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‘Coming from the cold’: Does officials’ background matter in organizational behaviour?

Clues for assessing institutional orientations of the European External Action Service¹

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Abstract

Almost four years after its formal establishment, the European External Action Service (EEAS) remains in a situation of complex and overlapping competence areas between different layers of political and administrative governance, in which the service has to interact with and to answer to different national (MS) and intergovernmental (European Council, Foreign Affairs Council, FAC) political masters as well as supranational actors/agents, represented by the European Commission and the European Parliament. The formal political decision-making power with regard to the EU’s common foreign and security policy remains with the Council, but the institutional transition of 2014, with a freshly constituted Parliament, the appointment of a new HR/VP and a re-distribution of portfolios and competences in the incoming Juncker Commission, warrant a substantial re-evaluation of the present arrangements, and may open for institutional change. Amidst of these developments, the EEAS’ autonomy and institutional orientation are still both much debated and empirically widely unexplored. Based on quantitative (survey-) and qualitative (interview-) data this article contributes a behavioural analysis of EEAS decision-making.

¹ *An earlier version of this paper was presented at a workshop examining the development of the European External Action Service and its impact on EU foreign policy-making, held at Sidney Sussex College, University of Cambridge, 23 June 2014. The author gratefully acknowledges comments and feedback from the workshop participants.*

Introduction

While backstage negotiations and haggling about the new High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission (HR/VP) are in full swing, the European External Action Service (EEAS) is (yet again) set on 'business continuity' mode, or rather on 'auto-pilot'. The successor of Catherine Ashton will inherit a fully staffed and operational EU foreign policy bureaucracy, yet a long way from institutional maturity. The follow-up of the 2013 EEAS review is still due, and three and a half years after its creation, the EU foreign affairs machinery remains in a situation of complex and overlapping competence areas, resorting in a constant struggle for policy coherence (Duke 2012, Portela and Raube 2012). Due to the 'poly-centric and compartmentalized' nature (Marangoni and Raube 2014: 483) of the EU foreign policy system as well as interlocking layers of political and administrative governance, the EEAS has to interact with and to answer to different national (MS) and intergovernmental (European Council, Foreign Affairs Council, FAC) political masters as well as supranational actors/agents, mainly the Commission and the freshly constituted European Parliament (Furness 2013, Henökl 2014a, Kostanyan 2014, Raube 2012, 2014; Wisniewski 2012).

As the HR/VP's supporting bureaucracy, the EEAS is an organizational hybrid with inbuilt ambiguities, stemming from the 'old' pre-Lisbon pillar structure, with competence areas divided between community institutions and the member states. In the FAC setting, the HR/VP is expected to act as 'primus inter pares' of the foreign ministers of the member states. On the other side, the HR/VP shares external policy competences with Commission DGs DEVCO, ELARG and Trade, and has to answer to the European Parliament and to justify her policy choices to the body, holding democratic legitimacy, in line with the "Declaration by the High Representative on Political Accountability", annexed to Council Decision 427/2010, establishing the EEAS (EEAS Decision). As a consequence of the intricate situation of the EEAS' multiple embedded-ness, competing oversight and control relations can be discerned as a structuring principle in order to 'secure material, political and/or ideational influence' (Blom and Vanhoonacker 2015: 5), from both the intergovernmental and the

community spheres, involving notably the MS in the Council, the Commission, and the EP in a struggle over power and institutional turf (Duke 2011, Dijkstra 2013, Furness 2013, Henökl 2014b, Smith 2013). Accordingly, organizational culture of the EEAS has been seen as a 'product of competing interests' and 'an ongoing process of negotiation and contestation' (Benson-Rea and Shore 2012: 481).

An intriguing feature of the EEAS, its personnel stem from three different sources; the former Commission DG External Relations (RELEX), the Secretariat General of the Council and national diplomatic services of the member states on temporary 'secondment', roughly one third each. Since this is a rather unique feature, a growing body of literature focuses on the effects of combining these different sources of recruitment within the EEAS (Duke and Lange 2013, Juncos and Pomorska 2013a, Hemra *et al.* 2011, Spence 2012). Past research has seen this specificity having consequences impacting on socialization and institutionalization processes within the service (Formuszewicz and Liszczyk 2013, Juncos and Pomorska 2013b, Henökl and Trondal 2013). These previous studies are based on insightful empirical material, in their majority drawing on interviews with EEAS officials regarding their attitudes towards change and their opinions with regard to EEAS leadership and culture. What seems to be missing² so far, is a behavioural analysis of how attitudes and beliefs of EEAS officials may impact the actual administrative decision-making orientation of the organization. Benefitting from a recent survey among EEAS staff, and analyzing data from 47 interviews with EU foreign policy-makers, the present study contributes to fill this gap. More precisely, I ask whether and how secondment of national diplomats may affect individual and collective administrative decision-behaviour, and could influence the institutional trajectory of the EEAS, to become a more intergovernmental or a more supranational actor. The question is thus: which are the factors that

