29 November 2012, no common EU policy position had been framed. However, with the exception of the Czech Republic, the majority of European countries – agreed, while eleven states abstained (Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, and United Kingdom). Since the 1980 Venice Declaration, Greece has consistently supported a two-state solution.

The MFA set up a Crisis Management Unit in 2007 in response to a growing need to be able to respond to major natural disasters and emergency situations worldwide. The MFA also has a Diplomatic Academy, established in 1999, whose mission is the continuing education of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' personnel, which constitutes the primary professional training (for a 12-month period) of candidates who successfully pass the Diplomatic Service entrance examination. The MFA also has an Office for the Promotion of Greek Candidacies in international and supranational organisations, and an Analysis and Planning Centre, which functions as an independent research unit.

The MFA, like all Ministries of the Hellenic Republic, has been severely affected by drastic austerity measures and efforts to reduce public expenditure. The MFA's budget has steadily decreased since 2010. In 2010, the budget was approximately 423 million euros, but in 2011 this fell to 348 million and for 2012, the Greek MFA had a budget of 308 million euros. For 2013, a further decrease of 3.1% is planned, bringing the new annual budget to 296 million euros. In line with the country's efforts to rationalise its public services and cut down public expenditure, the MFA has introduced cuts in terms of recruiting (though 20 new diplomats were hired in 2012), training, missions abroad, NGO funding, development assistance, contributions to international organisations, etc. A number of diplomatic and consular missions are being shut down, which should bring savings of approximately two million euros a year.

The MFA has 80 embassies, 15 representations and 40 consulates (including Embassies, Consulates and Permanent Missions to International Organisations and the EU), many of which were set up during the 1990s and early 2000s. This expansion of Greece's diplomatic service reflected the tectonic shifts in international relations of the post-Cold War period, the broadening scope of Greek foreign policy, and the perceived need to adapt to globalisation pressures. Moreover, Greece established additional consular services as a result of the country's transformation into a host migration country in the early 1990s. Until then, most consular services had been geared towards the needs of Greek citizens living and working abroad, and the Greek diaspora (in Australia, the USA, Germany). However, increased immigration from South-East Europe, the former Soviet republics, and in more recent years from South-East Asia and Africa, contributed to the need to further expand its presence globally.

The missions abroad are highly regarded, so the decision to close certain offices has been strongly resisted by diplomats and diplomatic officers. But the country's dire financial situation has made closures inevitable. Nine consulates were shut down in 2011, and a further six embassies (in Wellington, Lima, Montevideo, Khartoum, Hanoi and Harare) and at least three consular services (in Perth, Los Angeles and Atlanta) are expected to be shut down in 2013. The MFA has not ruled out further closures and cut-backs.

In addition, Greek state property abroad is being sold in order to reduce expenditure and increase income, including the former General Consulate in London, the residence of the former Permanent Representative of Greece to the EU in Brussels, and buildings in Belgrade and Rome.

The MFA has not fired any of its staff as yet, but all of its personnel have incurred significant salary decreases, promotions and transfers have been blocked due to the extraordinary financial circumstances, and temporary staff contracts have not been renewed.

The MFA is considering increasing cooperation with other member states, including within the EEAS framework, as a means to enhance its diplomatic outreach in spite of the effects of the crisis. However, these are still very tentative thoughts that are yet to be followed up by concrete actions.

### **12.3 GREEK VIEWS ON THE EEAS: ITS ESTABLISHMENT, ‘FIRST IMPRESSIONS’ AND THE FUTURE**

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Diplomats working at the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs welcomed the creation of the EEAS. It was seen as a political decision that would enhance co-operation at EU level, strengthen the global position of the Union, and promote its interest in speaking with one voice in the international arena. Over the past decade, Greece has been consistently supportive of the idea of ‘more Europe’ in the field of foreign policy, security and defence. Thus, the establishment of the Service was considered as a positive development that would contribute to further developing and strengthening European foreign policy.

Greece was not one of the core actors involved in the negotiations that set out the EEAS’s structure and institutional details, but it was consistently supportive of its creation. At the same time, like most member states, Greece was favourable to maintaining intergovernmentalism within the EEAS in order to be able to pursue its particular strategic foreign policy objectives.

Since its establishment, Greece’s approach towards the EEAS has been defined by principled support for the new service, a cautious first assessment of its functioning, and severe difficulty in actually participating in it as a result of the unfolding Greek crisis and the impact of the austerity measures and political instability that the country has been experiencing since late 2009-early 2010.

So far, initiatives taken by HR/VP Catherine Ashton have been welcomed and her attempts to unite different voices inside the EU have been appreciated by the Greek MFA, in spite of the negative or critical press coverage when her name was announced for the job and of her performance since. In the view of many Greek diplomats, Ashton has achieved more than could have been anticipated when she was appointed; there is a recognition that she is continuously improving her Service’s performance even though she has a particularly constrained margin within which to act. Greek diplomats widely share the following positions:

- There were notable mistakes and omissions in the setting-up of the EEAS that have unavoidably affected its functioning and have had a negative toll on the ‘first impressions’ that the Service has made. Most importantly, the tug-of-war between the Commission and the Council as regards the scope of competencies, as well as the increased preference for bilateral summits and intergovernmental consultations and agreements between the two or three largest member states (mainly Berlin and Paris), have proven to be considerable challenges for the EEAS.
- The EEAS is not yet fully up and running after its first two years of service. Documents have been consistently communicated with delays (particularly in comparison to the previous system of the rotating presidency); there has been an imbalance of representation and influence in favour of some (larger) member states; the EEAS has not yet ‘learnt the ropes’ of navigating between the foreign policy constraints, priorities and particularities of all the member states; and the EEAS still lacks the necessary political clout.
- However, it is also ‘too early to draw set conclusions’ on the modus operandi of the Service. As time passes, it is expected to become more efficient. Its nascent years should be considered as a platform from which to draw conclusions about the aspects that need to be improved or better addressed: not only on the part of the EEAS, but also that of individual member states.

The Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs is currently in the process of becoming accustomed to the operation of the EEAS, to the new balance of power that is being played out between the EU institutions, and to the growing expectations towards the EEAS on the part of different member states, third countries and the policy community overall. The MFA is generally satisfied with the

scope, frequency and intensity of its contacts with the EEAS. It would welcome, however, additional meetings that would permit more active interaction with the Service.

The MFA has attempted to play a creative, constructive and positive role with regard to the EEAS. In particular, Greece has issued and circulated a number of ‘food-for-thought papers’ and these initiatives have come from the ministerial level. Moreover, the MFA participates in various preparatory meetings on themes relevant to the Service.

At the same time, however, in addition to this overall positive disposition towards the EEAS, there exists a strong underlying ‘nostalgia’ for the past. In effect, while the institutional long-term benefits of the EEAS in terms of the EU’s global role and presence are acknowledged, the disadvantages are also stressed. There exists a general feeling in the MFA that the sense of empowerment and participation that the six-month rotating Council Presidency had offered until recently was now lost and that this represented a considerable disadvantage for the system overall. The Council Presidency was a unique experience that made national administrations ‘understand the way the EU works’ and offered an opportunity to be involved and active in all aspects of policymaking and in all policy sectors. This was described as an incredibly insightful experience – particularly for smaller member states, in spite of the challenges and strains that it put on national administrations. Thus, although it was acknowledged that given the growing and increasingly diverse number of member states, it no longer made sense to maintain the rotating presidency and that setting up the EEAS was clearly a rational decision, nevertheless, this transition was accompanied by ‘a substantial loss.’ What was therefore underlined was that the member states had to become more active in the EEAS through their national diplomacies in order to avoid the risk of becoming side-lined or feeling that decisions were being made elsewhere, with national diplomacies simply playing the role of observers instead of active, and ideally constructive, participants in foreign policymaking. What was missed in particular was the opportunity offered by the rotating Council Presidency to ‘set the common agenda’.

In this context, the MFA has already started to prepare for the EU Presidency in the first half of 2014, which is anticipated as an opportunity to work closer with the EEAS, establish closer relations and familiarity, and engage more proactively in the policy process. At the same time, there is a clear realisation that this presidency would be fundamentally different from previous ones. This is expected to be a source of some frustration, as competences are not clearly distinguished and, like all MFAs, the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs does not appreciate being unable to set the common agenda on matters of foreign policy.

Our interviewees confirmed that Greece supports the transfer of various tasks and functions to the Service. These include representation abroad and in international organisations, and reducing national diplomatic missions in third countries. The MFA acknowledges the important role of EU Delegations in third countries in terms of providing information to national capitals. Their contributions are regarded as particularly useful and insightful, and are increasingly replacing the information provided by national missions/embassies.

That said, although the Greek MFA views the role of the EU Delegations in coordinating member states’ positions in third countries in a very positive light, no specific steps have been taken to promote burden-sharing between national embassies and EU Delegations. Greece seeks to promote closer cooperation on this matter, but for now, as already mentioned above, it is still hesitant to close its missions abroad. However, we expect the austerity measures described above to serve as a catalyst for Greece to collaborate with other member states and the EU Delegations in some countries, particularly those that are most peripheral to Greece’s foreign policy priorities.

## 12.4 GREEKS IN THE EEAS

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In principle, Greece considers it important for the EEAS to be staffed by national diplomats from the member states (one third of the EEAS should in principle be recruited from member states' administrations). Greek diplomats expect that by the end of 2013, the EEAS's staffing will be more representative of all the member states, and this is appreciated as a positive development.

According to the Greek position, diplomats seconded to the EEAS should join the Service for a substantial period of time in order to familiarise themselves with its work. Specifically, a contract based on a time-span of '4+4+2 years' was deemed appropriate. The presence of Greeks in all EU institutions and in particular in the foreign affairs structures is considered highly important and a means through which to pursue and protect national foreign and security policy priorities.

Greek diplomats consider secondments to the EEAS to be particularly beneficial for their professional development. Positions in the EEAS are perceived to rank among the most well-regarded posts (similarly to the Permanent Representation to the EU, or some of Greece's most important embassies and missions in Washington DC, Moscow, Beijing, London, Paris, Berlin and Ankara). In this sense, the administration's 'best and brightest' (both in terms of qualifications and in terms of networks) are naturally expected to seek to join the EEAS.

In fact, the MFA differs from most other Greek ministries, where secondment to 'Brussels' (i.e. to one of the EU institutions) can be even penalised upon return (by being assigned to a 'dead-end' department), because the seconded official is often perceived to have benefitted from a 'privilege.' On the contrary, in the MFA, it was highlighted that Brussels-related experience was valued and 'tapped-into' as much as possible. It was underlined, however, that personality mattered. In other words, it is up to each diplomat to actively pursue his/her placement in a department in which the know-how that they may have accumulated in Brussels will be put to use. The role of personal networks and the social capital that each diplomat may have within the Ministry is crucial in this regard. Similarly, the personality of the Head of Personnel also matters in terms of the assignments that are made, the criteria according to which secondments are approved, and the posts to which returning diplomats are assigned.

However, regardless of the professional development incentive, at present there is a powerful drive for Greek officials to seek employment with the EEAS. Personal practical and financial reasons have become a core driver of applications to the EEAS on behalf of Greek officials. As is the case for all public sector employees, officials of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs have experienced severe pay cuts since the beginning of the crisis in October 2009. With salaries significantly squeezed (by at least 20-25%) and overall disposable income severely decreased (due to increased income and property taxes and social security contributions), potential secondment to the EEAS is widely regarded as a catalyst guaranteeing not just excellent career opportunities, but possibly even more significantly in the current situation, as the only way to secure a certain standard of living for one's self and one's family. Greek diplomats would currently much prefer to serve in the EEAS instead of their national ministry or embassies abroad (as pay cuts have equally affected all personnel, whether serving in the capital or in overseas missions).

In spite of this strong incentive to join, Greece is far behind in seconding its civil servants to the EEAS.

At the time of writing this report (early 2013), only eight Greek diplomats were working for the new service. This represents just 0.8% of all European diplomats under the leadership of High

Representative Ashton. The percentage of Greek administrators working for the EEAS is slightly higher and amounts to 2.7% of the total staff.

This lag was evident from the outset. Former Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis, for instance, urged in January 2011 in a parliamentary hearing then-Foreign Minister Dimitri Droutsas to explain why the country had totally failed to get staff appointed to senior positions within the Service. Two years later, the situation has improved, but not adequately.

Informal discussions with Greek officials informed us that in fact during the past two years most efforts on behalf of MFA personnel to apply for positions in the EEAS were consistently blocked by the Personnel Department. The unfolding crisis and successive budget cuts had raised concerns in the Personnel Department that the worsening situation would lead the Ministry's 'best and brightest' to leave for Brussels, thereby weakening the capacity of the Ministry. This had to be avoided in these times of unprecedented crisis. Moreover, it was also mentioned that given the budget cuts that the Ministry (along with all the public sector) was incurring and the dire situation the Greek public administration was facing, resources had to be protected<sup>121</sup> and 'it did not make sense to pay for officials who would be working elsewhere.'<sup>122</sup>

Thus, many Greek diplomats regret that their applications were discouraged or even blocked outright by the Personnel Service, especially given that their colleagues from other member states were strongly encouraged to join the EEAS.

More recent developments, however, seem to be changing this situation. In effect, after national elections in the summer of 2012, there has been a change in the MFA, and the Personnel Service has taken a more positive view towards applications and expressions of interest in the EEAS among Greek officials. This change was reportedly mainly driven by the personality of the new Head of Personnel. This reinforces what is often noted about the Greek public administration, namely that institutions and processes are still weak and individual personalities in key positions can make a notable difference, whether in a negative or positive way.

In terms of utilising the expertise of seconded Greek officials, Greek diplomats who work for the Service are in regular contact with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as is common practice for all member states. They have naturally already started to share their experience with the heads of the appropriate departments in the Ministry. Obviously, this is still in a very early phase and the challenging situation that has confronted Greece for the past three years has taken its toll here too. There is no formal process through which to make full use of seconded officials' EU expertise as yet. With the exception of the informal discussions they have with their colleagues, the tangible impact of their career at the EEAS is not yet apparent. For the time being, their experience is regarded as 'more important' than that which they gain from working in national embassies, and as such officials who are currently serving with the EEAS are valued.

Even though the sample size is extremely small, it can be noted that the officials who have been seconded to the EEAS are highly qualified and experienced as they have served in key posts and missions. What remains to be seen is the manner in which they will be able to bring back to the

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<sup>121</sup> Hiring procedures have been generally frozen and diplomats retiring are being replaced following the 10:1 rule (i.e. one new diplomat will be hired for every 10 diplomats retiring).

<sup>122</sup> Although seconded national diplomats are remunerated by the EEAS, their national government has to continue paying their social security contributions during the period of their assignment to the EEAS.

national diplomatic service the insight and experience that they gain from their time in the EEAS, and how they will in turn motivate other colleagues to join the EEAS.

As regards the relationship between Greek ministers of foreign affairs and the High Representative, so far it appears that relations have been smooth with each successive minister. Current Minister Dimitris Avramopoulos and his predecessors, namely Dimitris Droutsas, Stavros Lambrinidis and Stavros Dimas, have all enjoyed good relations with the High Representative. In fact, Stavros Lambrinidis was appointed EU Special Representative (EUSR) for Human Rights by High Representative Ashton on 25 July 2012, for a two year period.

## **12.5 CONCLUSIONS**

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There is no doubt that Greece has been fundamentally transformed by its EEC/EU membership and that foreign policy has definitely been an area where significant changes have occurred. Greek foreign policy has been consistently described by academics and analysts as having become more consensual and less confrontational; it has moved away from a zero-sum game approach to a discourse that privileges the pooling of sovereignty and cooperation. The shift from the early 1980s has been radical. Among both governing parties and other mainstream political forces, there is a clear agreement that Greek national interests are better served via multilateral efforts, and mainly through the EU. Until the outbreak of the crisis, this had become a core axiom of Greek foreign policy. More recently, however, as the economic crisis has unfolded, the political scene has been deeply shaken up by the sharp rise of left and right-wing extremes and the backlash of a nationalist, protectionist and even xenophobic discourse, as well as a questioning of whether Greek national interests are indeed best served by the EU in its current format.

