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National adaptation and survival in a changing European diplomacy

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1. Introduction: the making of the European External Action Service

The Lisbon Treaty entered into force in a context of global change amplified by the impact of the financial crisis. Alongside a general and perceived loss of traction for Europe as a whole, traditional diplomacy was losing ground to more transnational trends deriving from globalisation, which undermined the role of traditional actors, such as national Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Ministers, and sovereign states.

Cooperation within the EU on foreign affairs has always been ambiguous. Ever since the days of European Political Cooperation (EPC), EU foreign policy has been ‘less than supranational but more than intergovernmental’ (Ohrgaard 1997). Successive treaties have never unpacked this ambiguity. The Treaty on the European Union (TEU) intended to enable the EU to address the post-Cold War internal (economic governance through the Monetary Union) and external challenges (enlargement and a common foreign policy towards the Balkans) and created the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) as an intergovernmental mechanism for cooperation. In 1999 CFSP was flanked by the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and became headed by a High Representative (HR). But all these developments reinforced the dualism between the intergovernmental model of cooperation in traditional core issues of diplomacy and the supranational management of certain fields of EU external relations (notably trade, aid and enlargement) through the European Commission.

The Lisbon Treaty created the European External Action Service (EEAS) and extended the mandate of the High Representative to include the Vice Presidency of the European Commission. This represented an attempt to bridge the dualism between the intergovernmental structure of foreign policy decision-making and the supranational management of long-term programmatic policies by the Commission. It constituted a new, hybrid model of integration. The EEAS did not merit the status of an ‘institution’ precisely to ensure that member states would remain in charge of decision-making, based on a fear by some that EU foreign policy would become ‘communitarised’ by the European Commission. The compromise was that former parts of the Commission and the Council Secretariat were transferred to the new ‘body’. The boundary between EU and national diplomatic structures was blurred in a new way by bringing large numbers of national diplomats to serve in the EEAS together with permanent EU officials.

With these changes, the EEAS becomes the stage of a new relationship between foreign policy making in Brussels and in the member states, in terms of both diplomatic structures and policy processes. More than ever, the synthesis of intergovernmental and supranational approaches offered through the creation of the EEAS defies the traditional dichotomy in interpretations of EU integration.

The birth of a new actor on the diplomatic scene raises many questions for national diplomatic services as well as for the future of EU integration and the relationship between the EU and its member states. This chapter will examine the positions, approaches and degree of adaptation of national diplomacies of the member states to the creation of the EEAS and new patterns of interaction between EU and national levels, largely based on a year-long research project with cases studies carried out in fourteen member states and at the EU level throughout 2012.¹ It will trace three parallel processes of adaptation and change in the relationship between EU and national foreign policies. In terms of impact on national foreign policy, top down processes of adaptation can reorient national policy making towards the EU, thus harmonising foreign policy structures, processes and preferences and possibly leading to greater convergence. Alternatively, member states can influence EU policy-making by using the EEAS as a vehicle to bring national policy priorities to the EU level and thus shape the EU agenda in favour of national preferences. Thirdly, processes of socialisation of a European diplomatic elite can lead to the gradual strengthening of a European diplomatic culture. Hypothetically, a further alternative of a breakdown of EU foreign policy-making could be envisaged, but there are few signs pointing in this direction even in the member states most attached to national sovereignty in foreign policy.

It will do so first by exploring theoretical approaches to understanding the relationship between EU and member states in foreign policy making (section 2), by using concepts derived from intergovernmental approaches, Europeanisation studies and social constructivism. The following sections apply these concepts to examine, through the findings in individual countries, the various patterns of interaction and changes that follow the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. Section 3 focuses on intergovernmental and instrumental approaches of member states towards the EEAS, including continuities and changes in national efforts to ‘upload’ national foreign policy preferences to the EU; section 4 identifies instances of policy adaptation and support for EU leadership, as well as organisational adaptation and opportunities for burden sharing; section 5 examines socialisation patterns and potential for a shared foreign policy culture and identity. The concluding section will summarize the main empirical findings, notably the continued dominance of intergovernmentalism combined with early signs of a new division of labour and potential for socialisation, and highlight likely patterns of future change in an environment where the EEAS is one among many challenges to national diplomacies of EU member states.