² While I cannot rule out any omissions on my part, I found one recent exception in an article by Nicola Chelotti (2013). However, his analysis, based on quantitative data from 138 diplomats, only includes *national representatives* in Council CFSP/CSDP working groups, examining their mandates from MS governments, and does not help the purpose of elucidating the orientations of EEAS officials.

predominantly determine organizational decision-making in the EU's hybrid foreign policy apparatus?

To cast some light on this, I will first present the theoretical considerations at the basis of this research, introduce data and method for analysis, then highlight and discuss selected findings before drawing a number of rather timely conclusions, at this critical juncture for the new service.

Theoretical departure

In line with the definition of institutions as 'stable sets of rules', and formal organizations being 'a set of stable social relations deliberately created, with the explicit intention of continuously accomplishing some specific goals or purposes' (Stinchcombe 1965: 142) individuals as members of an organization are expected to follow certain behavioural prescriptions. However, there may be some degree of ambiguity as a consequence of different sets of rules or relational and behavioural dynamics present in organizations, particularly in organizations that operate at institutional intersections between the national and supra-national spheres. "One of the primary factors affecting behavior is the process by which some of those rules rather than others are attended to in a particular situation, and how identities and situations are interpreted" (March and Olsen 2006: 694). Rules are directing action only to a certain degree, they cannot determine or predict decisions or policy-making exactly. There is an individual marge of manoeuver or a grey-zone of decisional discretion, where purposeful action by individuals as utility maximizers, bureau shapers or policy entrepreneurs etc. (see e.g. Morgenstern-Pomorski 2014), in the form of personal or group preferences, socialization factors, multiple allegiances or diverging loyalties may intervene. At the macro-level, the attention to and the effects of these influences are attenuated by legal norms, buffered by formal organizational structure, and filtered through hierarchical layers (Lægreid and Olsen 1987: 31-39, Trondal 2010). Formal organizational structure also provides frames of reference, simplifications and shortcuts, cognitive scripts and ways to deal with complex information (frequently scarce, and, nowadays, even more frequently in overflow) and uncertainty (Simon 1957). These features may pre-structure behaviour, by creating the pre-dispositions or premises for

decisions and thus a 'bias' for administrative action (Schattschneider 1975). Decision premises include gathering, processing and analyzing information as well as other preparatory activities, such as taking initiatives, elaborating alternatives, and learning. Together they contribute to determining what issues are focused on, and why *certain* considerations and concerns are attended to. This attention, in turn, is triggering the directional mobilization of administrative resources and capacities (Egeberg 1999). Structure contributes to define what officials deem appropriate and important, which considerations and concerns they emphasize, where they look for signals and input, based on their "conceptions of reality, standards of assessment, affective ties, and endowments, and thereby with a capacity for purposeful action" (March and Olsen 1996: 249).

Beyond the *formal* rules, organizations are implicitly also guided by central structuring principles, the "institutional logics" of an organization, defined as "sets of material practices and symbolic constructions", constituting the components and informal organizing devices of an institutional order (Friedland and Alford 1991: 232). Building on this definition, Thornton and Ocasio (1999: 801 and 2008: 101) refined the approach and further elaborated that institutional logics are "socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs and rules by which individuals reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality." 'Logics' here are higher order cognitive arrangements, such as contexts of meaning, values, norms and rules that provide the frame of reference for how individuals 'make sense of the world'. A number of studies have demonstrated that "institutional logics manifest themselves materially in organizational structures and practices" (Cloutier and Langley 2013: 361), and that change in institutional logics affects the way organizations operate (e.g. Greenwood and Suddaby 2006, Lounsbury 2002 and 2007). Bátorá (2009) described the European Defence Agency as 'a flashpoint of institutional logics', and made a case for the value of analyzing collisions and accommodation of 'competing visions of appropriate institutional arrangements' as an indicator the 'emerging political order of EU defence' (Bátorá 2009: 1075). Moreover, organizational change, such as mergers or reform, may result in shifts of the dominant institutional logics, allow for diverging and

contradictory dynamics to influence organizational behavior, and affect the prevailing patterns of cleavages and conflicts, leading to situations of uncertainty and instability: “Organizations face institutional complexity whenever they confront incompatible prescriptions from multiple institutional logics” (Greenwood et al. 2011: 318).