Even though the crisis has uncovered a number of structural deficiencies in the Greek public administration and much of the country's reform and modernisation process of the past three decades has been put into question, there is no doubt that the EU has deeply influenced policymaking, administrative structures, political attitudes and behaviours. Foreign policy is one of the areas in which the EU influence has been substantial. As a matter of principle, the country supports the idea of 'more Europe' in international affairs, and this has not fundamentally changed in spite of the on-going crisis. There are of course a number of outstanding national security matters that have not yet been addressed or resolved in a satisfactory manner for every party involved. Relations with Turkey on a number of bilateral issues or the resolution of the name dispute with FYROM often lead to tensions, but Greece's objections are no longer presented as the core hurdles in the further development of these countries' relations with the European Union. It will certainly be interesting to observe how these dynamics play out within the EEAS.

To conclude, there are three important consequences of the crisis on Greek foreign policy. The first is that Greece, being under international tutelage, lacks the appropriate resources to undertake specific initiatives, especially in the Balkan Peninsula and the Eastern Mediterranean. Thus, all its efforts and initiatives aimed at promoting regional cooperation and exchange in its neighbourhood are frozen, leading to a substantial loss of political capital. The second is that foreign policy has been naturally relegated to an issue of relatively limited priority, because the government is principally focusing on economic affairs in order to secure payments and tranches from creditors. Third, trust in the European Union is general has started to collapse as citizens experience the pain of austerity measures and calamity. According to Eurobarometer, 79% of Greeks do not have confidence in Europe (EU website, 2012).

All in all, Greece's interaction with the newly-established EEAS has been overshadowed by the severe economic and financial crisis that has been unfolding in the country since late 2009. The Greek MFA has nevertheless pursued a pragmatic approach with respect to the EEAS, and it is likely that the Greek government will continue to support efforts to strengthen EU foreign policy.



## **Quantitative data - Greece**

### **MFA budget**

Year **2013**: Administrative budget: 296 mln € (planned)

Year **2012**: Administrative budget: 308 mln €

Year **2011**: Administrative budget: 348 mln €

Year **2010**: Administrative budget: 423 mln €

### **Number of missions**

Total: 118, of which:

- Embassies: 74
- Consulates General: 29
- Representations to international organisations: 15

Of these, nine Consulates were shut down in 2011. Six diplomatic missions and at least two Consulates are expected to be shut down in 2013.

### **Number of staff employed by the MFA**

Total: 2,588 (latest available data)

### **Number of staff seconded to the EEAS**

Total: 9, of which 8 diplomats and 1 legal expert

### **Number of arrangements of cooperation/burden-sharing with diplomatic missions of other member states (sharing premises, consular services etc.)**

N.A.

*Sources: Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Greece and European External Action Service (2012), 'Staffing in the EEAS', Brussels.*



# In search of leadership: French expectations of the European External Action Service

**By Fabien Terpan**

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## **13.1 FRENCH FOREIGN POLICY: BETWEEN INDEPENDENCE AND EUROPEANISATION**

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During the first years of the Fifth Republic (1958-69) and under the leadership of General de Gaulle, France searched for a status coherent with its history. It used to be a big power in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century and was still powerful until the First World War, but had become a power of average strength by the time of the Fifth Republic. Aware of this lower standing, De Gaulle tried to give back to France the idea of 'grandeur' and rank. Independence was considered the best way to maintain France's status in international politics.

Independence did not mean isolation. As a member of both NATO and the WEU, France agreed upon clauses of mutual assistance (Art. V of the North Atlantic Treaty and Art. V of the modified Brussels treaty) and as a member of the United Nations, France participated in several peacekeeping operations. But De Gaulle took two major decisions that reduced French dependence on the United States. He decided that France would withdraw from NATO military bodies as early as 1966, and launched an ambitious nuclear military programme aimed at providing France with its own deterrent force. Thus, from the beginning of the Fifth Republic to the 1990s, sovereignty and independence were considered the best way to maintain France's status in international politics.

Since the end of the Cold War, the European Union has gained importance in French foreign and security policy. Actually, the Gaullist legacy did not disappear entirely in the post-Cold War era. The main strategic purpose of France's foreign and security policy remains the promotion of national *grandeur* and the pursuit of an elevated global standing – *le rang*. These ultimate objectives have remained unaltered since the end of the Second World War: it is just the tactics that have been changing. There has been continued willingness to actively engage in world affairs, and there remains an absolute readiness to 'intervene', whether by diplomatic or military means. But the tactics have changed. Systemic pressures were such that much of the emphasis on national independence had to be sacrificed in exchange for greater cooperation with the country's principal partners. A certain reappraisal was undertaken, especially by François Mitterrand under his double *septennat*. The tactical response of French leaders was primarily to push for deeper European integration, and was also to dedicate the armed forces to multinational peacekeeping and humanitarian operations on behalf of the international community. France has realised that it would be both useless and counterproductive to go it alone in the security field, and that 'new' security tasks such as conflict prevention, peacekeeping or crisis management would be better fulfilled in a collective framework.

In the first years of the 1990s, France decided to transform its defence policy and adapt it to the new international context resulting from the collapse of the USSR. From that time onwards, the European Union became a core element in a renewed French defence policy that had entered into a process of 'Europeanisation'<sup>123</sup>, including: a reorientation of goals and means, an adaptation of institutions and policymaking, and the creation and development of a strategic culture promoting the idea of Europe as a military power.

Building a European foreign and security policy has since become a priority goal. Since the end of the 1990s, France has been advocating the drawing-up of a European defence policy to complement or strengthen the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). The development of both the CFSP and the CSDP (Common Security and Defence Policy) has been encouraged as a way of making the EU more autonomous in international affairs and as a means to strengthen French influence worldwide through political leadership in Europe. The French believe the CFSP should transform the EU into a powerful international actor and allow France to remain influential on the international scene.<sup>124</sup>

Until 1999, the EU had not succeeded in developing a strong security and defence policy. The connection between the EU, in charge of the CFSP, and the WEU, as the military arm of the EU, had not worked properly. In response, France supported the idea of a clear hierarchy between the two organisations, with the EU defining policy and the WEU limited to implementation tasks (this idea was included in the Treaty of Amsterdam, signed in 1997). Then, France promoted a European security and defence policy defined and implemented by the EU alone, paving the way for the integration of the WEU's activities into the EU framework. The British remained to be convinced, but agreement was reached at the Saint Malo summit in December 1998. A few months later, during the Cologne summit of June 1999, the ESDP was launched by the EU 15, with a strong impetus from France.

Thanks to the ESDP, the EU now has some capabilities in the field of crisis management. France chose a high-profile contribution, sending a lot of soldiers to countries where a European presence was requested. French officials have repeatedly said that EU-led operations – though limited in their

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<sup>123</sup> Irondelle, B. (2003), 'Europeanization without the European Union, French Military Reforms 1991-1996', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 10(2), pp.208-226; Pajon, C. (2003), 'L'Europe de la défense et la transformation des identités militaires: quelle européanisation? Le cas des militaires britanniques, allemands et français', *Politique européenne*, n°10/2003, pp.141-171; Terpan, F., 'L'européanisation de la politique de défense de la France', in Oberdorff, H. (ed.), 'L'européanisation des politiques publiques', Presses universitaires de Grenoble, pp.111-127.

<sup>124</sup> Treacher, A. (2003), 'French Interventionism. Europe's Last Global Player', Ashgate.

scope and intensity – are of great importance as they represent the first step in the EU’s emergence as a crisis manager and security provider. From the French point of view, the development of the ESDP should be accelerated in order to achieve the ultimate goal of making a great power out of the European Union. However, French policymakers often meet with scepticism and cautiousness when they call for a stronger EU foreign and security policy. Other member states are wary of the motivations of French diplomacy and often consider it to be driven by considerations of national interest. Hence, the French have to convince their partners within the EU, especially the British and the Germans, that they are heavily engaged in a true process of Europeanisation.

However, several arguments can be made that the Europeanisation of French foreign and security policy is an evolution that must not in fact be overestimated.<sup>125</sup> First, the EU is far from being the only card that France is willing to play. It supports other multilateral frameworks, most notably NATO and the United Nations.

Although France firmly promotes the development of a ‘strong’ and autonomous CFSP, decoupling with NATO is seen as a risk that should be avoided. French foreign policy has been described as a policy aimed at creating a gap between Europe and America. This image is partly due to the Gaullist legacy, but it can also be explained by the attitude of policymakers in the early 1990s, who gave the impression that France was attempting to break the Alliance and push the Americans away. Nicolas Sarkozy tried to change this perception by adopting a very pro-US position. He even decided to upgrade France’s participation in NATO by reintegrating into its military command structures. In addition, France contributes greatly to NATO’s external operations.

As far as the UN is concerned, France’s claim, in 2002-03, that no military intervention was possible in Iraq without a Security Council resolution, showed the importance that Paris gives to the UN framework. Both in and outside multilateral frameworks, France is willing to play an active role internationally. It has maintained an extensive diplomatic network all over the world.

Secondly, the process of Europeanisation has shown its limits. It is currently confined to crisis management and does not include territorial defence. France does not want to depend on others for deterrence and the protection of its vital interests. France supports the idea of Europe as a political and military power, provided that the CFSP remains intergovernmental and does not endanger French sovereignty in such fields as nuclear deterrence, territorial defence or permanent membership of the UN Security Council.

In those areas where European external action is welcome, there must be a high degree of convergence between French and European goals. The objectives of French foreign policy are both idealistic and pragmatic. On the one hand, it emphasises spreading French values rooted in democracy and human rights. France is supposed to be a state whose duty is to engage heavily in the promotion of democracy. On the other hand, foreign policy, in France as in any other country, remains driven by national interests. Economic interests counterbalance human rights and democracy objectives. Geopolitical priorities continue to justify a strong commitment to Africa and the Arab world, in spite of recent attempts<sup>126</sup> to downplay French engagement in sub-Saharan Africa (often criticised as post-colonial support of non-democratic regimes), and to change the image of France as being pro-Arab and critical of Israel.

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<sup>125</sup> Terpan, F., *ibidem*.

<sup>126</sup> During the presidency of Sarkozy, these objectives were high on the ‘foreign’ agenda but little change has been seen.

Finally, it is widely acknowledged that France does not hesitate to act on an individual basis when the European Union is hindered by the member states' hesitation to engage in world politics and crisis management in particular. Africa is a good case in point. On the one hand, France is trying to Europeanise its African policy by promoting EU operations instead of French ones. And France has pushed for the development of a European strategy towards the Sahel. But on the other hand, France did not hesitate to launch a military operation in Mali, considering that the wariness and/or lack of willingness of other EU member states should not prevent the deployment of French soldiers on the ground. This may contribute to the image of France as a country in search of power and independence, willing to play an international role far beyond its effective capabilities.

### **13.2 SHAPING THE EEAS INSTEAD OF BEING SHAPED? CONTINUITY AND ADJUSTMENTS IN FRENCH DIPLOMACY**

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The creation of the European External Action Service has not triggered major changes in the MFA's structure and functioning. French diplomats broadly share the view that the EEAS is a vehicle to promote French national interests, more than a source of transformation at national level. The ambition of the French government has always been to use the EU and the CFSP as power multipliers in order to increase France's influence in Europe and the world. Examples of French influence in EU policymaking can be found when looking at the EU's policy on Africa, where France has promoted initiatives such as Atalanta, EUTM Somalia and the Strategy on the Sahel. French diplomats see the promotion of national views through the EU as legitimate, finding further justification in the fact that all member states act the same way. At the same time, the MFA sees the EEAS as a means to make national foreign policies converge. The promotion of national interests and convergence are not mutually exclusive. Adaptations are possible in any field other than core national interests such as the UN Security Council, nuclear disarmament or territorial defence.

As far as the organisation of the MFA is concerned, the office dealing with the CFSP and the one in charge of 'Community' aspects of external relations were merged in March 2009 into one directorate dedicated to EU external action. The other directorates are obliged to coordinate with the EU Directorate prior to any contact with the EEAS. All diplomatic messages must be checked by the EU Directorate before being sent. Thus, the EU Directorate, which has gained considerable importance, is not merely a geographic directorate but aims to coordinate the work of the other directorates before meetings at EU level.

The MFA has introduced cuts to its staff and diplomatic missions (mainly at the consulate level), but these measures were not related to the establishment of the EEAS: the reform started prior to the inception of the Service. Having a global diplomatic network remains a central objective for France. The EEAS is not seen as a means of reducing France's diplomatic presence worldwide, at least not in the short and medium term. This situation might change in the future due to budgetary constraints.<sup>127</sup>

This same reason might justify an increase in bilateral arrangements with other MFAs, such as existing cooperation with Germany. France and Germany share certain resources, such as real estate, and have launched a joint internship programme for students. However, the *Conseil d'Etat* (France's highest jurisdiction dealing with public law) brought to a halt the Quai d'Orsay in its evolution towards common embassies with Germany. More generally, it seems that pooling and sharing with other member states cannot become a major trend for France in the foreseeable future.

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<sup>127</sup> In 2003, the budget dedicated to foreign affairs was reduced.

### 13.3 COMPLEMENTARITY INSTEAD OF POLITICAL TRANSFER

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The French president and government were very supportive of the creation of a European diplomatic service and played an active role in its inception. Situated in between the Council and the European Commission, the EEAS, as it was shaped in 2010, ensures that the Commission is kept at a distance in the fields of security and defence, in accordance with French requirements. It was also important for France that the EEAS did not become totally autonomous from the member states and that it would comprise national staff as well as officials coming from the Council's General Secretariat and DG RELEX.

The French MFA sees the rationale for creating the EEAS as twofold: bringing coherence to the EU's external action and making Europe more visible on the international arena. The EEAS is supposed to complement MFAs and not replace them: the rationale behind the creation of the EEAS was not to transfer specific tasks to the European level. At the same time, French officials acknowledge that the EEAS has already fulfilled tasks that compete with national MFAs and that transfers may happen in the medium and long term. The EEAS is characterised as 'a baby' that does not function very well for the time being: for example, the documents and reports issued by the Service are not distributed on time and are often rather poorly written. However, this is expected to change in the near future.

Although the MFA has no clear view on the potential impact of the EEAS, it does see some promising domains of cooperation:

- EU diplomatic *démarches* and initiatives on the ground: While agreeing on the leading role played by EU Delegations, French officials argue in favour of a complementary role for national ambassadors. The possibility of associating the 'big' member states should be maintained as they can bring added value to EU *démarches*. The current code of conduct for diplomatic *démarches* is seen as restrictive. On the other hand, it is sometimes seen as beneficial for France to let the EU Delegation undertake 'difficult' *démarches*, such as human rights claims, because they can have side-effects that may jeopardise economic (or other) interests.
- Diplomatic protection: All member states would benefit from burden-sharing and coordination in this field. French officials regret that the UK has hindered the evolution toward Europeanisation. The current burden on French diplomatic missions results from its large diplomatic network. Especially in emergency cases, diplomatic protection and evacuation should be coordinated by the EU Delegations. France also supports the creation of a European Fund to ensure that every member state shares part of the burden.
- Representation and analysis: The EEAS could replace national activity only in those countries where no strong bilateral dimension is involved. In international organisations, EU representatives are welcome, with the exception of the UN Security Council. The coordination role of the EU Delegations is largely seen as positive or very positive, although it is difficult to make generalisations. Coordination meetings are held on a regular basis in all countries, and new procedures have been adopted, based on best practices. But the intensity of the coordination depends on the country. The designation of a leading country to operate in close contact with the EU Delegation is seen as promising.
- There is a constant flow of information and contacts between EU Delegations and embassies, but the way in which Heads of Delegation perform their functions varies a lot, depending on the country and the personality of the official (the background and the profile of the Head of Delegation being of considerable importance). The MFA sees a need for the Delegations to become more "political" and less "technocratic" (less constrained by 'administrative red tape').<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> One interviewee illustrates this technocratic problem with the example of financial issues and the complexity of accounting rules.