2. Conceptualising interaction between EU and national foreign policy

There is no academic consensus on the interpretive lens for EU foreign policy making and its relationship with national foreign policy domain. The complexity, novelty and unique character of EU foreign policy system make its conceptualisation a tricky endeavour. Realism-inspired intergovernmentalism sees EU foreign policy decision-making processes as

¹ The results of this project coordinated by the two authors have been published in Rosa Balfour and Kristi Raik (2013), *Equipping the European Union for the 21st century. National diplomacies, the European External Action Service and the making of EU foreign policy*, Helsinki: FIIA Report No. 36 and in Rosa Balfour and Kristi Raik (eds.) (2013), *The European External Action Service and National Diplomacies*, Brussels: European Policy Centre, Issue Paper No. 73. Individual case studies were authored by: Cornelius Adebahr (Germany), Andrea Frontini (Italy), Mark Rhinard, Jakob Lewander and Sara Norrevik (Sweden), Ignacio Molina and Alicia Sorroza (Spain), Kristi Raik (Finland and Estonia), Grzegorz Gromadzki (Poland), Laura C. Ferreira-Perreira and Alena Vysotskaya G. Vieira (Portugal), Louise van Schaik (The Netherlands), Sabina Kajnc Lange (Slovenia), Ruby Gropas and George Tzogopoulos (Greece), Fabien Terpan (France), Caterina Carta and Richard Whitman (UK), Vit Beneš (Czech Republic). The authors are most grateful to them all.

dominated by rational inter-state bargaining. In this framework, EU member states can make an instrumental use of the EU with a view to promote their national interests. This is in line with neoliberal intergovernmental logic, whereby states use the EU as an instrument of national power to the extent that it preserves or strengthens rather than undermines national executive capacity (Moravcik 1993).

Europeanisation patterns can be seen as compatible with the intergovernmental approach (Börzel 2002; Wong 2011), in the form of transferring national preferences to the EU level in order to maximise their external impact. In other words, EU member states can ‘upload’ their national preferences and shape EU policy, thus strengthening the impact of that policy preference compared to what could have been achieved alone (Ginsberg 1999). This requires understanding the ways in which member states promote and project their interests, preferences and policy ideas to the EU institutions and their peers through bottom-up processes, thus playing a proactive rather than adaptive role (Börzel 2002). In light of this approach, while promoting national foreign policy interests through the EU, member states continue to defend their foreign policy independence. It seems logical for them to perceive the EEAS to some degree as a competitor to national MFAs and resist further transfer of power to EU level. In this model, member states and EU structures would coordinate among them or cooperate only where the advantages of such cooperation are evident.

A competing and widely applied approach in scholarly work on the relationship between EU and national foreign policy, Europeanisation, carries the burden of a bewildering variation in defining the concept (Moumoutzis 2011). Here we limit the definition of Europeanisation to processes of ‘downloading’ from the EU that shape organisational structures, policy processes and substance (cf. Wong 2011). In other words, what is at play in EU foreign policy making is top-down processes of national adaptation that reorient domestic institutional structures and policy-making processes to the degree that EU dynamics “become part of the organizational logic of national politics and policy making” (Ladrech 1994). Adaptation to the new foreign policy structures might lead to further transfer of power (both formal and informal) to Brussels, for instance by giving the EEAS a central role in agenda-setting, preparation of joint decisions, and diplomatic representation. In the process, national control of foreign policy is bound to weaken.

A constructivist reading of European foreign policy integration directs our attention to elite socialisation and change at the level of ideas and identities as a 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 (Glarbo 1999; Wallace 2000). 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 (e.g. Aggestam 2004; Rieker 2006).