For a number of reasons, there may be *ambivalence* between different and conflicting institutional logics operating within the EEAS: First, as already stated, due to its hybrid or ‘interstitial’ (Bátora 2013) character, its situation ‘in-between’ the supra-national, the intergovernmental and the national spheres, the EEAS taps different institutional reservoirs and repertoires.

Second, ‘young’ organizations, entering a particular institutional field, bearing the ‘liability of newness’ (Singh *et al.* 1986, Stinchcombe 1965, Bátora 2009), and organizations in transition, where there is ongoing transformation of the institutional infrastructure, are prone to ambiguous situations. If – for political or other reasons (lack of leadership and resource shortages, a deficit regarding external support or legitimacy, reform-pressures and continuous re-organization) – these ambivalences, which are well documented for EEAS’ early days (Juncos and Pomorska 2013a and b, Duke 2014), cannot be contained, they may be expected to ‘stick’ with the organization (Stinchcombe 1965), as a lasting imprint of a founding practice (Nystrom and Starbuck 1984), become a cultural feature, fostering in-house entrepreneurialism within different intra-organizational groups and networks to different extents ‘steering the ship’.

Third, structural internal ambiguity, such as lack of clarity regarding responsibilities, overlapping jurisdictions and areas of competence, multiple lines of reporting and instructions or dysfunctional control and oversight mechanisms, can be seen as a reinforcing factor or a catalyst for the different decision-making dynamics gaining momentum, ‘bubbling-up’ (Powell and Colyvas 2008: 278), surfacing, crystallizing and hardening, and eventually influencing the behaviour of an organization, and forging its ‘character’ and bureaucratic autonomy (Carpenter 2001).

In a conceptualization of ‘embedded agency’, organizational decisions and outcomes are seen to be “a result of the interplay between individual agency and institutional structure” (Thornton and Ocasio 2008: 103, Friedland and Alford 1991). Both individual and collective actors, whether they are rationally motivated to pursue their objectives or identified with value-laden goals, whether they are seeking power, status, and economic advantages, or ‘working for the future of Europeans’ (Shore 2000, Ellinas and Suleiman 2012), “the means and ends of their interests and agency are both enabled and constrained by prevailing institutional logics” (ibid., Thornton and Ocasio, 2008).

Micro-foundations of institutional logics

Organizational psychology has identified a number of incremental processes which Wenger (1998: 82) calls the ‘resources for negotiating meaning’, such as theorization, reification, creation of artifacts, formalization. The mechanisms of daily-life where these processes materialize are routines, repertoires for actions, ways of doing things, standard operating procedures, ‘Vademecum’-notes, vocabularies and wordings, meetings (as venues for joint sense-making), etc. These factors have also been considered relevant by research on epistemic communities (Adler and Haas 1992), communities of practice (Bicchi 2011, 2014, Davis Cross 2013, Feldman and Pentland 2003) or ‘alternative practice frameworks’ (Morill 2004).

Routinized ways of acting matter because they determine how issues are *usually* dealt with, how they are framed and problematized, which and how issues are prioritized, emphasized, categorized, whether and how resources are mobilized, who is tasked, by whom and how action is planned, launched and synthesized (combining, directing and sequencing means and ways to achieve a certain objective). Important for such routinization and institutionalization are recursive-ness and habitualization (Berger and Luckmann 1966).

Despite the connotations of ‘routine’ with repetition, continuity and ‘more of the same’, routines are a means of increasing organizational efficiency, saving time and freeing resources or building the basis for the more salient and ‘important’ decisions of the bureaucracy, such as re-evaluating and re-

considering its own structures, organization and functioning (Zucker 1987: 446). The joint construction of every-day knowledge has also considerable innovative potential, enabling communities of practices and knowledge, engaged in collective and mutual learning etc., to streamline, improve and reinvent administrative processes. The interpretation of ‘facts of the world’, and standardizing behaviour as the appropriate reaction in situations (March and Olsen 2006) is facilitated by institutional logics, as the “more or less taken for granted repetitive social behavior, underpinned by normative systems and cognitive understandings that give meanings to social exchange and thus enable self-reproducing social order” (Greenwood et al. 2008: 4).