The EEAS is structured in a very similar manner to a Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but the culture of the EEAS is far from that of a MFA. A lack of political advisers is also seen as a serious problem. The politicisation process has started but remains insufficient. Recruitment of national diplomats to EU Delegations should primarily be targeted at people with a ‘political’ background, i.e. diplomats exerting political functions within national MFAs.

To conclude, the French MFA acknowledges that the transformation of the Commission delegations into EU Delegations has already brought changes to the EU’s diplomatic representation, but the process is on-going and needs further improvements.

### **13.4 A PRIVILEGED MEMBER STATE**

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As regards contacts between the MFA and the EEAS, French officials have noticed an increase in information-sharing. The preparation of the Foreign Affairs Council’s meetings has changed – and improved – due to the new position of the High Representative. Still, the HR/VP needs to take into account the positions of member states – especially the most influential ones – just as the Presidency had to do before the Lisbon Treaty. There are frequent conference calls between France, Germany, the UK and the EEAS, giving birth to a kind of *directoire* that is most welcomed by the French MFA.

French diplomats are satisfied with the current level of contact between the MFA and the EEAS. However, it is not clear whether this flow of exchange has increased since Lisbon, or not. Several working parties meet on a more regular basis, but the presence of MFA representatives could be extended in a few of them in order to help fill the gap between the MFA and ‘Brussels’.

France has been pro-active in staffing the EEAS, and the presence of French personnel in the EEAS is regarded as very satisfactory. There was no pre-selection at national level, but information was circulated widely among civil servants. An intranet site was open to any civil servant willing to apply, not just to diplomats.

A programme was set up to support the candidates and a website was dedicated to applications. Advice was given to help candidates fill in the application form and prepare for the job interview, which is quite different from oral exams organised in France to join the Quai d’Orsay – the interview to join the EEAS is perceived as an “Anglo-Saxon type”. This programme included a linguistic dimension. A seminar on recruitment to the EEAS was organised in collaboration with the ENA (*Ecole Nationale d’Administration*).

A lot of French candidates applied for positions in the EEAS, which proves that the Service is of great interest to French civil servants. The MFA has highlighted that the EEAS is a top priority for France and a very valuable experience for those who are appointed. The human resources office played a key role in convincing potential candidates that the EEAS is important and that a position there will be an asset when returning to the French administration. The appointment of Pierre Vimont as the EEAS’s Executive Secretary-General serves as an example of France’s readiness to send its best experts to the EEAS.

France was very successful during the first stage of staffing, but this is expected to change, with affirmative action now benefiting Central and Eastern European countries.

The MFA keeps in close contact with the French staff working in the EEAS as well as French officials working in the Commission and the Council. This network of French diplomats and experts contributes



to creating a steady flow of information and promoting French interests within the EEAS. At the same time, the MFA notes that these people are disconnected from their country and have to remain as neutral as possible. It is very likely that diplomats seconded to the EEAS will be Europeanised, and will help to generate a European diplomatic culture. While French diplomats bring their national diplomatic culture to the EU level, they most certainly spread a European diplomatic culture when coming back to the national level.

### **13.5 A PLEA IN FAVOUR OF EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP**

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The French foreign affairs minister is not willing to accept reduced visibility. At the same time, the High Representative has been criticised for her low profile on several international issues. Thus, seen from Paris, the HR/VP should be more visible while the French foreign minister should remain active on the international arena.

French diplomats note that the most influential member states (the three 'big' member states and a few others) try to resist any evolution that would give true leadership to Catherine Ashton, but are obliged to accept a kind of co-decision-making with her. The HR/VP is expected to coordinate with ministers to a greater extent than she actually does (some note that coordination was more efficient with Javier Solana as the High Representative). Ashton is not seen to be active enough on security matters, as if she were not truly interested in the building of a common security and defence policy. But it is acknowledged that there has been an evolution and that Ashton is now much more inclined to build a European security policy than she used to be at the beginning of her mandate.

However, French officials believe that the EEAS could become more active, visible and efficient if a new High Representative were appointed. The role played by Pierre Vimont as number two is seen as important but far from sufficient. In addition, they all consider that Catherine Ashton has not succeeded in ensuring coherence among the commissioners in charge of external issues. Stefan Füle, in particular, is not controlled in any way by the HR/VP.

### **13.6 CONCLUSIONS**

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Europeanisation in the field of foreign affairs and security is a longstanding process, which started in the early 1970s. As the interviews have shown, the European External Action Service is just another stage in this on-going process.

The EEAS is seen as a new instrument allowing the EU to become more visible on the international scene. Of course, the French MFA tries to influence the EEAS and the other member states, but it also needs to find compromises with other member states and take into account proposals made by the EEAS. Although French diplomats try to project national priorities to the EU level, they are aware that they also need to adapt to the decisions taken by the EU on foreign and security issues.

In the MFA, one interesting evolution is the increasing coordination role of the EU Directorate, which can be seen as a form of (top-down) Europeanisation.

The MFA is not pushing to adopt a precise plan governing the division of labour between the EEAS and Paris. The EEAS is seen as a power multiplier that will bring added value to existing diplomatic resources. But the remit of the EEAS is likely to expand on a pragmatic basis, and not according to a clear-cut and pre-established division of labour.

## Quantitative data - France

### MFA budget

Year **2012**: Total budget: 4,9 bn €; reduction of 2,7 % in 2013

### Number of missions

Total: 271, of which:

- Embassies: 163, of which 26 within the EU
- Consulates General and Consulates: 92, of which 20 within the EU
- Representations to international organisations: 16

Since 2008, 3 new Embassies have opened, 4 Consulates closed and 5 new ones opened.

### Number of staff employed by the MFA

Total: 15,024, of which:

- Permanent staff in headquarters: 3,083
- Permanent staff in missions: 2,885
- Temporary staff in headquarters and missions: 3,166
- Military personnel (extra-budget): 718
- Locally employed staff: 5,172

### Number of staff seconded to the EEAS

Total of seconded diplomats: 31

### Number of arrangements of cooperation/burden-sharing with diplomatic missions of other member states (sharing premises, consular services etc.)

N.A.

Sources:

[www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jopdf/common/jo\\_pdf.jsp?numJO=0&dateJO=20111229&numTexte=1&pageDebut=22441&pageFin=22510](http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jopdf/common/jo_pdf.jsp?numJO=0&dateJO=20111229&numTexte=1&pageDebut=22441&pageFin=22510)  
[www.performance-publique.budget.gouv.fr/farandole/2013/pap/pdf/PAP2013\\_BG\\_Action\\_exterieure\\_etat.pdf](http://www.performance-publique.budget.gouv.fr/farandole/2013/pap/pdf/PAP2013_BG_Action_exterieure_etat.pdf)

# The United Kingdom and the European External Action Service

***By Caterina Carta and Richard Whitman***

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## **14.1 INTRODUCTION**

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The United Kingdom is, alongside France, one of the European Union's two most ambitious member states in the fields of foreign, security and defence policy. It has also established a reputation as one of the EU's 'awkward' member states and is perceived to be resistant to a deepening of European integration. Its population size, its economic, military and political capabilities, its traditionally strong relationship with the United States, the links that derive from its colonial history and its representation in key international forums make the UK ambitious to retain a globally significant role for itself.

London's approach to the development of a European foreign, security and defence policy has been broadly supportive of greater *intergovernmental* coordination of national foreign policy. At the same time, however, it has also been resistant to the notion that UK foreign policy should be constrained by institutional or decision-making arrangements that would limit national foreign policy prerogatives, as it made plain by insisting on annexing to the Treaty of Lisbon Declaration 14 concerning the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). This Declaration states that new provisions are not meant to "affect the existing legal basis, responsibilities, and powers of each Member State in relation to the formulation and conduct of its foreign policy, its national diplomatic service, relations with third countries and participation in international organisations, including a Member State's membership of the Security Council of the United Nations".

This has made London's position on the creation and development of the European External Action Service (EEAS) somewhat hostile: on the one hand, the UK has instrumentally supported any development that can enhance British foreign policy objectives. On the other, it has not hesitated to staunchly oppose any development which would strengthen the EU's autonomy in foreign policy.

The UK remains one of the most globally-significant economies. Its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was ranked the world's 6<sup>th</sup> largest in 2011, after those of the US, China, Japan, India and Germany, and ahead of Russia, France, Brazil and Italy.<sup>129</sup> Although in relative decline in terms of its ranking in the global economy as an on-going effect of the 2008 financial crisis and the economic growth of the BRIC states, the UK, together with France, still accounts for 3.6% of the global distribution of military expenditure, after the US (41%), China (8.2%) and Russia (4.1%).<sup>130</sup> It therefore remains a globally significant player in its own right, with ambitions that extend beyond the EU as a vehicle for its global role.

The UK is also one of the EU's largest countries. According to 2012 Eurostat data, its population accounts for 12.5% of the total EU-27 population of 503,491,975, compared to 16.2% for Germany and France's 13%. The UK's share of EU GDP (in 2011) was 13.3%, against 15.8% for France and 20.3% for Germany; the UK's share of EU military expenditure accounts for 21.4% of the EU 24, compared to 21.4% for France and 16% for Germany.<sup>131</sup> In terms of the size of its foreign service, it ranks second closely after France.

The UK is a net contributor to the budget, with the difference accounting for about 0.12% of GNI in 2009.<sup>132</sup> In 2011, according to the European Commission's data, its net contribution to the EU budget accounted for 12 918.3 million EUR. Successive British governments have faced a challenge in reconciling domestic political reticence towards European integration whilst seeking a leadership role within the EU. The current coalition government (in power since 2010) has diverted from the policy of its two predecessor governments. Rather than seeking a broadly pragmatic approach to the EU's agenda, it has sought a more confrontational approach. This was demonstrated in its approach towards the Stability Coordination and Governance Treaty (SCG), where the UK was unwilling to reach an agreement with other member states and which resulted in a separate treaty excluding the UK. Domestically, the UK's membership of the EU has become a topic of active political debate.

Prime Minister David Cameron pledged in January 2013 to hold an in-or-out referendum on British membership of the EU during the next legislature (should his continued premiership be confirmed). He has made clear that the UK is keen to see European integration rolled back: "far from there being too little Europe, there is too much of it".<sup>133</sup> This position was encouraged by other members of the Conservative Party, such as Liam Fox, John Redwood and Boris Johnson, who asked to renegotiate EU

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<sup>129</sup> Data, [www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/spending.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/spending.htm)

<sup>130</sup> Elaboration SIPRI data, available at: [www.globalissues.org/article/75/world-military-spending#WorldMilitarySpending](http://www.globalissues.org/article/75/world-military-spending#WorldMilitarySpending)

<sup>131</sup> Data, respectively, from the International Monetary Fund and SIPRI Military Expenditure Database 2012.

<sup>132</sup> The 2007-2013 multi-annual budget framework set out member states' annual contribution to the EU. Proposal for a Council Regulation laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2007-2013, available at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/budget/biblio/documents/fin\\_fw0713/fin\\_fw0713\\_en.cfm#alloc](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/biblio/documents/fin_fw0713/fin_fw0713_en.cfm#alloc)

Data concerning 2011 can be found at: European Commission, Budget 2011 in figures,

[http://ec.europa.eu/budget/figures/2011/2011\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/figures/2011/2011_en.cfm)

<sup>133</sup> And he added: "Too much cost; too much bureaucracy; too much meddling in issues that belong to nation states or civic society or individuals". David Cameron, "We need to be clear about the best way of getting what is best for Britain", The Telegraph, available at:

[www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/david-cameron/9367479/David-Cameron-We-need-to-be-clear-about-the-best-way-of-getting-what-is-best-for-Britain.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/david-cameron/9367479/David-Cameron-We-need-to-be-clear-about-the-best-way-of-getting-what-is-best-for-Britain.html)

membership during negotiations on the EU's 2014-2020 multi-annual budget framework. British public opinion seems to back up the position of the government.<sup>134</sup>

The UK is currently reviewing all aspects of its EU membership, including foreign and security policy. This 'Balance of Competence Review' was launched by the Foreign Secretary in Parliament on 12 July 2012.<sup>135</sup> This was a formal part of the programme agreed by the two parties of the governing coalition. It is examining EU competences and the impact this has on the UK; EU competence in foreign policy is one strand of this review, which is currently being conducted by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). In summary, the UK's relationship with the EU and its near-term attitude towards the further development of the EU's foreign policy (including the further development of the EEAS) is the subject of active debate.

## **14.2 CHANGES IN BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY STRUCTURES AND RESOURCES AND THE ROLE OF THE EEAS**

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The UK is currently in an unusual political situation, operating with its first coalition government since the Second World War. Moreover, this new political arrangement has come at a time when the country is grappling with economic austerity as a consequence of the global financial crisis. In a debate in the House of Commons in June 2012, UK Europe Minister David Lidington acknowledged the existence of different views regarding the EEAS within the coalition government and described the common position on the Service in quite dismissive terms: "the EEAS is a fact" that can be used "to complement the FCO's efforts to advance United Kingdom international objectives".<sup>136</sup>

The current UK government has created a number of new arrangements to guide its foreign, security and defence policy, of which the most important are *A Strong Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The National Security Strategy* and *Securing Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The Strategic Defence and Security Review*. Furthermore, Foreign Secretary William Hague has engaged in considerable public diplomacy to 'de-centre' the EU from the UK's foreign policy and instead place great emphasis on the UK as a 'networked' foreign policy actor for which the EU is only one of its networks of influence.<sup>137</sup>

As an effect of the 2008 financial crisis, the UK economy is still suffering from high debt rates, a situation that exposes it to macroeconomic risks and requires fiscal consolidation, budget cuts and structural reforms.<sup>138</sup> Rates of expected growth are still only increasing at a slow pace, according to

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<sup>134</sup> See, for instance, Eurostat data on the reaction to the crisis, conducted from 10-25 March 2012. According to this survey, 62% of Britons believe that the UK should act individually to counter the crisis, against 38% of the EU average; only 29% of Britons believe that the UK should coordinate actions with other EU countries, against 55% of the EU average. Data available at: [www.europarl.org.uk/view/en/infocentre/Eurobarometer.html](http://www.europarl.org.uk/view/en/infocentre/Eurobarometer.html)

<sup>135</sup> Review of the Balance of Competences between the United Kingdom and the European Union, presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs by Command of Her Majesty, July 2012.

<sup>136</sup> Government Response to the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee Report of Session 2010-12 HC 1618 on the Departmental Annual Report 2010-11, Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs by Command of Her Majesty, June 2012.

<sup>137</sup> Foreign Secretary William Hague, "Britain's values in a networked world", the third of four speeches on the Coalition Government's foreign policy, 15 September 2010.

<sup>138</sup> All data reported here and below are taken from the European Commission Staff Working Document "In-Depth Review for the United Kingdom" in accordance with Article 5 of Regulation (EU) No 1176/2011 on the prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances, Brussels, 30 May 2012 SWD (2012) 161 final and by the UK Spending Review 2010, available at: [www.fco.gov.uk/en/about-us/what-we-do/spend-our-budget/2010-spending-review](http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/about-us/what-we-do/spend-our-budget/2010-spending-review)

the UK Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) forecast. In this context, the government has adopted a plan of austerity, introducing a fiscal consolidation plan in 2010 and cuts in budget spending involving the public administration.

The FCO has been forced to adjust to this situation with its own austerity measures, with reductions in 2010 accounting for 33% of the Department's administration budget.