Prior to the creation of the EEAS, the CFSP institutions (and even before then EPC) socialised European foreign policy elites to a considerable extent by creating complex transgovernmental networks of policy experts (Smith 2004: 105-6; Cross 2011). The design of the EEAS, especially the principle that one third of its staff should consist of seconded national diplomats, broadens and deepens such networks and is thus conducive to further elite socialisation and the strengthening of a shared foreign policy culture. The constructivist emphasis on the social construction of norms and identities is akin to a later version of neofunctionalist theory of integration whereby national actors accommodate and shift their

expectations, activities and possibly loyalties to common structures, contributing to policy convergence and the common European agenda and objectives taking priority over national ones (Haas 2004; Niemann and Schmitter 2009).

3. Intergovernmentalism and resistance to adaptation

In spite of the changes introduced by the Lisbon Treaty, foreign policy remains an area where member states are keen to maintain national control and the intergovernmental framework of decision making. What is key is that the member states feel they are in the driving seat, able in principle to control the speed, turn the wheel and pull the brake if needed. Hence the decision to ensure that the EEAS did not acquire the status of an institution but would remain under member state control.

From the point of view of institutional structures and functions, the preference in European capitals remains for complementarity characterising the relationship between the EEAS and MFAs. Even if there is dissatisfaction with the low level of ambition inherent to this relationship, foreign policy continues to be seen as belonging to the core of national sovereignty that should stay out of reach of supranational tendencies. Although acknowledging strong interdependence between European states as well as crumbling barriers between internal and external policies, member states and in particular their MFAs seem to have an instinct to defend foreign policy structures built upon the Westphalian state order. This pattern is visible even in the most committed pro-European countries. They try to confine reforms and integration processes into the boundaries of that order, resisting the challenge imposed by the EU on the very institution of diplomacy (as discussed in Batora 2005).

MFAs justify their position that the EEAS should play a complementary role above all by a logic of avoiding duplication. In some countries, notably the UK and Czech Republic, there is also a real concern 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.²

In line with the rational logic of liberal intergovernmentalism, most of the member states emphasise the role of the EU as power multiplier when it serves national priorities and as a vehicle for uploading national interests. Acting through the EU rather than alone can give an indispensable boost even to the largest member states. Europe’s relative global decline is logically increasing the rationale for unity.

An unashamed combination of promoting a common European foreign and security policy through the prism of national strategic interest and leadership on the global scale has been most visible in the case of post-Cold War France. The promotion of national “grandeur” and the pursuit of an elevated global standing of France have been the main strategic purpose of French foreign and security policy since the end of the Second World War. A shift in French position on a common European foreign and security has been a tactical one; France has supported the development of both the CFSP and the CSDP (Common Security and Defence Policy) above all as a ‘means to strengthen French influence worldwide through political

² e.g. C. Ashton, Foreword to the EEAS Review, July 2013.

leadership in Europe' (Terpan 2013). The ability of France to retain its global leverage is seen as inherently linked to the EU's success as a powerful international actor (Treacher 2003). In other words, French emphasis on national interest is not seen as detrimental to a more common EU foreign policy; on the contrary. The key for France is the drive to make EU foreign policy as close as possible to French policy. At the same time the institutional structures of common foreign policy should remain intergovernmental.

The UK draws a much clearer distinction between national and European interest. For all its questioning of EU integration, it has a pragmatic approach to EU foreign policy which does not necessarily undermine a more joined up global action, but limits it to selected fields and clings to a strict interpretation of intergovernmentalism. It has been at pains to underline that greater intergovernmental coordination should not constrain national foreign policy prerogatives (Carta and Whitman 2013). London privileges 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.

For smaller member states, acting as part of the broader European framework is essential for multiplying their voice and visibility. National visibility within EU foreign policy framework is also an important priority as such, not just for the sake of the issues promoted, but as a means to strengthen one's overall standing and image in the Union. Furthermore, on the domestic level, the government's success in the EU is often measured by its ability to take the initiative and promote national priorities on EU agenda. All these aspects played a role behind the promotion of the Northern Dimension by Finland, Eastern Partnership by Poland and Sweden, and the European Endowment for Democracy by Poland.