To get a better idea about the existence and the importance of such standardizing, routinizing and institutionalizing tendencies, comparisons of behavioural data across and between formerly distinct institutional spheres or groups with different professional backgrounds and cultures, such as officials coming from member states (with different national administrative and diplomatic traditions) and officials with previously supranational EU-affiliation (to different extent socialized to European values) may be a helpful instrument for detecting distinct institutional logics and tendencies in the formation of organizational culture, even more so in combination with in-depth interviewing of key personnel in the organization, and data on potentially ambiguity-creating circumstances. Such knowledge and insights about the drivers of organizational behaviour, should be of value to analyze the institutional character of the EEAS, and to put its policy-making orientation into perspective. How the new service evolves over time, and whether as an organization it will behave rather supra-nationally or inter-governmentally, are more intricate questions, and require long-term observation to make meaningful statements beyond extrapolation or mere speculation. As pointed out by Bulmer (2009), “[t]he difficulty lies in *predicting* or accounting for this type of change rather than identifying it, *ex post*, in empirical accounts of institutional or policy evolution” (Bulmer 2009: 309, original italics). As a baseline for later observations and comparisons, this article therefore wants to map the present cognitive and behavioural pre-dispositions of the staff as their decision-making premises and contribute to a better grasp of the EEAS’ evolving institutional character.

Capacities and dispositions for action

The importance of previous organizational affiliation and officials' career paths was more or less explicitly acknowledged by interviewees of different institutional provenance (interviews #3, 6, 9, 15, 19, 27, 39)³ and is also confirmed by the data of Juncos and Pomorska (2013b: 312). As Peters (1988: 174-175) explains, earlier work experiences, particularly from a different institution provoke 'a sort of built-in cross-pressure', which makes individuals less unequivocally committed than a continuous affiliation within one institution (Egeberg 1994: 91). In the same vein, Benz (forthcoming, 2015: 9) underlines that "recruitment of staff and action orientation make a difference. In a supranational administration, we find European 'technocrats', whereas civil servants selected by member states tend to represent national or regional interests, even if they fulfil special tasks in a policy sector."

To determine officials' role orientation or 'disposition for action' (Georgakakis 2012), I look at intra- and inter-organizational contact patterns (cross-cutting or inward focused), conflicts and cleavages (territorial or non-territorial, and whether transcending sectoral, departmental, organizational boundaries and governance levels), attention to political signals and bureaucrats' concerns (political input, guidance, steering and action orientation), as well as rules of loyalty and allegiance (informing about identity and sense of belonging). Contacts indicate the reference group for socialization, based on sustained and intense interaction (Beyers 2010; Hooghe 2005). Patterns of conflicts and cleavages inform about underlying structuring dynamics (Rokkan 1999, Egeberg 2004). Cleavages have, for instance, been studied by Ban in her research on the enlarged EU Commission, and proved to be a useful tool to analyze the social and cultural heterogeneity as well as the distribution of power within EU bureaucracies (Ban 2013: 171-174). Attention and consideration given indicates the importance attributed to different sources of political input and refers to institutional logics, providing "rules and conventions for deciding which problems get attended to, which solutions get considered, and which

³ The format of this does not allow for more exhaustive quotations, but to illustrate the different views and opinions with regard to the newcomers it may be mentioned that in some instances were seen as "enriching and invaluable resource for the EEAS" (#9) whereas the other extreme was to perceive them as "Trojan horses of the member states" (#39).

solutions get linked to which problems” (Thornton and Ocasio 2008: 114, referring to March and Olsen 1976).

Trondal (2010) distinguishes four decision-making logics at the individual level: intergovernmental (IG), supranational (SN), departmental (DP) and epistemic (EM). An intergovernmental logic corresponds to strong member state orientation, or a state-centric view, where the national governments are the main points of reference and most important emitters of signals for policy making, steering the process of European integration (Moravcsik 1998). A supranational decision-making logic attributes importance predominantly to the EU level institutions representing the community method, i.e. the Commission, the European Parliament and the ECJ (Sandholtz and Stone Sweet 1998). The departmental logic emphasizes the interest of an official’s department of affiliation, and represents a sense of belonging or loyalty to his/her DG or service/unit, evoking a certain group identity or esprit de corps. Lastly, the epistemic logic underscores an official’s role as expert or technocrat, most strongly relying on his/her professional values, technical expertise and educational socialization, as a lawyer, an economist or engineer etc. (Mayntz 1999: 84, Van Maanen 1978). Similar categories have recently been used by Kassim *et al.* (2013: 103-113) to analyze attitudes, values and belief-structures of Commission officials. Whilst in their large-scale study additional operators included also national background (country size, MLG structure, national tradition, governance efficiency) and bureaucrats’ personal ideological and political views, the relevance of the four decision-making logics as categories has been confirmed. The decision-making logics used here are not discrete or mutually exclusive categories, but rather ‘ideal types’ that can be represented as gradual patterns synchronically and to different extents influencing belief systems and role understandings of officials.