In the light of this constraining structural condition, the UK has pursued a dual-track strategy: on the one hand, reducing costs; whilst on the other making better use of existing resources. This strategy was mainly pursued by reducing spending on staff and buildings, and increasing relative spending on programmes. The overall aim of this strategy is to pursue a "Network Shift", that is "a re-allocation of 8% of the FCO's diplomatic resources and [aiming] to transfer the UK's diplomatic power to the emerging economies and countries which would be important to the UK's interest in the next 20 years".<sup>139</sup>

Accordingly, while cutting or recycling assets, the UK was pursuing an overall strategy of rationalisation, which allowed it to open new embassies and strengthen existing ones in strategic countries. In this light, new embassies have been opened in El Salvador, Kyrgyzstan, South Sudan, Mexico and Indonesia; the staffing of current embassies in India and China has been increased by 30 and "up to 50" new staff; seven new consulates-general have been opened in emerging powers, and other measures were put into place to strengthen existing outposts outside Europe. In turn, "a closure of subordinate posts in Europe outside capital cities and a withdrawal of diplomatic staff from some other posts" were foreseen to balance this expansion.<sup>140</sup>

In this overall context, the UK diplomatic system still boasts a considerable size. There are currently some 137 Sovereign Posts, 52 subordinate Posts and 56 locations headed by locally-engaged staff. The FCO has roughly 4,580 UK-based civil servants, of whom 1,890 are currently working overseas (41%) and 2,690 in the UK (59%). In addition, the FCO's diplomatic system currently employs 8,659 locally-engaged staff overseas.

How do these diplomatic resourcing arrangements relate to the UK's strategy for diplomacy? The FCO defines three key priorities for both the UK and the EU. According to Hague's Balance of Competences between the United Kingdom and the EU, these are: globalisation; the eurozone crisis, and; democratic legitimacy. Accordingly, these priorities have shaped the reorganisation of the FCO beyond the establishment of the EEAS. In the FCO Business Plan 2012-2015, the FCO describes the UK coalition government priorities in general terms. These are: safeguarding Britain's national security; building Britain's prosperity; and supporting British nationals around the world through modern and efficient consular services. The EU and the establishment of the EEAS play a marginal role in determining the key tenets of the FCO and overseas reorganisation.<sup>141</sup> In other words, while recognising the possibility for the EEAS to add value to the EU common position in third countries, the UK does not look at the network of EU Delegations as a factor influencing the opening or closing of its own embassies and consulates. In the words of the Foreign Secretary, the role of the EEAS is

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<sup>139</sup> Permanent-Under-Secretary Simon Fraser, as quoted in the Departmental Annual Report 2010-2011, issued by the House of Common on 20 March 2012, available at:

[www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmfaff/1618/161802.htm](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmfaff/1618/161802.htm)

<sup>140</sup> All data in this section draw on information from the Departmental Annual Report 2010-2011, issued by the House of Common on 20 March 2012.

<sup>141</sup> Business Plan 2012-2015, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 31 May 2012.

straightforward: ‘although we are working closely with the new EEAS and ensuring that talented British candidates enter it, there is not and will never be any substitute for a strong British diplomatic service that advances the interest of the United Kingdom’.<sup>142</sup>

Changes to the configuration of the diplomatic network and of the FCO, therefore, are portrayed as unrelated to the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty and to the establishment of the European External Action Service (EEAS).

### **14.3 NATIONAL VIEWS ON THE FUNCTIONS OF THE EEAS**

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The British government portrays the role of the EEAS in terms of complementarity to national diplomacy: positive, but certainly not affecting the UK’s international leverage and strategies. The UK view emphasises the differences in functions between the EU’s missions and member states’ embassies abroad, stressing the importance of avoiding duplications between the two. Within these boundaries, the UK position is one of “encouraging the EU to use its collective weight in the world to promote human rights and democracy with the many levers at its disposal”, as stated in William Hague’s speech on Britain’s values in a networked world, delivered in September 2010. While acknowledging that the EEAS can effectively and positively perform a role in presenting the EU’s unified position to the outside world and in coordinating the positions of the member states in foreign policy dossiers, the UK Government’s aim is explicitly one of continuing to exert influence on the priorities and action of the EEAS.<sup>143</sup>

In parallel, as Minister Lidington clearly stated before Parliament in June 2011, “the EEAS should act only where it has competence to do so under EU treaties. The coalition agreement is clear that there should be no shift in powers from this country to the European Union, which applies as much in the field of foreign policy as anywhere else”. The UK attitude towards the newly-established EEAS is, therefore, vigilant against “any threat of competence creep on the part of the EEAS”.<sup>144</sup> Reportedly, the British attitude did not change as a result of the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty. The UK government is supportive of the upgrade of the Service insofar as the EU can bring together and speak for the member states only insofar as it is allowed to do so.

In the aftermath of the Lisbon Treaty, the position of the UK has been consistent both with its traditional pragmatism and with its emphasis on clear boundaries between national and EU competences. The EEAS’s added value is recognised where it complements rather than substitutes for national foreign policy. Reference to “common values” and positive cooperation is therefore made in cases where the EU can work as an amplifier of concerted decisions, e.g. the comprehensive sanction package issued against Iran or the overall Middle East Peace Process (MEPP).

The UK has championed the position that the EEAS and the Delegations should not perform any role where there is no clear mandate and established competences exist. Therefore, while declaring the maximum support for competences established by the Treaty, the UK resisted an upgrade of competences in the areas of common representation in matters of mixed competences and of consular protection (see below).

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<sup>142</sup> William Hague, as quoted in the Departmental Annual Report 2010-2011, issued by the House of Commons on 20 March 2012.

<sup>143</sup> House of Lords European Union Committee (Sub-Committee on External Affairs), Inquiry on the European External Action Service, Evidence Session No. 1, Heard in Public, Questions 1-26, 1 November 2012.

<sup>144</sup> House of Commons, European Committee B, European External Action Service, 18 June 2011, available at: [www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmgeneral/euro/120618/120618s01.htm](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmgeneral/euro/120618/120618s01.htm)

### ***Overall cooperation between the FCO and the EEAS***

Reportedly, daily cooperation between the EEAS and national actors is positive both in the Headquarters and in the Delegations. Meetings are frequent and tend to encourage convergence and general agreement among EU partners. Specifically, very good cooperation is acknowledged on the Syrian dossier, and the role of High Representative Catherine Ashton in dealing with international crises is generally assessed as positive.

In order to facilitate coordination, EU competences are mainstreamed in all geographical desks at the FCO to make the most of common competences – whether ‘communitarised’ or ‘unionised’. Therefore, the FCO European External Action Service Team in the Europe Department liaises closely with and provides assistance to other geographical desks to make sure that they duly incorporate EU issues in their dossiers. This practice was reportedly well-established before the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. The EEAS, therefore, was not considered as a factor that would change this well-established practice.

Accordingly, the diplomats interviewed said they were unable to assess whether the FCO was benefitting at all from the EEAS’s enhanced role of political reporting on third countries, in implicitly recognising that the UK does not need additional resources to provide for sound political reporting on its own.

### ***Pooling resources and burden-sharing in the aftermath of the Lisbon Treaty***

With a large Foreign Ministry and an extensive network of embassies and consulates abroad, the UK is certainly among those member states that do not need to rely on the network of the EU Delegations to gather information or pursue their own goals in third countries and inter-governmental organisations (IGOs).

In this context, burden-sharing involves mainly logistics, rather than functions: it is a pragmatic decision aimed at optimising resources and ensuring the security of missions and diplomats. This is the case, for instance, when securing the sharing of resources in sensitive posts. The UK, the French, the EU and the German embassies are hosted in the same location in Astana (Kazakhstan), which allows for sharing of security costs. The EU and its member states are not the UK’s only partners in this kind of endeavour. In the reported case of Astana, the Japanese diplomatic mission shares the same premises. In another case, the UK Ambassador to Morocco and Mauritania uses UK premises in Rabat and the EU Delegation in Mauritania when travelling there. However, the UK does not look exclusively to other EU member states in matters of logistical cooperation, as confirmed by the fact that William Hague recently signed an agreement in Ottawa that will see the UK and Canada share some facilities and consular services in third countries.

## **14.4 CONTACTS AND LINKS BETWEEN THE FOREIGN OFFICE AND THE EEAS**

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### ***UK diplomats in the EEAS***

By mid-2012, there were 21 British diplomats working for the EEAS, which was considerably lower than the corresponding figure for France (31; see Table 3 on page 169) France is seen as having done a great job throughout the selection process, by presenting very strong and competitive candidates for most EEAS opening positions. The FCO was satisfied overall with the recruitment process, which was defined by one interviewee as “transparent and very competitive”, even if the



general feeling that the UK is “underrepresented” within all the EU institutions remains. However, other member states do not share the view that Britons are underrepresented within the Service. According to a confidential German Foreign Ministry document, leaked in 2012, both Germany and France were concerned about the “over-proportioned Great Britain influence on the establishment of the EEAS”. As proof of this overwhelming presence, it was reported that out of the 12 staff appointed in Ashton's office, four were British, and that Britons were well-placed in crucial departments, such as the EU's intelligence cell and its military staff. The prestige of these appointments within the EEAS is generally acknowledged by the UK government. In June 2012, for instance, the UK's Europe minister listed a series of important positions held by British nationals, such as the positions of *chef de cabinet*, managing director for Africa, special representative to the Sudan, the Heads of Delegation in Switzerland and Bolivia, the special adviser on Turkey, minister-counsellor in Washington, the head of the China unit, the first secretary (political) in Beijing and the first secretary (political) in Pretoria.

The House of Commons expressed some concerns that the FCO's decision to freeze recruitment throughout the spending review could affect negatively the overall ability of the FCO to cope with global challenges. In this perspective, the House of Commons feared that the EEAS could place a further strain on the FCO's resources.<sup>145</sup> Despite the above-mentioned constraints, the UK is reportedly encouraging British diplomats to apply for EEAS positions in order to secure stronger national representation within the EEAS. The process of secondment of British diplomats is entirely voluntary, but mechanisms exist to encourage competitive candidates to apply, with an eye to ensuring their due relocation in the FCO after serving the EEAS. No financial incentives are in place to encourage applications, but the FCO attaches great value to the experience, presenting posts in the EEAS as attractive in terms of career advancement.

With well-established practices and experience of secondment also in the private sector and in Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), the FCO ensures seconded diplomats a smooth process of reintegration and a good flow of exchanges, in order to contain any ‘foreign legion’ syndrome while respecting their seconded mandate. Strong ties are also kept with retired diplomats, through a lively alumni network. Retired diplomats are keen to share their own information and experience at the EU.

Overall, London recognises both the usefulness and challenge of the EEAS: by bringing together different working profiles and skills, let alone different national traditions, the EEAS is considered an ambitious gamble. While it is too early to assess the added value for the FCO of UK seconded officials, the EEAS reportedly has a “positive” influence in the “mind-set” of seconded officials. It is recognised that the EEAS was set up to favour stronger convergence of foreign policy views among interested diplomats. In this process, Ashton's positive contribution and her ability to set up a well-equipped service is generally acknowledged, by taking on board “the best and the brightest” as well as in her capacity to navigate between the different and oft-conflicting demands of the member states. In this context, the competitive climate involved not only the member states, but also the institutions, with the Commission and the EEAS having assumed litigious moods. The UK reportedly encouraged distension and cooperation among the EU institutions, to make sure that the EU was functioning as well as it could in the performance of its functions.

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<sup>145</sup> European Scrutiny Committee, House of Commons, Annex: Non-paper on the EEAS, 9 February 2012, available at: [www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmeuleg/428-xlix/42804.htm](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmeuleg/428-xlix/42804.htm)

## 14.5 EUROPEAN FOREIGN POLICY LEADERSHIP

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Throughout the negotiation of the Lisbon Treaty and in the immediate aftermath of the establishment of the EEAS, the UK assumed a rigid stance overall, by ensuring that the CFSP would remain firmly under intergovernmental control. This attitude brought some commentators to talk about an UK-led “diplomatic guerrilla campaign to block the EEAS”.<sup>146</sup>

The UK position at that time can be summed up by the words of then-Prime Minister Tony Blair, who stated in Cardiff in November 2002 that “Europe is and should remain an alliance of European and national government”. In this context, in a research paper on the Convention published in 2003, the House of Commons acknowledged a split between large and small member states onto two broad camps on institutional issues. On the one hand, the small member states – such as the BENELUX countries – championed a stronger supranational executive, with the Commission at its core; on the other, bigger member states – such as the UK, France, Spain and Italy – supported a more intergovernmental institutional structure with a reinforced Council of Ministers at its core.<sup>147</sup>

In this overall intergovernmental framework – according to the then-Minister for Europe and the Government’s representative at the Convention on the Future of Europe, Peter Hain – foreign policy should respond to the following priorities and rationales: first, it should be more coherent, by giving the new Representative the chair of the newly-established Foreign Affairs Council (FAC); second, the European Council should be enhanced and made able to steer EU action and to cement the common interest of the member states; third, external action should flexibly allow the member states to pursue promptly and effectively their own actions on the basis of their own national interests; and fourth, the role of the new High Representative should be enhanced, by foreseeing the formal right of initiative in the CFSP and a clear link to the Commission’s competences in external matters. In parallel, Hain made plain his opposition to the title of “European Foreign Minister” for the newly established High Representative, a term which was labelled as “misleading”.

In the Common Defence and Security Policy, the UK has pushed for a special transatlantic relationship. While France pushed for an autonomous European defence structure, the UK insisted on the centrality of the NATO umbrella in defence matters. The UK has remained sceptical on the question as to whether the core problem with the European Defence Agency (EDA) is the need for additional financial resources. Consequentially, it pushed for a reduction in the EDA’s budget and has not participated in several EDA projects. The UK position is to favour greater capabilities development through better targeted defence expenditure, increased defence expenditure by states for who defence spending has been in substantial decline and an enhancement of structured cooperation among the most active in defence member states, rather than the focus on the institutional framework for such cooperation in defence matters.

Since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty and the change of government in London, the UK has pursued an overall ‘push back’ approach in all attempts to interpret the vague wording of the treaty against any expansion of the EEAS’s competences. Reportedly, William Hague sent instructions to British embassies in Washington, Beijing and the UN to be vigilant against any “competence creep” and possible encroachments on behalf of the EU and its Delegations, against the wishes of small

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<sup>146</sup> European Council on Foreign Relations, European Foreign Policy Scoreboard 2012, available at: [www.ecfr.eu/scorecard/2012/extras/introduction](http://www.ecfr.eu/scorecard/2012/extras/introduction)

<sup>147</sup> House of Commons, 'The Convention on the Future of Europe: institutional reform', Research Paper 03/56, 12 June 2003.

member states, such as Austria, Belgium and the Netherlands, to expand the 'supporting role' of the EU Delegations in the areas of consular protection and crisis management.

In this context, the UK has been a staunch opponent of any increase in the EEAS budget. In May 2011, for instance, UK Europe Minister David Lidington described as "ludicrous" a request of a 5.8% increase in the EEAS budget: an increase defined by High Representative Catherine Ashton as indispensable to cover the basic costs of the Service.<sup>148</sup> During a House of Commons hearing held in June 2011, Liberal Democrat Martin Horwood pointed out that the EEAS's budget was accounting for a "vanishingly unimportant" impact on the overall EU budget (0.33%) while global challenges ahead demanded a well-resourced response. In replying to Horwood, Lidington recognised the small impact of the EEAS on the EU's overall spending and defended the UK's opposition to any increase in the EEAS budget alike: "I am an old-fashioned believer in the principle that if one looks after the pennies, the pounds look after themselves [...] If we do not adopt a firm, rigorous, top-down approach to budgetary control in the European Union, we will not get the result that I think we all wish to see". In short, the UK is opposing an increase in the EEAS budget to secure future discipline and results.

In terms of leadership, in a recent hearing at the House of Lords, Hugo Shorter – Head of the European Union Directorate External Department in the FCO – maintained a positive opinion of the overall performance of Catherine Ashton. Among successful cases – which can be seen as both personal and organisational successes of the newly-appointed High Representative/Vice-President – there are the above-mentioned examples of Ashton's role on the Iran nuclear issue and in the Middle East peace process, but also her role in Europe's neighbourhood, both southwards and eastwards.