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 is meant to boost national foreign policy and the country's standing in the EU. However, in a manner that challenges the intergovernmental logic, it simultaneously increases the importance of the EU and empowers EU actors. As highlighted by constructivist studies, national interests are not pre-given to the EU negotiation process, but are shaped and re-formulated along the way. There is thus a tension between the national (and rational) motivation that drives uploading on the one hand and the subsequent strengthening of EU foreign policy on the other.

Overall, member states see uploading as a positive contribution to the EU's external action and role. A crucial question for the EU's global leverage is whether uploading national pet projects is accompanied with a broadly constructive approach to EU policy making, 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 any area. The reality is more mixed, and the habit of creating shopping lists of pet projects and priorities has not been curbed by experience.

The transition phase has even seen a perceived fragmentation of commitment towards EU foreign policy. Some European diplomats share the perception that foreign policy has been to some degree re-nationalised and the EU has less of a common foreign policy than it used to have in pre-Lisbon times (e.g. Tuomioja 2013). The difficulties of the transition to the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty, the acrimonious negotiations around the creation of the

EEAS, and the operational struggle of the first months of the EEAS all contributed to a tense atmosphere. The backdrop of the economic crisis and its impact on solidarity among the member states and trust in the Union made the overall context all the more difficult. On a positive note, public opinion in most member states is still favourable towards common EU foreign policy, with 64% of the population supporting the idea and just 26% opposing (support for common security and defence policy being even higher, 73% for and 20% against).³

When it comes to the ability of the member states to contribute to shaping EU foreign policy, a significant cleavage has emerged between the large and smaller member states. Large member states are seen to have gained a relatively stronger role in shaping EU policy, but have simultaneously been more inclined to act on their own without prior consultations inside the EU. Britain, France, Germany and even Italy and Poland are satisfied with the level of contact with and influence over policy processes managed in Brussels. Diplomats of the larger member states report to have very active and regular contacts with their counterparts in the EEAS.

The perceived dominance of the big countries has raised broad criticism and concern among smaller member states over their weakened leverage on and access to the kitchen of EU foreign policy making. Many smaller member states have complained about receiving information too little 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 big states. At the same time some diplomats of smaller member states have also experienced increased contacts and consultation with Brussels, indicating the rise of an EU coordination reflex (e.g. van Schaik 2013). However, increased coordination has not always been seen as a positive sign, but has been partly due to confusion and malfunctioning during the transition period (e.g. Rhinard et al. 2013). Some of these complaints are in the process of being addressed by consolidation of the new structures and through improved patterns of information exchange between Brussels and national capitals.

The more systemic change is related to the transfer of tasks from presidency country to the EEAS and High Representative, which has changed uploading patterns in important ways. In pre-Lisbon times, member states used to build alliances with the presidency if they wished to promote their priorities on the EU agenda. A degree of equality among the member states was guaranteed by rotation: the pet project proposed by one could survive on the transmission belt of the rotating system. Nowadays, smaller member states need to build coalitions of like-minded countries in order to make their case to the Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee (FAC) and the EEAS. Attitudes of national diplomats towards the EEAS seem to differ from their earlier attitudes towards the work of presidency countries. The presidency country used to be seen by MFAs as 'one of us', whereas the EEAS is not. There have been instances in which member state representatives have coalesced against the HR to push for their preferences.⁴ Presidencies were perceived as more open to the input and influence of fellow member states, but access to the EEAS, especially to the higher levels of the organization, was more difficult except for the largest member states. The presidencies were also seen as having a different, more diplomatic style of communication. Yet in spite of the nostalgia for the presidency system in the member states, they do value the increased continuity that the EEAS provides.

³ European Commission, Standard Eurobarometer 78, Autumn 2012.