Method and data

The main challenge for research on organizational behaviour, as has been pointed out (Bauer and Trondal 2015: 19, Ellinas and Suleiman 2012) lies in the difficulty to bridge individual level values, beliefs, role patterns, and individual actors’ allocation of attention, on the one side, and the

organizational policy-making orientations on the other. Operationalization in this study involves two independent variables at the (1) present and (2) previous organizational affiliation of EU foreign policy makers, together defining the conditions for role orientation and re-socialization of officials, as the dependent variables (Beyers 2010, Checkel 2005). In contrast to the definition of socialization as 'support for supra-national norms' (Hooghe 2005), the conceptualization used in this contribution follows Beyers and Trondal (2004: 920), focusing on 'role perceptions'. Central in this view are identity, role understanding and 'action orientation' (Benz 2015), *i.e.* what officials perceive as the 'right' or 'appropriate' way of approaching a particular situation in accordance with their self-conceptions, their loyalty and allegiance to rules and roles, embedded in institutionalized decision-making logics and under conditions of organizational ambiguity. Identity here refers to a reflexive self-constitution, in the sense of Wenger: "Building and identity consists of negotiating the meanings of our experience of memberships in social communities" (Wenger 1998: 145).

For the empirical analysis, the study draws on three main sources of data; relevant official documents, semi-structured interviews with 47 EU officials working in or closely with the EEAS as well as data from a survey among 184 foreign policy decision makers. The methodology used to analyse the survey data is descriptive statistics and basically consists of looking at the correlation between officials' background (previous and present affiliation) and their conception of personal and organisational roles and values (by asking for sensibility to rules of loyalty and allegiance, importance of political guidance and signals by the relevant forums, professional concerns and considerations, as well as officials' contact patterns⁴). The reason for this focus on organizational affiliation and the exclusion of other independent variables is that background factors such as gender, age, education or nationality did not show consistent correlation patterns and therefore were so far not taken into account. In this contribution, I dichotomise between (1) the different staff categories (permanent vs. temporary staff), and (2) according to officials' institutional provenance or source of recruitment

⁴ Other variables and data, not reported in this article include: perceptions of inter-institutional cooperation, conflicts and cleavages, communication patterns, and personal views/attitudes regarding EU institutional and foreign policy issues.

(supranational vs. intergovernmental recruits) to see whether there are differences, and, if so, what these differences exactly are. In addition, the study can also draw on information on changes in the work situation of officials, comparing the level of administrative discretion in terms of instructions and reporting lines, political exposure job responsibility and decisional leverage to the situation before the establishment of the EEAS. For more detailed information on the data set and methodology of the survey I have to refer to the **ANNEX** ('research instruments and data sets') of this article.

ANALYSIS: Background and behaviour

From an organization theory perspective the creation of organizational capacities has certain implications for how organizations and humans act. One specific point about the staffing of the EEAS has also been raised by the 2013 EEAS Review, namely the multiple and overlapping reporting lines, in some instances redundant hierarchical layers, created mainly to ensure a sufficient number of available posts at higher echelons, leading to a congestion within the senior ranks, and lack of resources at support level of the service (EEAS 2013, Duke 2014: 33). This particular feature has produced a lot of confusion and frustration among EEAS staff (Juncos and Pomorska 2013a), and is one of the parameters facilitating institutional ambivalence.

Ambiguity and change

Officials were asked whether, compared to their experiences before the launch of the EEAS, they had faced profound changes in their work situation. The data shows clearly that the formation of the EEAS introduced – at least during the early stages of the EEAS and until mid-2013 – an element of uncertainty or opacity for officials regarding their roles and instructions, lines of reporting, and especially as regards organizational goals and strategy. Secondly, perceived changes also involve more 'political exposure' and 'political interferences', but also changes as regards 'clarity of one's own role and function', 'clarity of reporting lines', and 'clarity of organizational goals and strategy'. Officials also report, not surprisingly, increased 'workload' and 'administrative burden'. Especially the latter was emphasized by nearly two thirds of respondents.