However, the UK government has not always expressed a positive view of her leadership, to the point that Lady Ashton ironically commented "I am more popular in Benghazi than in Britain".<sup>149</sup> In June 2011, for instance, a leaked diplomatic memorandum from 2009 – released under a freedom of information request – was accidentally published on the FCO website. The document, issued before Catherine Ashton's appointment, clearly stated that only a former prime minister, head of state or foreign minister would be qualified to cover the role of High Representative/Vice-President of the Commission. On that occasion, William Hague defended Lady Ashton's performance, declared that the offending document was issued under Gordon Brown's government, and gave assurances that the current government had a positive opinion of Ashton's performance so far. However, Hague's declaration of esteem was viewed as ambivalent, to say the least. Charles Tannock, a UK Conservative member of the European Parliament, for instance stated that she was acting in Britain's interests in the sense that "she is unlikely to ever pose a threat to national sovereignty".<sup>150</sup>

### ***Controversial issues: who speaks for the EU in multilateral organisations?***

While the implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon did not cause major problems in bilateral posts for the UK, the process of implementation proved to be more controversial at the multilateral level, where the EU and its member states are represented in Inter-Governmental Institutions (IGOs).

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<sup>148</sup> Waterfield, B., 'Britain attacks Baroness Ashton over 'ludicrous' budget demands', the Telegraph, 23 May 2011, available at: [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/eu/8531454/Britain-attacks-Baroness-Ashton-over-ludicrous-budget-demands.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/eu/8531454/Britain-attacks-Baroness-Ashton-over-ludicrous-budget-demands.html)

<sup>149</sup> 'Low ambition for the High Representative', Charlemagne (European politics blog), The Economist, 23 May 2011.

<sup>150</sup> Waterfield B., 'Baroness Ashton 'not experienced enough', government document states', The Daily Telegraph, 19 June 2011, available at: [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/eu/8585291/Baroness-Ashton-not-experienced-enough-government-document-states.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/eu/8585291/Baroness-Ashton-not-experienced-enough-government-document-states.html)

After the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the UK raised objections to the idea that the EU could speak for its member states in matters of mixed competences, where the member states still maintained their own competences, programmes and budget.

The issue of representing the EU in multilateral IGOs has come to be known among European diplomats as the “UK issue”. EU internal documents and interviews with EU diplomats in Geneva and Brussels referred to some 100 statements to be issued in IGOs that had been blocked because member states and EU actors could not agree on whether the statements should be issued under the nameplate “on behalf of the EU” or “on behalf of the EU and its Member States”.

The UK insisted that most statements should be delivered under the proposition “on behalf of the EU and its member states”. In October 2011, the stalemate in multilateral organisations was finally overcome in COREPER II, with the adoption of a document prescribing the General Arrangements to be adopted in matters of EU Statements in Multilateral Organisations.<sup>151</sup> The UK was reportedly satisfied with the general agreement, and welcomed it as a solution allowing all EU partners to finally overcome the institutional stalemate and get ‘back to work’ on issues of substance. Therefore, after the General Agreement, cooperation among EU member states in multilateral locations is now considered to be smooth and well-ingrained.

The UK stressed that EU competences are neither exhaustive of the competences of member states, nor do they cover the financial costs of all actions performed by member states. This explains the UK and some other member states' reluctance to empower EU Delegations in matters of external representation of mixed competences: the EU cannot legitimately claim to represent the member states where they still perform their foreign policy activities under their own capacity and with their own resources.

### ***Controversial issues: consular matters in the aftermath of the Lisbon Treaty***

In consular matters, according to Articles 20(2)(c) and 23 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union; and Article 46 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, EU citizens have the right to equal treatment regarding protection from the diplomatic and consular authorities of any member state outside the EU when their own country is not represented.

The UK opposed the view that the EU should take on responsibilities in matters of consular protection on the grounds of pragmatic considerations, based on both the need to avoid duplication and the presumed lack of expertise of the EEAS in dealing with consular affairs. While the UK agrees that multilateral arrangements should be made in order to protect EU citizens abroad in situations in which their own country does not have a consulate or an embassy on the ground, it contests the capability and expertise of EEAS diplomats to pursue any role in consular matters.

The solution that the UK government suggested was therefore one of ensuring that European citizens have due consular assistance in places where there is no national representation, through member states' ad-hoc arrangements.<sup>152</sup> Large member states often offer consular protection to citizens of smaller member states. So, for instance, the UK often provides diplomatic and consular protection to Irish nationals. More seldom, the UK is the direct beneficiary of other member states' protection, as

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<sup>151</sup> Council of the European Union (2011), 'EU Statements in multilateral organizations General Arrangements', 15901/11, 24 October 2011.

<sup>152</sup> UK Parliament, 'Diplomatic and consular protection of Union citizens in third countries', 21 December 2011, available at [www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmeuleg/428-xlix/42810.htm](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmeuleg/428-xlix/42810.htm)

was the case during the temporary withdrawal of the UK embassy in Teheran, when the Swedish embassy provided consular protection for UK citizens.

## 14.6 CONCLUSIONS

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With a prestigious foreign policy tradition, consistent resources and a well-established profile in international affairs, the UK can afford to look at the EU as one among many possible partners in the enhancement of both national and shared international interests.

All in all, the British case seems to confirm that the enhancement of the EU's toolkit to deal with external affairs did not bring about an Europeanisation of the FCO, where Europeanisation assumes that organisational adaptation follows the evolution of the EU integration process. Since 2009, the organisation of the FCO has been undergoing a process of change. However, these changes seem to be more related to the on-going effects of the 2008 financial crisis, rather than to the establishment of the EEAS and the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. Drastic cuts in public spending, however, seem not to have affected the UK's international ambitions: the focus is one of maintaining the UK's leverage in times of international challenges.

In this context, very few elements seem to suggest that the UK is contemplating any change in the current division of labour between the EEAS and the FCO in the near future. The case of cooperation to protect national citizens abroad seems to confirm that the UK has adopted a case-by-case approach, which mostly relies on inter-state cooperation.

The UK maintains a pragmatic vision of the role of the EEAS. The role of the EEAS is considered to be positive where it can add value to the making of the Common Foreign and Security Policy and foreign economic policies. However, the UK stresses the need to ensure that the EEAS does not cross the border of competences explicitly conferred upon it by the Treaties.

In a nutshell, the UK case seems to support the vision of strengthening intergovernmentalism. The implementation of the Lisbon Treaty arrangements and the establishment of the EEAS did not affect the UK's traditional position on EU foreign policy coordination.

The UK assumes that where the member states have agreed upon an upgraded role of the EU institutions, those institutions need to be supported. In parallel, the UK position traditionally embraces the idea that the EU does not necessarily add value in the pursuit of member states' common interests.

If socialisation involves a gradual process of cognitive and affective shift from the national to the EU level, the UK case with respect to the EEAS shows that this is certainly not the case. If socialisation means the strengthening of mutual trust in the pursuit of common interests, the UK case demonstrates that cooperation enhances mutual trust and understanding insofar as it meets strategic challenges.

## **Quantitative data – United Kingdom**

### **MFA budget**

Year **2012**: 1,239.1 mln €

### **Number of missions**

Total: 245

### **Number of staff employed by the MFA**

Total: 13,239

### **Number of staff seconded to the EEAS**

Total of seconded diplomats: 21

### **Number of arrangements of cooperation/burden-sharing with diplomatic missions of other member states (sharing premises, consular services etc.)**

N.A.

*Sources: British Foreign and Commonwealth Office; European External Action Service (2012), 'Staffing in the EEAS', Brussels.*

## The Czech Republic and the European External Action Service

*By Vít Beneš*

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### 15.1 INTRODUCTION: KEY FEATURES OF CZECH FOREIGN AND EUROPEAN POLICIES

The Czech Republic describes itself as a “middle-size country”.<sup>153</sup> In the security sphere, the Czech Republic relies on its NATO membership and on bilateral security guarantees from the US. The Czech Republic promotes strong relations with its neighbours, notably with the Višegrad Four. Czech foreign policy focuses on Europe and its vicinity. More specifically, it pays special attention to the Balkans (supporting the integration of the Balkans into the EU) and Eastern Europe (promoting the democratisation of Belarus and the rule of law in Ukraine).

The Czech Republic is aware of its limited resources and power in the globalising world. EU and NATO membership is seen as crucial to the country's further development. The EU is seen as a natural place for the Czech Republic, and there is no alternative to EU membership. At the same time, the Czech Republic is dedicated to defending its national interests and actively shaping the EU. As a medium-sized country, the Czech Republic has no global interests “across the board”. It tries to focus on several selected issues and countries/regions. These include the Balkans (EU enlargement, stabilisation), Eastern Europe (democratisation, the rule of law and Europeanisation), Cuba and Burma (transition to democracy and human rights), and the Middle East (Israel's security).

<sup>153</sup> Government of the Czech Republic (2011), ‘Conceptual Basis of the Foreign Policy of the Czech Republic’, 20 July 2011, Prague, [www.mzv.cz/file/681350/koncepcie\\_zahranicni\\_politiky\\_2011\\_en.pdf](http://www.mzv.cz/file/681350/koncepcie_zahranicni_politiky_2011_en.pdf)

To start with, most political actors in the Czech Republic share some priorities *vis-à-vis* the EU. For example, the liberalisation of internal market is a matter of political consensus across most political parties and so is external energy security.<sup>154</sup> Nevertheless, the CFSP is certainly not an issue of domestic consensus. The current right-wing government led by the Civic Democratic Party opposes the transfer of more powers to the EU and fights the “centralisation of the EU”. It promotes the intergovernmental model of the EU, believing that such an integration model is favourable for a small/medium-sized country. On the other hand, the strongest opposition party (the Czech Social Democratic Party) does support the idea of the EU as a “global actor”, and thus of a stronger and more effective CFSP and EEAS.

It should also be noted that the EU, its institutions (notably the European Commission) and the EEAS are seen in a more positive light by those who are in more frequent and personal contact with the EU institutions. Generally speaking, the attitude of individual institutional actors towards the EU is more positive (less negative) as we move along the following continuum: the President > the Prime Minister (the Government) > the Minister of Foreign Affairs (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) > the Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the EU. In 2009 the Czech president openly clashed with then-Prime Minister Mirek Topolánek (both of them belong to the Civic Democratic Party) over the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty.<sup>155</sup> Even though current Prime Minister Petr Nečas does not clash with President Václav Klaus openly, he disapproves some of his most radical ideas (such as Klaus’ proposal to negotiate a permanent opt-out from the euro zone). In 2011 Václav Klaus attacked the governmental ‘Concept of the Foreign Policy’ of the Czech Republic (prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) for being too pro-European.<sup>156</sup> At the same time, the Minister of Foreign Affairs criticised the Prime Minister for not signing the Fiscal Compact.<sup>157</sup> Diplomats from the MFA usually distance themselves from the Eurosceptic attitudes of President Václav Klaus. In addition, interviewees from the Permanent Representation tend to view the EU (and the CFSP) in a more positive light compared to diplomats from Headquarters.

## 15.2 CHANGES IN THE STRUCTURE AND RESOURCES OF CZECH DIPLOMACY

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In 2007 the Czech MFA launched an ambitious process of internal reform and reorganisation with the aim of imposing new business-like management which would give more responsibility to individual actors and boost the effectiveness of the MFA.<sup>158</sup> These reforms also aimed to reduce the network of Czech embassies abroad and to improve IT management. However, these reforms met with strong resistance from the bureaucratic structure of the Ministry. During 2008, these structural reforms were postponed, and they were eventually halted in 2010 by then-Minister of Foreign Affairs Jan Kohout. As a result of the initial round of reforms, section names were changed, deputy ministers

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<sup>154</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>155</sup> Beneš, V. and Braun, M. (2010), ‘The European Dimension of Czech Foreign Policy’, in Kořan, M. (ed.), *Czech Foreign Policy in 2007 - 2009, Analysis*, Prague, Ústav mezinárodních vztahů, pp. 76-77.

<sup>156</sup> Beneš, V. and Braun, M. (2012), ‘Evropský rozměr české zahraniční politiky [The European Dimension of Czech Foreign Policy]’, in Kořan, M. (ed.), *Česká zahraniční politika v roce 2011, Analýza ÚMV [Czech Foreign Policy in 2010: Analysis of the IIR]*, Prague, Ústav mezinárodních vztahů, pp. 80-81.

<sup>157</sup> ‘War of Words Erupts in Prague over EU’s Fiscal Treaty’, Radio Prague (Czech Radio), 1 February 2012: [www.radio.cz/en/section/curraffrs/war-of-words-erupts-in-prague-over-eus-fiscal-treaty](http://www.radio.cz/en/section/curraffrs/war-of-words-erupts-in-prague-over-eus-fiscal-treaty)

<sup>158</sup> Kořan, M. (2010), ‘The Political Context and the Making of Czech Foreign Policy in 2007–2009’, in Kořan, M. (ed.), *Czech Foreign Policy in 2007 - 2009, Analysis*, Prague, Ústav mezinárodních vztahů, p. 30.



were assigned different tasks, and agendas were relocated to newly-named departments. But hardly any substantial changes took place.

A new process of restructuring the MFA was launched by current Foreign Minister Karel Schwarzenberg. His plan was unveiled in September 2010. The MFA planned to reduce the number of MFA staff at the Ministry in Prague from 801 to 673, and the number of positions in missions from 1,178 to 1,009. The target date for doing so was 1 February 2011.<sup>159</sup> These plans were more or less observed and, by the end of 2011, the total number of staff employed by the MFA had been cut down to about 1,765 people.

In 2010 the Ministry also announced plans to close down seven embassies and two consulates. This decision sparked debate (and related criticism) not just on the political scene but also among think-tanks and academics. The MFA eventually closed six embassies (in Colombia, Venezuela, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Yemen and Costa Rica) and one consulate (Mumbai). At the same time, it opened one new embassy (Armenia – see below).<sup>160</sup> Meanwhile it seems that the negative trend in the number of missions will be reversed. In 2012 the embassy in Colombia was reopened. As of August 2012, the Czech Republic had 96 embassies (including missions and delegations to international organisations), one economic and cultural office (Taiwan), and 15 consulates. In 2013 the MFA plans to open four more embassies (in Qatar, Senegal, Burma and Sri Lanka) and close two representations (in Luxembourg and to UNESCO).<sup>161</sup>

The 2010 reform and restructuring were driven by the austerity measures of the centre-right wing government led by Petr Nečas (Civic Democratic Party). It should also be noted that Foreign Affairs Minister Karel Schwarzenberg himself comes from the political party which advocated the reduction/rationalisation of public expenditure.