⁴ Andrew Gardner (2013), Ashton in power struggle over Middle East policy, *European Voice*, 20 June.

Operationally, a lack of transparency and information-sharing is a major problem that has exacerbated suspicions about the three largest member states controlling the agenda, but is not only related to the “big three issue”. There have been problems with both the scope and timing of EEAS information-sharing. During the early phase of the EEAS, member states were receiving less information on CFSP-related matters than in pre-Lisbon times. In particular, many member states considered reporting on meetings of the HR/VP with external partners to be inadequate, which raised questions about mandate (the capitals simply did not know whether the HR/VP was acting within the scope of the agreed common line) and sometimes complicated bilateral relations.

The practice of distributing relevant documents very close to the meetings (the FAC in particular) was broadly criticized by the member states. Such a practice can be used as a form of power, especially if some member states have been informally involved in the preparation and others not, which is common practice and again favours the larger ones. Limited access by smaller member states to the higher level of EEAS officials underlines this problem, although it is to some extent inevitable – the EEAS leadership simply cannot be in daily contact with all 27 member states. Information-sharing in the other direction, from European capitals to the EEAS, tends to be even more difficult.

On the positive side, informal contacts between the EEAS and MFAs at the lower level are working reasonably well: member states’ diplomats are fairly satisfied with the responsiveness and openness of their colleagues in the EEAS when it comes to informal consultations; this goes for both the Headquarters in Brussels and EU Delegations abroad.

4. Europeanisation, policy adaptation and support for EU leadership

When it comes to foreign policy adaptation, member states downplay the role of the EEAS in stimulating change and highlight national adaptation in a broader framework of the Europeanisation of foreign policy which has taken place over 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 among countries). The founding members often see EU foreign policy as intertwined with the national one. There are 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 on the EU or national level; both are deemed necessary.

Of all the EU member states, German foreign affairs officials are amongst those who see EU and 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 although generally supporting a strong common approach. Shades of difference between the member states are revealing of 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.

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. The need to broaden the scope of foreign policy due to EU membership is not necessarily seen as merely positive by national actors; from a conservative perspective, one should rather focus on core issues of national security and not waste limited resources on a broader global agenda (Gromadzki 2013). The broadened global outreach should be understood as a result of adaptation and downloading, in accordance with the logic of appropriateness (March and Olsen 2004), rather than use of the EU by the member states, following instrumental rationality.

Even where intergovernmental bargaining between member states is the method through which consensus is reached, patterns of Europeanisation can be found. The European Neighbourhood Policy, for instance, is also the result of a compromise between the Mediterranean EU countries most interested in relations with North Africa and the Middle East and those East Central European countries keen to deepen relations with Eastern Europe. Through this consensus, which puts these two regions in the same policy framework, East Central European member states have increasingly been exposed to the issues and challenges faced in North Africa and vice versa for Mediterranean EU member states in Eastern Europe. This balance has been maintained not just by renewing the intergovernmental bargain but also by Europeanising member states’ relations with these parts of the world.

One area where national positions are perhaps most contradictory is foreign policy leadership. There is a demand for more leadership on part of the EEAS and HR, and each country would like to see it in its preferred areas (e.g. France on Africa and CSDP, Finland on EU-Russia and EU-Arctic, Poland on Ukraine and Eastern Europe, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Sweden on human rights). The Service has been criticized for not preparing decisions and meetings (notably foreign ministers, but also other levels) with sufficient substantive analysis, for not being strategic enough, and not bold enough in taking the initiative. This is partly due to the difficulties of the start-up phase when building up the organization, recruitment of staff and other practicalities inevitably occupied much time, and some improvement has already been acknowledged. But it also ties in with the difficulties of taking the initiative when surrounded by mistrust.

The calls for leadership were 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 has been very frequent in different countries. Finally, the Czech Republic does not want more leadership from EEAS – seen as potentially destroying CFSP and its intergovernmental nature.