Table 1: Changes in work situation by PREVIOUS affiliation (source of recruitment) (N=133)

CHANGES	Intergovernmental recruits (N=37)			Supranational recruits (N=96)		
	<i>(Significantly more (%)</i>	<i>Same (%)</i>	<i>(Significantly less (%)</i>	<i>(Significantly more (%)</i>	<i>Same (%)</i>	<i>(Significantly less (%)</i>
Political exposure	57	24	19	42	37	12
Political interferences	52	22	16	51	46	3
Contacts inside*	51	27	22	30	51	19
Contacts outside*	59	24	16	35	52	13
Variety of tasks	46	35	19	44	44	12
Clarity of role/function	14	35	51	16	37	46
Clarity of instructions	11	38	51	17	35	48
Clarity of lines of reporting	8	41	51	14	37	59
Clarity of org. goals and strategy	11	25	64	15	34	51
Administrative burden*	81	11	8	63	28	10
Overall workload	68	24	8	65	28	8

Table: Changes in work situation by previous affiliation (n=133)

Original code list: 'Significantly more' (value 1), 'more' (value 2), 'same' (value 3), 'less' (value 4), 'significantly less' (value 5), 'can't say' (value 6).

We see that both groups of staff are affected by the changes, but that overall intergovernmental recruits report slightly more significant changes (with the exception of the decline in the 'clarity of lines of reporting'). The same holds true if we compare EEAS staff proper to Commission personnel (posted at EU Delegations), except from 'clarity of instructions' and 'organizational goals', the perceived changes seem to be slightly less pronounced, but still important:

Table 2: Changes in work situation by PRESENT affiliation (current job) (N=147)

CHANGES	EEAS staff (N=124)			Commission staff (N=23)		
	<i>(Significantly more (%)</i>	<i>Same (%)</i>	<i>(Significantly less (%)</i>	<i>(Significantly more (%)</i>	<i>Same (%)</i>	<i>(Significantly less (%)</i>
Political exposure	58	29	13	31	46	13
Political	59	35	6	36	59	5

interferences						
Contacts inside*	43	41	16	17	57	26
Contacts outside	49	38	13	17	74	9
Variety of tasks	49	38	13	35	48	17
Clarity of role/function	17	38	45	17	35	48
Clarity of instructions	15	36	49	17	26	57
Clarity of lines of reporting	12	39	49	22	30	48
Clarity of org. goals and strategy	15	31	54	13	26	61
Administrative burden**	72	20	8	48	35	17
Overall workload	67	26	7	61	26	13

Table: Changes in work situation by present affiliation (n=147)

Original code list: 'Significantly more' (value 1), 'more' (value 2), 'same' (value 3), 'less' (value 4), 'significantly less' (value 5), 'can't say' (value 6).

From the above, we see rather clearly that the EEAS is not only characterized by hybrid personnel composition, but it also an organization in transition and displaying a considerable degree of behavioural ambiguity, potentially leaving ample room for decisional discretion to officials. Rules themselves can be ambiguous and “provide critical openings for creativity and agency; individuals exploit their inherent openness to establish new precedents for action that can ‘transform the way institutions allocate power and authority’” (Mahoney and Thelen 2010: 12). According to background and socialization, personal and organizational objectives or strategies, different types of action orientation and different degrees of ‘creativity’ are expected to be more or less strongly present. Whilst assuming that the present organizational affiliation provides the most significant of premises for administrative behaviour and decision making, the question is whether we can detect other such premises and if it is possible to distinguish role patterns and behavioural orientations, according to different organizational affiliations in the officials’ past.

Rules and roles in EU diplomacy

The EEAS, particularly MS diplomats placed in key positions within the service, can be regarded as fulfilling a certain function for member states and assuming the role of an informal link between the

domestic governments and the supranational, Brussels-based, foreign policy administration as well as the EU Delegations 'in the field', ensuring the flow of information back to the MS MFA and guaranteeing that their vital interests are safeguarded. In diplomacy, even more than in other organizational and governance contexts, information, especially accurate and professionally processed information, is a crucial resource (Berridge 2002: 122). One MS diplomat in a coordinating position with regard to this country's SNDs expressed this thought during an interview:

“If you have your people, your nationals, there, then it's a way of getting to know how things are done. Then, of course, access is one thing ... I mean it is not impossible to call *anybody*, the phone numbers are there - but it is so much easier to call your own people. You don't feel like intruding so much as with other people. [...] It is more of a natural connection there. That's why it is so important that every country has their own representatives there. Nobody is left out in the cold” (Interview #012).

This may very well reflect the rationale behind secondment of MS diplomats to the EEAS – to have a contact and entry point, securing information flow and have a foot in the door in the EU foreign policy bureaucracy. Why else would they send “their best and the brightest”⁵ to Brussels?