The establishment of the EEAS was not considered in the decision about the restructuring, and the introduction of the EEAS did not induce the organisational changes at the Czech MFA described above. The establishment of the EEAS did not play a role in the decision to restructure the Czech Republic's diplomatic service and its representation abroad. However, the EEAS was a factor in the second thoughts about the network of Czech embassies. The Czech Republic supports the idea of co-location by sharing premises with other member states (the Višegrad Four) or with the EEAS. In 2010, the Višegrad Four agreed to strengthen cooperation between themselves, even in remote territories. This cooperation yielded some results. In 2010 the Czech Republic offered its building in Cape Town

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<sup>159</sup> These numbers refer to the so-called "systemised positions". These are full-time positions assigned to individual ministries and governmental organisations. See: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Ministr Schwarzenberg Rozhodl o Reorganizaci Ministerstva [Minister Schwarzenberg Decided about the Reorganisation of the Ministry]', Prague, 30 September 2010, [www.mzv.cz/jnp/cz/udalosti\\_a\\_media/udalosti\\_a\\_temata/archiv\\_zprav/rok\\_2010\\_09\\_30\\_ministr\\_schwarzenberg\\_rozhodl\\_o\\_reorganizaci\\_ministerstva.html](http://www.mzv.cz/jnp/cz/udalosti_a_media/udalosti_a_temata/archiv_zprav/rok_2010/x2010_09_30_ministr_schwarzenberg_rozhodl_o_reorganizaci_ministerstva.html)

<sup>160</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Embassy of the Czech Republic in Yerevan', 9 March 2012, Prague, [www.mzv.cz/yerevan/en/our\\_office/our\\_location.html](http://www.mzv.cz/yerevan/en/our_office/our_location.html)

<sup>161</sup> 'Česko Otevře v Příštím Roce Nové Zastupitelské Úřady [The Czech Republic Will Open New Embassies Next Year]', Deník.cz, 15 August 2012, [www.denik.cz/z\\_domova/cesko-otevre-v-pristim-roce-nove-zastupitelske-urady-20120815.htm](http://www.denik.cz/z_domova/cesko-otevre-v-pristim-roce-nove-zastupitelske-urady-20120815.htm)  
'Česko Otevře Nové Zastupitelské Úřady v Africe, Asii a Jižní Americe [Czech Republic Will Open New Embassies in Africa, Asia and Latin America]', Novinky.cz, 15 August 2012, [www.novinky.cz/domaci/276092-cesko-otevre-nove-zastupitelske-urady-v-africe-asii-a-jizni-americe.html](http://www.novinky.cz/domaci/276092-cesko-otevre-nove-zastupitelske-urady-v-africe-asii-a-jizni-americe.html)

(South Africa) to the Višegrad Group partner countries for joint use. The four countries also established 'Višegrad House', which provides consular aid to their nationals.<sup>162</sup> In 2011 the Czech Republic closed its embassy in Kenya (as we noted above), but one Czech diplomat remained in Nairobi, residing in a dedicated office at the Slovak embassy.<sup>163</sup> In 2012 the Czech Republic opened its embassy in Armenia (headed by the *Chargé d'Affaires* and formally subjected to the Czech embassy in Georgia), which is based in the premises of Poland's embassy.<sup>164</sup>

Co-location is even being considered with the EEAS. The Czech Republic closed its embassy in Colombia in 2010, but in August 2012 the embassy was reopened. The embassy (consisting of one diplomat) resides in the premises of the EU Delegation in Colombia in order to save on costs.<sup>165</sup> As of August 2012, the Czech Republic has 96 embassies (112 missions in total).

### **15.3 CZECH DIPLOMACY'S VIEWS ON THE EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE**

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#### ***Institutional design of the CFSP***

The starting point of the Czech attitude towards the EEAS is the notion that the EEAS should be a neutral instrument of the Common Foreign and Security Policy. The EEAS is the institution that serves the CFSP. Since the design of the CFSP is, and should remain, intergovernmental<sup>166</sup>, the EEAS is expected to serve member states.

According to Czech diplomacy, the institutional design of the CFSP and the competences of the EEAS cannot evolve further, since the EU is not a federation and thus it cannot assume the tasks of national diplomacies. The CFSP does not serve Europeans but European states. Accordingly, the political activities (i.e. declarations) of the European Parliament in the field of EU external relations are seen in a rather negative light.

The EEAS is expected to strictly observe the mandate which arises from the consensus of member states. In relation to third countries, the EEAS (the HR/VP) should not act autonomously, nor should it go beyond this relatively strict mandate. Czech diplomats argue that greater autonomy of the EEAS would be destructive for the CFSP as a whole. The Czech Republic is unhappy when the EEAS (the HR/VP) tries to develop its own political agenda, either as a result of the HR/VP and his/her staff's own personal political views or due to pressure from some member states on issues which are not consensual.

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<sup>162</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Višegrad House was Opened in Cape Town', 25 March 2010, Prague, [www.mzv.cz/jnp/en/issues\\_and\\_press/events\\_and\\_issues/press\\_releases/x2010\\_03\\_25\\_visegrad\\_house\\_was\\_opened\\_in\\_cape\\_town.html](http://www.mzv.cz/jnp/en/issues_and_press/events_and_issues/press_releases/x2010_03_25_visegrad_house_was_opened_in_cape_town.html)

<sup>163</sup> 'Češi Zavřeli Ambasády v Pěti Zemích. V Keni se Diplomat Přemístil ke Slovákům [Czechs Closed Embassies in Five Countries. In Kenya the Diplomat Moved to Slovak Premises]', iDNES.cz, 1 February 2011, [http://zpravy.idnes.cz/cesi-zavreli-ambasady-v-peti-zemich-v-keni-se-diplomat-premistil-ke-slovakum-17y-zahranicni.aspx?c=A110131\\_195403\\_zahranicni\\_bt](http://zpravy.idnes.cz/cesi-zavreli-ambasady-v-peti-zemich-v-keni-se-diplomat-premistil-ke-slovakum-17y-zahranicni.aspx?c=A110131_195403_zahranicni_bt)

<sup>164</sup> The Višegrad Group, 'Czechs Embassy Opens in Armenia', Prague Daily Monitor, 17 May 2012, <http://praguemonitor.com/2012/05/17/czechs-embassy-opens-armenia>  
'Poland to Share Embassy with Czechs in Yerevan - Foreign Ministry', 10 May 2012, [www.visegradgroup.eu/news/poland-to-share-embassy](http://www.visegradgroup.eu/news/poland-to-share-embassy)

<sup>165</sup> 'Česko po Dvou Letech Znovu Otevírá Ambasádu v Kolumbii [The Czech Republic Reopens Embassy in Columbia After Two Years]', Czech Radio, 29 August 2012, [www.rozhlas.cz/zpravy/politika/\\_zprava/cesko-po-dvou-letech-znovu-otevira-ambasadu-v-kolumbii--1103601](http://www.rozhlas.cz/zpravy/politika/_zprava/cesko-po-dvou-letech-znovu-otevira-ambasadu-v-kolumbii--1103601)

<sup>166</sup> Government of the Czech Republic (2011), 'Conceptual Basis of the Foreign Policy of the Czech Republic', 20 July 2011, Prague, [www.mzv.cz/file/681350/koncepce\\_zahranicni\\_politiky\\_2011\\_en.pdf](http://www.mzv.cz/file/681350/koncepce_zahranicni_politiky_2011_en.pdf)

## **Tasks of the EEAS**

In the eyes of Czech diplomacy, the CFSP is, and should remain, an intergovernmental policy produced by the member states. The EEAS serves member states. Czech diplomacy strongly opposes the idea that the EEAS may one day produce the content of the CFSP. In relations with third countries, the EEAS is expected to represent the consensus among member states, i.e. the “greatest common divisor”. Most interviewees stress that the EEAS should only represent the intersection of the particular national interests of member states.<sup>167</sup> Since the national interests of the member states often contradict one another, the mandate of the EEAS is and will naturally be limited. Once a consensus among all EU members has been found, member states should respect the mandate of the EEAS (the HR/VP), and the EEAS (the HR/VP) is expected to consistently pursue the agreed strategy. At the same time, if there is no consensus on the issue, the EEAS (the HR/VP) must respect the right of the Czech Republic (or any other country) to pursue its own national priorities. The CFSP is produced by the member states, and the role of the EEAS and the HR/VP is to coordinate and mediate between the member states. Several interviewees pointed out that the HR/VP devotes relatively little time and energy to such mediation.

The expectations of most Czech representatives regarding the scope of the CFSP are quite low. Czech diplomats are generally sceptical about “grandiose projects” like “the EU as a global player”. They suggest that the CFSP (the HR/VP and the EEAS) should keep a low profile and focus on a limited number of feasible priorities. The CFSP/the EEAS “cannot and should not do everything”, and it should stay away from issues where it is impossible to find a consensus among all EU member states. Those diplomats who advocate a more active CFSP (“the EU as a global player”) seem to be in the minority in the Czech Republic.

In the words of Czech diplomats, the EEAS cannot replace national diplomacy. Even though the structure of the EEAS resembles national diplomatic services, it is not a diplomatic service in itself. Most Czech diplomats do not support the idea that the EEAS may one day provide consular services. In a similar vein, Czech diplomats do not expect EU Delegations to provide economic diplomacy. The promotion of economic and commercial interests is one of the principal tasks of national diplomacy.<sup>168</sup> Interviewees concluded that it is simply not possible for the EEAS to promote the specific economic and commercial interests of Czech actors.

The diplomats interviewed clearly see reporting as the most significant value added of the EEAS. The EEAS is expected to provide Czech diplomacy with information (raw data, not analysis) from third countries. The EEAS has better geographical coverage than the Czech diplomatic service. Thus EU Delegations can provide information from countries where the Czech Republic is not properly represented. The Czech Republic maintains its own embassies in all countries which are deemed important from the Czech perspective. Therefore, EU Delegations can be useful, especially in terms of reporting from less important third countries.

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<sup>167</sup> Government of the Czech Republic (2011), *ibidem*.

<sup>168</sup> Government of the Czech Republic (2011), *ibidem*.

## 15.4 CONTACTS AND LINKS BETWEEN CZECH DIPLOMACY AND THE EEAS

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### *Czech diplomats at the European External Action Service*

The Czech Republic has about 12 national diplomats working as temporary agents (full-fledged employees coming from national institutions) at the EEAS<sup>169</sup>, most of them in EU Delegations.<sup>170</sup> Czech diplomacy is generally satisfied with the number of Czech diplomats (temporary agents) working in EU Delegations. Four Czech diplomats became Heads of EU Delegation: in Iraq, Sudan, Guyana and Algeria. Also, two Czechs occupy the position of Deputy Head of Mission (in India and Nicaragua). Some of these top positions were secured by individual candidates, while other positions went to senior diplomats backed by the MFA. Each of these people in the top positions has substantial experience of the national diplomatic service, but their CVs show diverging personal careers, as they include senior diplomats, a manager, a former diplomat and an ex-MEP.<sup>171</sup> Even though the Czech Republic is generally satisfied with the number of Czech diplomats (temporary agents) in EU Delegations, virtually all interviewees point to the lack of Czech diplomats in the EEAS Headquarters.

Czech diplomats at the EEAS are a very useful selling point which can justify and legitimise the EEAS in the eyes of Czech politicians, media and the general public. They are expected to ease cooperation and communication between national diplomacy and the EEAS. However, diplomats from the Permanent Representation to the EU played down the importance of nationality when dealing with EEAS staff in the context of practical matters. According to the interviewees, the Permanent Representation is able to establish and maintain useful contacts and a working relationship with EEAS personnel irrespective of nationality. Nationality is not a factor behind the success of this cooperation.

Czech diplomacy invested quite heavily in preparing candidates for EEAS posts. Ahead of the first rounds of the selection process, the Czech MFA provided information for the candidates and organised a number of seminars for both senior and junior diplomats competing for EEAS posts.<sup>172</sup>

The selection process for temporary agents (full-fledged employees of the EEAS coming from national administrations) is divided into three rounds, which involve: 1) the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO); 2) selection panels set up by the EEAS (the Consultative Committee on Appointment – CCA), and; 3) the top management of the EEAS. First, EPSO collects 10-15 applications which meet the formal criteria for a given post. Second, the selection panels evaluate the candidates and establish a list in order of merit. These selection panels, set up by the EEAS, include representatives from member states. According to the Czech representative involved in these selection panels and Czech diplomats who were selected by the EEAS, the selection panels really evaluate candidates on their merits in a transparent manner.<sup>173</sup> If Czech nationals fail, they primarily do so at the selection panel stage, and deficiencies in French language skills seem to be an issue.

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<sup>169</sup> The European External Action Service. 'Staffing in the EEAS', European External Action Service, Brussels, 1 July 2012.

<sup>170</sup> According to the sources from the Czech MFA, there are circa 22 additional Czech nationals who came to the EEAS from the European Commission, the Council of the EU or other European bodies. In total, there are circa 45 Czech nationals working at the EEAS (the EEAS puts the number of Czech nationals a bit higher at 50 persons). As of July 2012 the EEAS had 2,211 employees, so the Czech nationals represent circa 2,0 % – 2,3 % of the EEAS staff. See 'Czech staff within the EEAS', Email communication with Europe Direct, 24 August 2012.

<sup>171</sup> This diversity can be illustrated on the case of Jana Hybášková (Head of the EU Delegation in Iraq), who served as the Czech Ambassador in Kuwait (covering also Iraq and Katar), but left Czech diplomacy in 2004 after her public criticism of the government's policy during the Iraqi crisis. Between 2004 and 2009 she was an MEP.

<sup>172</sup> Čechlovská, J. (2012), 'Impact of National Composition of the European External Action Service on Formation and Functioning of the European Union Foreign Policy', Diploma Thesis, Metropolitan University of Prague, Prague.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 61.

Czech diplomacy did not lobby at this level, simply because there is no room for national lobbying in this selection round. According to a survey among Czech diplomats who actually made it through the selection process, the effectiveness of national lobbying is rather limited. It could even be counterproductive at the level of selection panels and does not work for lower-ranking positions.<sup>174</sup> The selection panel sends the best 2-4 candidates to the EEAS (HR/VP/VR) for the last round of the selection process. The third round is considered a “black box”, where other factors (nationality, geography, gender, etc.) come into play. This final phase of the selection process leaves ample room for the HR/VP’s discretion. At the same time, it provides an opportunity for member-state lobbying. Some interviewees pointed out that the Czech Republic should have lobbied for Czech candidates more heavily in this final phase.

There are two types of Seconded National Expert (SNEs) at the EEAS. The first type of SNE is the ‘standard’ SNE, while the second type is the so-called ‘cost-free’ Seconded National Expert. Diplomats working as Seconded National Experts (both the ‘standard’ and the ‘cost-free’ types) remain employees of the MFA. But while the EEAS covers allowances for the ‘standard’ SNEs, it covers no costs for ‘cost-free’ SNEs.<sup>175</sup> All costs (salary, allowances, etc.) for ‘cost-free’ SNEs are covered by member states’ public administrations (the MFA). The Czech MFA is a keen supporter of ‘cost-free’ SNEs. Several interviewees pointed out that the Czech Republic is one of the countries with the highest number of ‘cost-free’ SNEs.

The Czech Republic has about 13 Seconded National Experts.<sup>176</sup> Only around two Czech SNEs are ‘standard’, as the absolute majority of Czech SNEs are ‘cost-free’. Most of the Czech ‘cost-free’ SNEs are employed by the MFA (only ca. two Czech SNEs are employed by other ministries).

Since most of the ‘cost-free’ SNEs are fully covered by the MFA, the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs runs its own (pre-)selection process for Czech candidates. This selection process for seconded positions is identical to the internal selection process for positions in Czech diplomatic missions abroad. The Czech MFA prefers junior diplomats as Seconded National Experts because it expects seconded diplomats to gain experience, build personal connections and later apply for positions as temporary agent (i.e. fully-fledged employment) at the EEAS.

The MFA regularly advertises vacancies at the EEAS. The interest of MFA staff in EEAS positions (both those of temporary agents and those of Seconded National Experts) was quite high in the initial phase. Diplomats and experts working at the EEAS are better paid than diplomats working at the Czech MFA. However, several interviewees confirmed that the interest in the EEAS has faded away<sup>177</sup>; and that there is even a certain sense of frustration with the highly competitive selection process.

Once Czech diplomats manage to get into the EEAS, though, they prefer to stay. One interviewee had conducted her own survey among Czech nationals at the EEAS, which showed that they assessed their working experience there quite positively and preferred to stay in the EEAS.<sup>178</sup> Additionally, there are (understandably) uncertainties regarding the reintegration of returning diplomats into Czech diplomacy. So far there are no (or very few) centralised rules on how to deal with diplomats returning from their positions within the EEAS. However, the MFA is preparing a new career

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<sup>174</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 58-59.

<sup>175</sup> ‘Decision of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 23 March 2011 establishing the rules applicable to National Experts Seconded to the European External Action Service’, Official Journal C 012, Brussels, 14 January 2012, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=C:2012:012:0008:01:EN:HTML>

<sup>176</sup> The actual number varies. Other sources put the number at 12.