Some countries have also shifted, showing that adaptation is not a linear process. Finland and the Netherlands have moved towards a more cautious approach to integration in general, including a somewhat more reserved position on common foreign policy. Estonia and Greece have become more fervent supporters of a strong common foreign policy with leadership coming from Brussels, although they are not ready to compromise on formal intergovernmentalism.

The change of EU structures following the Lisbon Treaty provisions has also provided a logic for further national adaptation of institutional patterns. The most important contribution of the EEAS comes from its 139 Delegations across the world. Overall, member states see the

Delegations, their performance so far, and their potential in the future 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 value added.

Many member states have started to show 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 the strengthening role of the EEAS in crisis coordination in situations such as the conflict in Syria or the tsunami in Japan in 2011.

These developments reflect an emphasis on rational cost-efficiency, which is a new phenomenon in the relationship between EU and national foreign policy with potentially major implications. Cost-saving considerations used to play a marginal role among the drivers of foreign policy integration (Smith 2004), but they have become an important factor pushing the member states to act jointly and pool and share resources. This is due to the significant cuts suffered by foreign services of most European countries over the past years (see an overview of the cuts in Balfour and Raik 2013b). In this context, the EEAS and its 139 delegations across the globe entail a potential for considerable economies of scale in European diplomacy that have yet to be harnessed by the member states. So far, the restructuring, rationalising and downsizing of MFAs has not been done as a consequence of the EEAS; it has only just started to take into account the opportunities for cost-saving that the EEAS could provide. The re-focusing of national diplomatic networks reflects changing global distribution of power and the rise of commercial diplomacy: most European countries have opened new missions and/or strengthened their presence in the emerging economies in an effort to promote national economic interests, while cutting their networks in other parts of the world. 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 introduced organisational changes in the headquarters, but again with no linkage to the EEAS. In France, the introduction of EU Directorate in charge of coordinating all external aspects of EU policy (and not just CFSP) can be seen as a form of top down Europeanisation. This, however, was created in 2009, before the EEAS came into being.

So far, the member states have focused on cost-saving solutions based on functional considerations, without envisaging a broader shift in balance between EU and national diplomacy. However, there is a fundamental tension between this approach and its longer-term implications: the logic of efficiency, while motivated by the *national* imperative to make savings and pursued in the framework *intergovernmental* cooperation, logically leads towards greater centralisation of foreign policy and cutting of national structures in favour of common EU institutions.

An area where the 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 contacts with their diplomats in the EEAS and see them as important sources of information. From the perspective of MFAs, sending their best people to the EEAS is a double-edged sword: a well-functioning EEAS is in their interests, as it is to be represented by their best. The side effect is that the smaller diplomacies in particular lose out on human resources. Attracting the best and brightest national diplomats back home after EEAS posting can also be a challenge.

Career-wise, secondment to the EEAS is generally seen at least on par with national service in the MFA. However, there are no established patterns yet as to how the MFAs will grade the experience of their diplomats in the EEAS. Notably the large member states (Germany, France, UK) encourage their officials to apply by regarding the service in the EEAS as beneficial with a view to further career in the MFA. In other countries, it is more common that the EEAS experience is on par with the “field jobs” of the ministry. Especially in the Eastern member states (Czech Republic, Poland, Estonia), but also Greece, the higher salaries of the EEAS are a strong incentive. At the same time there has been some concern among national diplomats that serving in the EEAS may be detrimental to one’s career. Fitting the career systems of the EEAS and MFAs together and creating a well-functioning system of rotation requires concerted efforts.

5. Socialisation: towards a European diplomatic culture

According to the neo-functionalist, Haasian vision of European integration, political adherence and loyalty to common structures would follow from pragmatic cooperation. Foreign policy is largely believed to be immune to the neo-functionalist logic as it is an area that lies at the heart of national sovereignty. The ability of the EEAS to disprove this assumption and steer foreign policy integration away from rationally motivated cooperation towards a shift of political loyalties is questionable in the short run. Yet in the longer term, the success of the EEAS depends on its ability to strengthen the sense of ownership and loyalty on the part of the member states and contribute to a shared foreign policy identity for Europeans that is strengthened alongside national identities.