Also from 'the inside', this strategy is reported in interviews. Asked about his contacts with his domestic MFA, one secondee (from the least-likely MS case as compared to the above one) replied:

“I have frequent contact, because in my case as seconded expert it is the ministry (of foreign affairs) that pays everything. So I have to have contact. Also there are initiatives from the Permanent Representation [of my country] to maintain contacts to all their SNDs, but that is recent. I have lots of contacts with my ministry from a professional point of view. [My country] is very interested in [my region of expertise], and they call me a lot to ask about things. So we talk weekly. But these are questions that other member states could ask as

⁵ The HR/VP on recruitment and staffing of the EEAS in a press communiqué after the vote on the EEAS Decision in the EP, available at: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/115736.pdf

well, nothing confidential. They are more of the type: ‘what is on the agenda?’, ‘what are we interested in?’, ‘what is our opinion on a certain issue?’, ‘what will be my next trip?’ That is the advantage of having me here” (Interview #47, own translation).

Formally, according to the staff regulations, the MS diplomats (or SNDs) should devote their loyalty exclusively to the HR/VP for the time of their secondment to the EEAS. Already the recruitment and the insertion of the first cohort of SNDs has proved to be a difficult and delicate exercise, often contested and in many instances driven by political and diplomatic concerns as well as bureaucratic bickering between MS and the Brussels machinery - at the expense of staff morale, organisational capacity, and effectiveness (e.g., interview #4).

Which rules, whose rules?

“Formal organizations temporarily settle issues about ‘tasks, authority, power and accountability’ (Olsen 2010: 37). Accordingly, bureaucrats’ identities and role perceptions may be an indicator of their ‘sense of belonging’ in terms of organizational allegiance and loyalty. Therefore, the survey asked which rules officials stick to when facing a situation that requires allegiance-related evaluations: “When facing a conflict of interests or conflicting loyalties how much do you emphasize the guidelines provided by the following?”

Table 3: Rules for conflicts of loyalty (N=148)

RULES	(very) strongly (%)	Somehow (%)	Less strongly/ Not at all (%)	Can’t say (%)
Rules institution of origin (recruitment source)	53.4	8.8	26.3	11.5
Rules present affiliation (present employment)	81.8	10.8	1.4	6.1
Staff regulations EU institutions	77.7	12.2	4.1	6.1
Code of conduct for the civil service	68.9	12.8	7.4	10.8
Rules and standards for EU agencies	20.3	11.5	33.1	35.1
Supervisor/hierarchy	70.3	14.9	6.1	8.8
National coordinator	8.8	4.1	48	39.2
Other	1.4	0.7	2.0	85.8

Table: Rules for conflicts of interests and loyalties (n=148)

Original code list: 'Very important' (value 1), 'important' (value 2), 'somewhat important' (value 3), 'less important' (value 4), 'not important' (value 5), 'can't say' (value 6).

As expected, most officials emphasize the “rules and regulations of [their] present affiliation” with 82% saying “strongly” or “very strongly”, followed by the “staff regulation for the personnel of European institutions” (78%) and “my supervisor/hierarchy” (70%). Less than 9 per cent answered that they at least “strongly” emphasized guidelines by their national coordinator. More important seems to be the “Code of conduct for the civil service” (69%), which in the EU context is an abstract notion rather than a document directly applicable to staff of EU institutions. The fact that “rules and standards for EU agencies” (20%) score much lower could be taken as a statement that EEAS is not seen as an agency but, in terms of self-perception, rather close to a central level EU institution.

Again, to see more specifically which officials chose different sets of rules or guidelines could give us a hint regarding their (converging or diverging) organizational identities and role perceptions.

Role orientation in practice

Other than the presented *formal* organizational relations and rules it should be of interest to examine the de facto dynamics regarding the EEAS’ sensitivity for political concerns and signals. Presented with a choice of different political actors outside their own organization, officials pay most attention to central level EU institutions (European Commission – 74%, Foreign Affairs Council and European Council both 68 %, and finally the European Parliament – 58%). Only then follow “the big EU member states” – 51%, “the medium-sized EU member states” – 30%, International Organizations – 23%, “the small MS” – 22%, and, finally, “signals from the domestic government of my own member state” – 17%. So, overall we see a supra-national action orientation, first and foremost pointing towards the European Commission.

Table 4: Political signals (Total N=149) “Where do political signals guiding your work come from?”