<sup>177</sup> Čechlovská, J. (2012), *ibidem*.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibidem.*, pp. 61.

structure, meaning that the time spent at the EEAS will count towards promotion according to seniority criteria.

Contacts and links between the seconded diplomat and his/her national MFA are maintained primarily through the department in which the diplomat served before his/her EEAS placement (usually the CFSP Department, the EU General Affairs Department or the EU Policies Department). This department is also responsible for the reintegration of returning diplomats into the MFA. Reintegration into the MFA is not very well coordinated at the central level, though, and the success of the process depends on the personal engagement of the heads of department.

The MFA tries to channel SNEs to its prioritised countries and regions (such as Cuba). However, many seconded diplomats end up in more attractive destinations (such as the EU Delegations to international organisations in New York, Geneva and Vienna).

### ***The Czech MFA and the EEAS (EU Delegations and EEAS Headquarters)***

Czech diplomats point out that EU Delegations (and the EEAS as a whole) should serve member states. Thus openness, transparency and information sharing *vis-à-vis* member states (and their missions abroad) is crucial. The quality of cooperation between EU Delegations and Czech missions seems to vary, but the overall assessment is not very positive. Problems arise when there is a lack of communication from the Delegation, unwarranted political activism or too much loyalty to “the Brussels institutions” (the European Commission or EEAS Headquarters) rather than to member states. Czech diplomats would like the EU Delegations to become more independent of EEAS Headquarters and the European Commission.

The Czech MFA conducted a survey among its embassies regarding the quality of cooperation with EU Delegations. The survey showed that cooperation is generally good, but it also showed problems in cooperation (and communication) between EU Delegations and non-resident national embassies. The occasional lapses in communication are attributed to the fact that detailed rules, procedures and communication systems are still in the making. Czech diplomats thus acknowledge that the above-mentioned issues are improving over the course of time. Despite occasional lapses in communication between EU Delegations and national embassies (which are taken quite seriously by the MFA), EU Delegations are seen in a more positive light because they provide tangible added value (reporting from third countries).

The working relationship between the EEAS and the MFA (the Headquarters in Prague and the Permanent Representation to the EU) seems to be professional and correct, and EEAS staff are collaborative. However, information flows are still hampered by the fact that there is no shared information system. An information system to allow for information-sharing is still in the making.

## **15.5 EUROPEAN FOREIGN POLICY LEADERSHIP**

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### ***Rotating Presidency***

The introduction of the Permanent Presidency has several implications. First, some diplomats point out that the EEAS (the HR/VP) may act as just another negotiating party at the table, with its own priorities to be dealt with. The need to accommodate a new actor with its own priorities may complicate negotiations in the FAC or in its Working Groups. Second, diplomats (especially those who attend the Working Groups presided over by the EEAS) point out the positive effects of the

Permanent Presidency: the presidency of the EEAS is more neutral than the previous Rotating Presidency. Thus, the current set-up is more friendly (i.e. more open) towards smaller countries like the Czech Republic.

Czech diplomacy is rather satisfied with the way the Permanent Presidency works. However, there is a discernible nostalgia among Czech diplomats for the Rotating Presidency. The Rotating Presidency did offer political leadership and initiative. At the same time, the presiding country had a strong incentive to avoid abusing its position because it knew that other member states could repay that once they had assumed the position. The rotating nature of the presidency had several positive effects on the European diplomatic culture, so to say. It induced self-restraint on the part of the presidency, cultivated respect among member states, and promoted transparency.

### ***High Representative/Vice-President***

The choice of Catherine Ashton as the HR/VP was generally assessed negatively by Czech diplomats. Baroness Ashton is criticised for lacking the necessary experience in the international arena, for being “chaotic” and “activist” – i.e. for having a distinctive political profile. These aspects of her personality are at odds with expectations of what it means to be a good diplomat and mediator. Additionally, the personal political values and views of the HR/VP are sometimes at odds with the political priorities of the Czech Republic. This clash of political values is vivid in the issue of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Czech Republic is one of the strongest supporters of Israel, while Baroness Ashton seems to be personally (and emotionally) engaged with the Palestinian cause. Baroness Ashton is sometimes criticised for her lack of attention to Eastern Europe and Russia, which are crucial in the eyes of Czech diplomacy.

On the general (political) level, the HR/VP attracts criticism from Czech diplomacy for being too active and too passive at the same time. First, the HR/VP (or the EEAS / EU Delegations) is (are) sometimes criticised for being too activist and unpredictable (see above), and for overstepping the (relatively narrow) consensus among the EU 27. At the same time, she was criticised by one interviewee for not exploiting the room for manoeuvre provided by the intersection of the particular national interests of member states. While focusing on leading and representing, she is left with little time for mediation between member states. In this sense, Czech diplomats often call for the HR/VP (the EEAS) to be more active in the search for consensus between member states.

Czech diplomats expect the EEAS and the HR/VP to keep a low profile. In this context, the HR/VP is criticised for focusing on a “status-enhancing” agenda and issues. The attempt to upgrade the EU’s status at the UN was regarded as a huge failure that weakened the EU. Also, for many at the Czech MFA, the HR/VP focuses too much on rewarding topics and on raising her public profile. Czech diplomacy’s negative view of the HR/VP’s public relations stems from the notion that her constituency is not the ‘European public’ as such, but member states.

However, some interviewees are more benevolent, pointing out that it is still too early to assess the EEAS and the HR/VP. According to them, practical experience with Baroness Ashton today is rather positive, and the HR/VP is appreciated for highlighting the human rights agenda during her foreign visits (e.g. in China and the Gulf States). Our interviewees also acknowledge that the institutional

set-up (and not just the personality of the HR/VP) is to be blamed for some of the ills. “Not even Bildt<sup>179</sup> would perform much better” was one statement that clearly reflected this view. The HR/VP cannot meet all the expectations and duties that stem from the wide array of roles she is expected to play (High Representative, Vice-President of the Commission, President of the FAC).

## 15.6 CONCLUSIONS

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### ***Adaptation of national diplomacies to the EEAS***

Concerning *the organisational structures and the policy processes*, the Czech MFA did adapt to the introduction of the CFSP in the past. A dedicated department dealing with the CFSP was established, and the introduction of the CFSP did affect information flows in Czech diplomacy (between the CFSP department, territorial departments and embassies). Even though the creation of the CFSP induced changes to the organisational structure of the Czech MFA, the establishment of the EEAS had very little impact. Over the past three years, Czech diplomacy has undergone a process of internal reform and reorganisation. The process was driven primarily by domestic factors (budget cuts), and the establishment of the EEAS did not play a role in the decision to reform the MFA. However, the EEAS does enter into ‘second thoughts’, since EU Delegations are considered as possible partners for co-location. The opportunity to post national diplomats to the EEAS, either as employees (temporary agents) or as seconded national experts, needs to be reflected in the career order. Processes for the selection of candidates and the reintegration of returning diplomats need to be established as well.

Concerning the *substance* of Czech foreign policy, there are no signs of ‘top-down’ adaptation. To be more precise, there was a discernible sense of resistance and hostility to ‘top-down’ downloading of priorities. Czech diplomats treat national interests as exogenous to the CFSP/the EEAS and to the process of European integration. National interests stem from the domestic political arena, and they are subsequently brought to the European-level bargaining process. Czech officials often conceptualise national interests in a rather defensive way – as a kind of ‘red lines’ which should be defended in the bargaining process *vis-à-vis* other member states (and other actors in the European arena, including the EEAS). Czech diplomacy is ‘on guard’ against possible ‘excesses’ on the part of the HR/VP that go beyond the consensual mandate from the FAC and are thus at odds with Czech national priorities. This defensive attitude reflects Czech opposition to deeper integration (‘federalisation’) of the CFSP.

### ***Uploading of national interests***

Despite the defensive attitude mentioned above, Czech officials repeatedly emphasise that the Czech Republic does not want to obstruct the CFSP/the EEAS. Their position is rather that the EEAS should be more humble, more focused and more effective at the same time. The diplomats interviewed maintained that the EEAS (the HR/VP) should be instrumental and active in seeking consensus among member states when and if such consensus is possible. The potential added value of the EEAS lies in EU Delegations (rather than the EEAS Headquarters), especially in reporting from third countries where the Czech Republic is not properly represented. However, the information flow between EU Delegations and national missions (especially non-resident missions) is still clumsy. The diplomats

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<sup>179</sup> Carl Bildt is held in high esteem by interviewees – he meets the expectations of a “professional diplomat” mentioned above. He was one of the strongest candidates for the post of High Representative. Sweden is also regarded as one of the allies of the Czech Republic in contemporary European politics.



interviewed are quite positive regarding future prospects – the information flow is expected to improve once proper rules and an information system have been established and have settled down.

The Czech Republic tries to ‘upload’ and project some of its national priorities to the CFSP (‘multiplication of our activity’). The Czech Republic is aware of its limited weight in the international system and the limited resources at its disposal. For this reason, it promotes its interests not just individually, but also through its membership of larger groupings like the EU. There are two areas where the Czech Republic encourages the CFSP (the EEAS) to take over Czech national priorities and interests: Eastern Europe and the Balkans. Czech diplomats would also welcome more assertive promotion of the human rights agenda by the HR/VP, and would be happy to see a common and more assertive EU approach towards Russia.

Do Czechs consider the EEAS to be vulnerable to the influence of larger member states? To start with, Eurosceptic Czech President Klaus (and his political followers) portrays (portray) the CFSP/the EEAS as a tool of domination by large member states over small ones, and a way to suppress small states’ national interests. For Václav Klaus, the selection of a weak and inexperienced HR/VP (Baroness Ashton) symbolises the dependence of ‘the Brussels centre’ on larger member states (like the UK, Germany and France).<sup>180</sup>

The picture provided by Czech diplomats is different, though. None of the interviewees raised concerns about the domination of larger member states in and through the CFSP (the EEAS). According to Czech diplomats, larger member states have a tendency to bypass the EEAS rather than to abuse it. As long as bypassing the EEAS does not threaten a previously agreed common (consensual) position, Czech diplomats see and perceive such behaviour as the legitimate pursuit of national interests.

To conclude, concerns raised by Czech diplomats focus on the EEAS leadership and not on the behaviour of larger member states. A whiff of autonomy on the part of the EEAS is portrayed as a threat to Czech national interests.

### ***Elite Socialisation and Diplomatic Culture***

One of the questions posed by this study is that of the possible contribution of the EEAS to the development of a European diplomatic culture among EU member states (their national diplomacies). This question of strengthening or weakening the European diplomatic culture should be dealt with separately from the question of convergence (Europeanisation) of national interests. Thus this part deals solely with the issue of diplomatic culture.

The existing literature holds that, despite diverging national interests, European diplomatic culture has been with us for decades or even centuries. “Diplomats, the primary guardians and promoters of national interests of the respective states they represent in the international arena, are at the same time members of a transnational group of professionals with a shared corporate culture, professional language, behavioural codes, entry procedures, socialisation patterns, norms and standards.”<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Klaus, V. (2010), ‘Těžké časy liberálů: esej k šedesátinám Gerharda Schwarze [Classical liberals’ difficult epoch: an essay for the 60<sup>th</sup> birthday of Gerhard Schwarz]’, 8 July 2010, <http://www.klaus.cz/clanky/2642>

<sup>181</sup> Batora, J. (2005), ‘Does the European Union Transform the Institution of Diplomacy?’, *Journal of European Public Policy* 12(1), Taylor and Francis, Abingdon, pp. 45.

The interviews seem to confirm this proposition. Many interviewees implicitly assume (or even explicitly declare) that there is already a European diplomatic culture shared by diplomats from EU member states: a shared professional language, behavioural codes, entry procedures, and norms and standards of what qualities constitute a 'good' professional (diplomat). In fact, EEAS staff members are expected to learn and to integrate into the diplomatic culture and meet the (already existing) shared expectations regarding what it means to be a good diplomat.

Interviewees at the Czech MFA portray the EEAS as a mixture of two different corporate cultures: diplomatic culture and bureaucratic culture. They suggest that, in terms of corporate culture, the dividing line does not run between individual member states' diplomatic services, but rather between EEAS staff originating from the diplomatic community (the diplomatic services of member states) on one side, and the staff originating from the European Commission on the other side. Interviewees tend to pit the diplomatic corporate culture (presumably shared by all national diplomacies) against the bureaucratic corporate culture of the EU institutions (especially the Commission).

The latter is not necessarily perceived negatively. The bureaucratic culture of the Commission is hailed for its reliability, neutrality and expertise on specific issues. At the same time, though, the bureaucratic culture is criticised for being rigid, hierarchical and based on paperwork. In contrast, diplomacy (diplomatic culture) is more flexible, intuitive and based on more complex (rather than specific) knowledge and expertise. Czech diplomats acknowledge (and welcome) the fact that the EEAS is on a learning curve, and is gradually shifting from a bureaucratic (Commission-like) culture towards a diplomatic culture.

### ***Policy Convergence***

So far it is difficult to assess whether the establishment of the EEAS induced policy convergence in Czech diplomacy. As noted earlier, Czech diplomats consider national interests to stem from the domestic political arena. Czech diplomats at the MFA are ready to upload some Czech priorities to the EU level (CFSP), yet they often define Czech interests *vis-à-vis* the CFSP/the EEAS in a defensive manner, preventing actions and policies which are at odds with Czech interests as well as further communitarisation of the CFSP. Czech diplomats at the MFA have a rather narrow vision of European interests (a naturally limited intersection of the national interests of member states), and they remain sceptical about the idea of the 'EU as a global actor'.

However, interviewees who are closer to the EU institutions point to the fact that the Czech Republic is still on a learning curve, like other newcomers in the past. According to one source, it will take time for the Czech Republic to learn to define its interests in a more ambitious and active way (what we want rather than what we do not want).

Diplomats working at the Czech Permanent Representation to the EU seem to be more optimistic regarding the convergence of national interests and the idea of the EU as a global actor. Last but not least, a survey conducted by MFA staff among Czech diplomats working at the EEAS suggests that they too have a more optimistic perception regarding the EU as a global actor and the ability of the EEAS to strengthen the geopolitical position of the EU. Yet, it is difficult to attribute these attitudes to the process of elite socialisation, since posts at the EU institutions (including the EEAS) are usually sought by individuals who already see the EU's institutions and policies in a more positive light.

## Quantitative data – Czech Republic

### MFA budget

Year **2011**: Total budget: 235.9 mln € (5,872 mln Czech korunas) (change since 2010: - 19.6 mln €/ - 490 mln Czech korunas)

### Number of missions

Total: 112 (change since 2010: - 5), of which:

- Embassies (including representations to international organisations): 96 (change since 2010: - 4)
- Consulates General: 15 (change since 2010: - 1)
- Economic and Cultural Offices: 1

Outside EU: 80 (change since 2010: - 5)

Inside EU: 32 (change since 2010: N.A.)

### Number of staff employed by the MFA (average in 2011)

Total: 1,765 (change since 2010: - 333), of which:

- Staff in missions: 1,079 (change since 2010: - 206)

### Number of staff seconded to the EEAS

Total: 25, of which:

- 4 Heads of Delegation
- 2 Deputy Heads of Delegation
- 6 other ADs
- 2 standard SNEs
- 11 cost-free SNEs

### Number of arrangements of cooperation/burden-sharing with diplomatic missions of other member states (sharing premises, consular services etc.)

- Co-location/ burden-sharing with other member states: 3 (change since 2010: +3)
- Co-location/ burden-sharing with the EEAS (change since 2010: +1)

Sources: Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic; European External Action Service (2012), 'Staffing in the EEAS', Brussels.



## Conclusions: EU foreign policy in 2020

**By Rosa Balfour and Kristi Raik**

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Early on 1 January 2020 a sudden political and humanitarian crisis affected far away Zabuland. Fortunately, the Head of the EU Delegation was on the spot at the very start of the crisis, coordinating early responses. She was joined very soon by the foreign minister of one EU member state for an early reckoning of the situation, who then flew to Brussels and reported to the Deputy HR/VP, in charge of devising the EU's response to the complex crisis. In the meantime, the HR/VP travelled to New York to consult with other countries at the UN, while another foreign minister launched talks with the regional organisations of which Zabuland was a member.