The rotation of staff between national diplomacies and the EEAS is a key element of the Service and one of the main instruments for ensuring a sense of ownership and trust among member states. It builds on the experience of participation in CFSP institutions, which has functioned as a rather successful tool for the socialization of national diplomats to the EU framework. Many diplomats of the member states see a potential of rotation between the MFAs and EEAS to contribute to elite socialization and European diplomatic culture. This process could balance the intergovernmentalism of common foreign policy, which is oriented towards defending national interests, by strengthening a European mindset and habit of considering broader European interests among national diplomats, despite the variety of national backgrounds, as the experience of CFSP institutions such as the Political and Security Committee or the former Policy Unit of the Council Secretariat shows (Cross 2011). The EEAS has the potential to function as an incubator for European diplomats that complements these processes of socialization. It could aim to make it a norm across the EU that the best and brightest European diplomats serve in the EEAS at some point in their careers.

In its initial phase, member states did not perceive the EEAS as safeguarding the common European interest in a similar manner to the Commission. The trust that some member states traditionally have in the Commission has not been transferred to the EEAS.⁵ On the contrary, the position of the Commission, or former Commission officials, in the EEAS was widely criticized for being too influential. The way in which the Commission handled the negotiations on setting up the EEAS and promoted its institutional interests during the transition phase has backfired into lack of trust in the ability of the Commission and the EEAS to cooperate on foreign policy implementation. Furthermore, the Commission's bureaucratic culture was seen as ill-suited to constitute the core of European diplomatic culture, and former Commission officials were criticized for not having the necessary skills for diplomatic work. The majority of the initial EEAS staff had a background of working in the Commission, which explained the dominance of Commission working culture in the Service.⁶

According to the Council Decision establishing the EEAS (Art. 6(9)), national diplomats are to constitute at least one-third of all EEAS diplomatic staff, while permanent officials from the EU should make up at least 60%. As of June 2013, this goal was practically accomplished: the proportion of national diplomats had reached 32.9%, with a reasonably balanced representation of each member state.⁷ The next challenges are to integrate the staff from different backgrounds into a common culture and make the rotation work so that there is regular and smooth circulation between Brussels and the national capitals. It would advance the cross-fertilization of European diplomats if the permanent staff of the EEAS could also be rotated to national MFAs, and not just vice versa.

The EEAS has so far succeeded in attracting highly qualified and motivated staff from national diplomacies. There has been stiff competition for posts in the EEAS, indicating a high level of interest among the member states. Promoting their diplomats to the EEAS has been a priority for most MFAs, although there is variation as to the intensity of encouraging staff to seek positions in the Service. In spite of the well-known troubles of the transition phase and low morale among EEAS staff, diplomats posted to the Service tend to be highly motivated to make the new structures work smoothly and deliver. The staff transferred from the Commission and Council Secretariat were also very committed to the common EU foreign policy cause, although the same people have been very critical of the early steps of the Service (Juncos and Pomorska 2012).

Although there have been no formal national quotas, MFAs and even some national parliaments have been keen to keep track of the number of their diplomats in the Service, paying particular attention to high-level posts. Having one's own people in the Service is a way to gain access and control; it helps to ensure that one's national perspective is put in the boiling pot of EU foreign policy at all stages of pre-cooking and cooking. It is also in the interests of the EEAS to have member state views well-represented in the kitchen. Rotating diplomats from MFAs bring to the service knowledge of national priorities and sensitivities,

⁵ It should also be noted here that trust in the Commission has decreased with the economic crisis.

⁶ Initial staff included 2805 people transferred from the Commission (including 1084 local agents) (Source: European External Action Service, *Report by the High Representative to the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission*, 22 December 2011). In comparison, the number of EEAS staff in June 2012 totalled 3346 (European External Action Service, *Staffing in the EEAS*, June 2012).