The EU's growing involvement in Zabuland had not prevented the crisis from unfolding, but after the events there was much consensus that the EU had played a role in containing its spread beyond the country's capital and in helping to restore peace in a short timeframe. A mix of development aid and a special mobility package had offered some breathing space to the population in rural areas; an advantageous trade deal had given the struggling democratically-elected government a boost, and on the ground support for grassroots activists and civil society organisations had helped the local people to address their social and political problems.

Finally, the timely display of crisis management tools and mediation skills had played a part in settling the conflict between rival political groupings and restoring peace and democratic government.

If this was possible, it was thanks to changes introduced to the EU foreign policymaking structures a decade earlier. These took some time to solidify and to break down mistrust between and among institutions and member states.

By 2020, the EU had not made significant inroads on breaking down the national attachment to sovereignty in the foreign policy field: from a formal point of view, intergovernmentalism remained the norm. But a number of trends had led to *de facto* automatic forms of cooperation and the emergence of a more tight-knit European diplomatic system.

Common reporting from EU Delegations scattered around the world had given national and European officials similar information and analysis of global trends as well as local situations. National diplomacies often shared privileged access to information with their European partners, enriching common knowledge. Regular contacts between colleagues in Brussels, in the member states and on the

ground broke down barriers between national and EU foreign policy structures. The habit of working together on an increasing number of issues meant that in many areas, consensus-building happened on a daily basis: the number of topics that required lengthy discussions before approval had become a handful; and in many areas the EU could legitimately act without prior consultation. If strategies required in-depth discussions among the various stakeholders involved, once agreed upon, EU and national representatives could follow through. The EU was singing from the same hymn sheet, even if not with a single voice. Some found the endurance of more voices at times quite convenient: different role-playing (such as good cop/bad cop) could be an effective way of reaching common goals. More so, a new trend of inter-changeability between the HR/VP and national representatives was becoming visible, at least in those areas in which cooperation was longstanding.

This habit reflected very well an increased need for flexibility in managing global affairs. As national barriers were broken down by interdependence, the traditional ring-fencing of diplomacy had become less relevant. Foreign policy had become less about traditional 'high politics' and more about handling the consequences of new global challenges, such as desertification or pandemics. With the EEAS at the centre of a wealth of cross-cutting policies, a network of national and European diplomats around the world, and more flexible and streamlined decision-making processes, the EU was increasingly able to respond to events and to shape global trends.

The EU had not followed what many had hoped for in terms of a more federal foreign policy. Quite the contrary, national diplomacies had been searching for an autonomous role to guarantee their survival. Maintaining the veto right was seen as having symbolic importance, even if it was never used. The compromise was found in a dual approach of maintaining some niche areas of activity at national level (such as trade promotion and cultural relations) while making sure that distinctive national contributions to EU foreign policy were more visible. This had also led to a more flexible global network of diplomats, politicians and civil society representatives diversely engaged with issues and areas around the world. Finland, for instance, had remained a pioneer of peace mediation initiatives (together with Norway, which continued to cooperate with the EU while not joining it), while France led military and defence cooperation (which, however, remained firmly intergovernmental).

The increase in the interconnection and interpenetration between national and EU foreign policymaking had led to the integration of national and EU diplomatic structures into a dynamic system. Even if decision-making remained intergovernmental and national control was formally uncompromised, developments challenged the concept itself of intergovernmentalism. A more appropriate notion of trans-governmentalism<sup>182</sup> had gained popularity in the academic community. It directed attention to the multiplication of linkages and vanishing of clearly defined boundaries between the main 'units' of the EU's foreign policy system and captured horizontal and vertical coordination between actors, while also allowing for the conceptualisation of non-institutional actors such as civil society organisations, which were increasingly playing a part in influencing foreign policy decisions and actions.

In this context, the EEAS was breathing through a dense formal and informal network of relations around which common strategies and decisions were reached. EU foreign policy had become more common in the sense of having stronger autonomous structures, with a leading role of the EEAS in taking the initiative. At the same time, member states shaped EU foreign policy also by feeding in their preferences and pet projects. The close interaction and flexible division of labour, based on better understanding and knowledge of each other, helped build mutual trust.

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<sup>182</sup> The authors are grateful to Sabina Lange for suggesting this concept.

Nationally, the ministries of foreign affairs had also adapted structurally and functionally. Reflecting the interdependence between policy areas, MFAs increasingly coordinated the external dimension of other ministries, along the fault line established by cooperation between the EEAS and the Commission. National networks of diplomatic representation were also in flux. The number of Europe Houses, bringing together diplomats of the EU and the member states under one roof, had proliferated, promoting perceptions of European unity around the world and in the eyes of EU citizens. Large member states had maintained their dense global network of national diplomatic missions, but many smaller member states had moved to more flexible and cost-effective patterns of diplomatic representation, such as laptop diplomacy. The infrastructure of EU Delegations was essential in this regard.

Human resources departments of national ministries had become used to devoting a great deal of attention to rotation between the Ministry and the EEAS. Top posts in the Ministry were preferably assigned to diplomats with European experience, also helping the rotation to and from the EEAS. The EEAS had become a 'must-work-for' institution. National diplomats needed to be able to influence the early stages of EU policymaking and make sure that important national concerns were heard and taken seriously by partners in the EU. But it had become increasingly hard to distinguish between national and European interests, helping to create a European diplomatic culture. This was reinforced by trans-European training, which supported the growth of trans-governmental networks.

In fact, by 2020 talks had re-started on giving this network and its centre – the EEAS – a bigger role by extending its areas of competence (for instance in consular affairs) and by increasing the resources at its disposal. The role of the EEAS in globally promoting 'Europe' as a brand for peace, democracy, prosperity and diversity was increasingly recognised as an asset for all.

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This is an optimistic vision of EU foreign policy of the near future. But it is not an unrealistic one. If the EU wants to move in that direction, it needs to continue laying these foundations – now.





## Annexes

**Table 1: Statistics on the ministries of foreign affairs of EU member states**

|                       | <b>Administrative budget (€ million)</b> | <b>Number of missions</b> | <b>Staff*</b> |
|-----------------------|--|---------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Austria</b>        | 231.7                                    | 103                       | 1,802         |
| <b>Belgium</b>        | 472                                      | 135                       | 3,192         |
| <b>Bulgaria</b>       | 47.5                                     | 99                        | 1,638         |
| <b>Cyprus</b>         | 83.6                                     | 57                        | 211**         |
| <b>Czech Republic</b> | 162.3                                    | 112                       | 1,765         |
| <b>Denmark</b>        | 285.2                                    | 113                       | 2,700         |
| <b>Estonia</b>        | 34.5                                     | 46                        | 650           |
| <b>Finland</b>        | 211                                      | 92                        | 2,704         |
| <b>France</b>         | 1,347                                    | 271                       | 15,024        |
| <b>Germany</b>        | 955.8                                    | 229                       | 11,138        |
| <b>Greece</b>         | 308                                      | 118                       | 2,588         |
| <b>Hungary</b>        | 151.1                                    | 104                       | 2,486         |
| <b>Ireland</b>        | 143.8                                    | 73                        | N.A.          |
| <b>Italy</b>          | 919                                      | 229***                    | 4,333         |
| <b>Latvia</b>         | 35.8                                     | 44                        | N.A.          |
| <b>Lithuania</b>      | 46.8                                     | 59                        | 1,272         |
| <b>Luxembourg</b>     | 46                                       | 41                        | 477           |
| <b>Malta</b>          | 28.5                                     | 30                        | 312           |
| <b>Netherlands</b>    | 720                                      | 158                       | 2,500         |
| <b>Poland</b>         | 294.6                                    | 137***                    | 4,622         |
| <b>Portugal</b>       | 229.5                                    | 128                       | 2,039         |
| <b>Romania</b>        | 148.3                                    | 141                       | 2,059         |
| <b>Slovakia</b>       | 106.7                                    | 82                        | 1,111         |
| <b>Slovenia</b>       | 69.9                                     | 58                        | 861           |
| <b>Spain</b>          | 864                                      | 221                       | 5,701         |
| <b>Sweden</b>         | 294.1                                    | 98                        | 2,580         |
| <b>United Kingdom</b> | 1,239.1                                  | 245                       | 13,239        |
| <b>Total****</b>      | 9,475.8                                  | 3,223                     | 87,004        |
| <b>EEAS</b>           | 489                                      | 140                       | 3,346         |

Sources: Data from the ministries of foreign affairs of EU member states.

\* In most cases, figures on staff include locally employed staff, but in some cases the number of locally employed staff was not available.

\*\* This figure only includes the number of diplomats.

\*\*\* These figures do not include cultural institutes abroad.

\*\*\*\* This figure only comprises available data.

**Table 2: Summary of budget cuts, reductions of staff and missions, and co-location arrangements of national foreign services (covering only the cases included in the study)**

| <b>Countries</b>      | <b>Budget<br/>(€ million)</b>   | <b>Staff</b>  | <b>Number of<br/>missions</b>  | <b>Co-locations</b>  |
|-----------------------|---|---|--|--|
| <b>Czech Republic</b> | significant cuts of approx. 20 million in 2010-12                                       | significant cuts from approx. 2,100 to 1,765 in 2010-11 | 7 missions closed; 1 opened in 2010-11; 1 re-opened in 2012; plan to close 2, open 4 in 2013 | 4 co-locations (3 with Višegrad countries, 1 with EEAS); interest in more co-locations also with EEAS  |
| <b>Estonia</b>        | significant cuts from 38,1 to 32,2 million in 2008-11; increase to 34,5 million in 2012 | significant cuts from approx. 590 to 540 in 2008-09     | increased from 42 to 46 since 2009; 1 more opening forthcoming                               | approx. 3 co-locations; active interest in more co-locations primarily with Nordic-Baltic countries    |
| <b>Finland</b>        | minor increase in 2010-12; significant cuts of 13 million per year foreseen for 2013-16 | minor reduction of staff since 2009 (none fired)        | 9 missions closed in 2011-2013; 5 more closures foreseen; few new openings                   | approx. 14 co-locations with Nordic countries; active interest in more co-locations also with the EEAS |
| <b>France</b>         | cuts over a longer period of time (e.g. -2.7 % 2013)                                    | cuts over a longer period of time                       | 8 new missions opened, 4 closed since 2008   | limited interest; shared premises with EEAS and some member states in Astana                           |
| <b>Germany</b>        | minor increase since 2009   | minor increase in 2013; cuts in previous years          | steady   | limited interest; shared premises with EEAS and some member states in Astana                           |
| <b>Greece</b>         | significant cuts from 423 to 308 million in 2010-2012; further to 296 million in 2013   | reduction of staff (none fired) and salaries            | 9 missions (consulates) closed in 2011; 8 more closures foreseen                             | interest in co-locations with member states and EEAS   |
| <b>Italy</b>          | significant cuts from 991 to 919 in 2010-12   | cuts  | some closures (mainly consulates)  | limited interest   |
| <b>Netherlands</b>    | significant cuts over several years totaling 95 million                                 | significant cuts from over 3,000 to 2,500 by 2014       | several closures, more foreseen  | 3 co-locations; active interest in more co-locations also with EEAS                                    |
| <b>Poland</b>         | minor cuts from 297.4 to 294.6 in 2011-2012   | reduced from 4,903 in 2011 to 4,622 in 2012             | 18 missions closed, 5 opened in 2008-9; 2 more opened in 2010-11                             | 2 co-locations; strong interest in more co-locations also with EEAS                                    |
| <b>Portugal</b>       | significant cuts since 2011   | significant cuts since 2011                             | 12 missions closed, 3 opened since 2011  | no co-locations  |

|                 |   |   |   |  |
|-----------------|---|---|---|--|
| <b>Slovenia</b> | significant cuts incl. 5,4 million cut from diplomatic and consular network in 2012 | cuts                                      | 6 missions closed, 1 opened, 4 more openings foreseen | no co-locations  |
| <b>Spain</b>    | very significant cuts mounting to 54% of MFA budget in 2012                         | N.A.                                      | 3 consulates to be closed                             | 1 co-location with EEAS in Yemen; strong interest in more co-locations                                     |
| <b>Sweden</b>   | significant cuts in 2009-11   | reduced by approx. 100 persons in 2009-10 | major re-allocation in 2009-11                        | approx. 16 co-locations with Nordic countries; interest in more co-locations                               |
| <b>UK</b>       | significant cuts in 2010: 33 % of FCO administrative budget                         | cuts                                      | major re-allocation in 2010-11                        | interest in co-locations primarily with Canada; shared premises with EEAS and some member states in Astana |

Sources: Data from the ministries of foreign affairs of EU member states.

**Table 3: Member state diplomats and AD officials in the European External Action Service**

| Countries      | Member state diplomats | % of total staff | AD officials | % of total staff | Total      | % of total staff |
|----------------|------------------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|------------|------------------|
| Austria        | 11                     | 1,2%             | 17           | 1,9%             | 28         | 3,1%             |
| Belgium        | 15                     | 1,6%             | 48           | 5,2%             | 63         | 6,9%             |
| Bulgaria       | 9                      | 1,0%             | 3            | 0,3%             | 12         | 1,3%             |
| Cyprus         | 1                      | 0,1%             | 3            | 0,3%             | 4          | 0,4%             |
| Czech Republic | 12                     | 1,3%             | 11           | 1,2%             | 23         | 2,5%             |
| Denmark        | 6                      | 0,7%             | 17           | 1,9%             | 23         | 2,5%             |
| Estonia        | 7                      | 0,8%             | 5            | 0,5%             | 12         | 1,3%             |
| Finland        | 8                      | 0,9%             | 17           | 1,9%             | 25         | 2,7%             |
| France         | 31                     | 3,4%             | 90           | 9,8%             | 121        | 13,2%            |
| Germany        | 14                     | 1,5%             | 71           | 7,7%             | 85         | 9,3%             |
| Greece         | 7                      | 0,8%             | 25           | 2,7%             | 32         | 3,5%             |
| Hungary        | 8                      | 0,9%             | 8            | 0,9%             | 16         | 1,7%             |
| Ireland        | 6                      | 0,7%             | 16           | 1,7%             | 22         | 2,4%             |
| Italy          | 12                     | 1,3%             | 88           | 9,6%             | 100        | 10,9%            |
| Latvia         | 5                      | 0,5%             | 4            | 0,4%             | 9          | 1,0%             |
| Lithuania      | 4                      | 0,4%             | 6            | 0,7%             | 10         | 1,1%             |
| Luxembourg     | 2                      | 0,2%             | 2            | 0,2%             | 4          | 0,4%             |
| Malta          | 5                      | 0,5%             | 2            | 0,2%             | 7          | 0,8%             |
| Netherlands    | 8                      | 0,9%             | 23           | 2,5%             | 31         | 3,4%             |
| Poland         | 9                      | 1,0%             | 29           | 3,2%             | 38         | 4,1%             |
| Portugal       | 7                      | 0,8%             | 20           | 2,2%             | 27         | 2,9%             |
| Romania        | 8                      | 0,9%             | 2            | 0,2%             | 10         | 1,1%             |
| Slovakia       | 6                      | 0,7%             | 3            | 0,3%             | 9          | 1,0%             |
| Slovenia       | 3                      | 0,3%             | 3            | 0,3%             | 6          | 0,7%             |
| Spain          | 13                     | 1,4%             | 77           | 8,4%             | 90         | 9,8%             |
| Sweden         | 10                     | 1,1%             | 26           | 2,8%             | 36         | 3,9%             |
| United Kingdom | 21                     | 2,3%             | 54           | 5,9%             | 75         | 8,2%             |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>248</b>             | <b>27%</b>       | <b>670</b>   | <b>73,0%</b>     | <b>918</b> | <b>100%</b>      |

Source: 'Staffing Report' of the European External Action Service (2012).

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