⁷ European External Action Service, *EEAS Review*, July 2013.

which is highly valuable for the policy-making process in Brussels and helps to ensure the legitimacy of EU positions and actions in the global arena.

In order to utilize the potential of the highly motivated and professional staff, to draw people from different backgrounds together and maintain the attractiveness of the Service, an investment in creating an *esprit de corps* is essential. The variety of experiences and perspectives of its staff is an asset of the EEAS, but these need to be brought together into a joint pool of skills and a sense of community. A shared working culture should also be consciously reinforced. Joint training is necessary with a view to realizing all of these goals and needs to be designed in line with the unique nature of the EEAS.

Even if the EEAS succeeds in building a strong *esprit de corps* and eventually a new supranational diplomatic class, there is the danger that the Service will remain distant from national foreign policy structures. The number of national diplomats moving from MFAs to the EEAS and back is inevitably small: for example France, which has the highest proportion of staff in the EEAS in comparison with other member states, had sent 39 national diplomats to the Service by June 2013; this is a miniscule number (less than 0.6%) compared to the over 6700 diplomats working for the French MFA.

It is also far from certain whether strengthening the EEAS will contribute to a shared foreign policy identity among the member states. There is much evidence of the Europeanizing impact of Brussels experience at the individual level, be it in the service of national representations or the EU. However, there is no straightforward link between the socialization of individual diplomats to the EU framework, the scale of which has so far been limited, and EU orientation at the level of national foreign policy. Many member states, including France, Britain, the Czech Republic, Finland, 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.

6. Conclusion

National Foreign Ministries are challenged on more than one front. Within their countries, the past few years have seen the Prime Ministers and Ministries of the economy and finance take the lead role in shaping policy, including in the external sphere. In the EU, the broad guidelines for foreign policy are decided by the heads of states, who are no longer accompanied by their Foreign Ministers at the European Council meetings. The European External Action Service is potentially a competitor. In spite of assurances that the Service is not meant to replace national MFAs, the latter do have to adjust to the new body and deal with pressures to accept reduced visibility, shrinking budgets and a lower profile.

This poses a challenge at two levels. First, to the extent that the EEAS has the same functions as the MFAs, there is pressure for centralization and rationalization that takes place at the cost of the MFAs. Second, the EEAS poses a more fundamental challenge to the diplomatic system and diplomacy as an institution that regularizes inter-state relations, being a fundamentally new kind of actor on the diplomatic scene that does not fit into the old categories. In this sense, the EEAS is an additional existential challenge to national MFAs that have been struggling with a decline in traditional diplomacy for years.

However, the processes of change that the creation of the EEAS has initiated have been slow to take shape. The first months were characterised by difficult adaptation on part of all parties involved. Three years into the operation of the EEAS, some broad conclusions can be drawn regarding the relationship between EU and national foreign policy. First of all, intergovernmentalism continues to dominate member states' approach to common foreign policy. There is a degree of impermeability of member state perceptions of national sovereignty on international matters which, at times, is stronger than a reality of cooperation on most matters. Before discussing policy, all member states address the 'national interest' question. Depending on the country in question, the conclusion may be and often is that the national interest is to cooperate with its European partners.

Even if there now are some signs of organisational adaptation to the existence of the EEAS, for instance by relying more heavily on the Delegations, adapting human resources management, and exploring burden-sharing options, there is little evidence suggesting that the EEAS in itself led to policy adaptation. Most national diplomats claim that these processes were underway since their country joined the EU and that the EEAS has not made a significant difference to that process. In the longer-term, however, the EEAS is expected to have important socialising effects that may contribute to policy convergence. Our research has brought out the predominance of an instrumental approach: member states have been more willing to invest in the EEAS when this was seen as producing improved coordination, better analysis, and as multiplying the avenues for pursuing national interests. Yet working together and developing more joined up efforts to respond to international events can stimulate the habit of cooperation and development of a European diplomatic culture.

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