SIGNALS	(Very) important (%)	Somewhat important (%)	Less/not important (%)	Can't say (%)
European Council	67.8	14.8	5.3	12.1
Foreign Affairs Council	67.8	12.1	6.7	13.4

European Commission	73.8	10.7	6.7	8.7
European Parliament	57.7	19.5	11.4	11.4
“Big” EU MS	51.1	18.1	19.4	11.4
Medium-sized MS	30.2	34.9	22.8	12.1
Small MS	22.1	35.6	30.9	11.4
Own EU MS	17.4	14.1	57.7	10.7
Political level/senior management	83.9	4.7	3.3	8.1
Direct hierarchy	87.9	5.4	1.4	5.4
International organizations	22.8	35.6	28.8	12.8

Table: Political signals (n=149)

Original code list: ‘Very important’ (value 1), ‘important’ (value 2), ‘somewhat important’ (value 3), ‘less important’ (value 4), ‘not important’ (value 5), ‘can’t say’ (value 6).

Other than a clear emphasis put on signals from EU-level institutions, an interesting observation concerns the relative importance that is given to the EP, which corroborates the impression that the MEPs by smartly playing their hand throughout the negotiations which ultimately lead to the EEAS Decision have gained influence and political weight *vis-à-vis* other EU institutions, at least in the eyes of EEAS officials. However, this is an observation that is also shared by Commission officials, for instance in a quote, summarizing a trend detected by Ellinas and Suleiman (2012: 80): “For many years the EP was unimportant and it was ignored. It had the least standing among the institutions of the EU. It is undergoing a process of transition – gaining power and knowing how to use it.”

Variation according to organizational affiliation

By simple cross-tabulation, I analyse varying patterns of receptivity and attention paid to the signals and concerns of different political institutions:

RULES AND ROLES

Table 5: Rules for conflicts of loyalty by PREVIOUS affiliation (source of recruitment) (Total n=124)

RULES	Intergovernmental (MS and SGC) staff (n=33)			Supra-national (COMMISSION) staff (n=91)		
	(Very) important (%)	Somewhat important (%)	Less/not important (%)	(Very) important (%)	Somewhat important (%)	Less/not important (%)
Rules institution of origin (recruitment source)	49	12	39	64	11	25

Rules present affiliation (present employment)	88	12	0	87	11	2
Staff regulations EU institutions	73	18	9	87	11	2
Code of conduct for the civil service	66	25	9	82	13	3
Rules and standards for EU agencies	23	39	38	33	12	55
Supervisor/hierarchy	85	9	6	71	21	8
National coordinator	15	19	66	N/A	N/A	N/A

Table: RULES by PREVIOUS affiliation (Total n=124)

Original code list: 'Very important' (value 1), 'important' (value 2), 'somewhat important' (value 3), 'less important' (value 4), 'not important' (value 5), 'can't say' (value 6).

Most strongly developed for both groups is the sense of bounded-ness by the rules of the present affiliation, which fulfills the expectations that officials' loyalty and sense of belonging is most strongly developed towards their primary affiliation, i.e. 'rules of present affiliation'. In the case of IG recruits the 'rules of previous affiliation' score even lower than for supranational recruits. Both groups perceive stronger allegiance to the 'staff regulations of the EU institutions' (which is a control for primary affiliation). Direct hierarchy is important for all officials, slightly more for IG recruits. By contrast, 'national coordinator' was not mentioned as playing a significant role.

Table 6: Rules for conflicts of loyalty by PRESENT affiliation (current job) (Total n=133)

RULES	EEAS staff (n=110)			COMMISSION staff (n=23)		
	(Very) important (%)	Somewhat important (%)	Less/not important (%)	(Very) important (%)	Somewhat important (%)	Less/not important (%)
Rules institution of origin (recruitment source)	53	12	35	87	4	9
Rules present affiliation (present employment)	89	11	0	78	17	4
Staff	81	15	4	95	0	5

regulations EU institutions						
Code of conduct for the civil service	76	17	7	81	5	14
Rules and standards for EU agencies	34	20	46	13	13	75
Supervisor/hi erarchy	78	17	5	68	18	14
National coordinator	9	9	72	N/A	N/A	N/A

Table: RULES by PRESENT affiliation (Total n=133)

Original code list: 'Very important' (value 1), 'important' (value 2), 'somewhat important' (value 3), 'less important' (value 4), 'not important' (value 5), 'can't say' (value 6).

Comparing personnel by their current employment it would seem that for the Commission personnel (mainly posted at EU Delegations, some FPI staff) rules of the previous institutional affiliation matter considerably more, than for EEAS staff proper.

POLITICAL SIGNALS

Table 7: Political signals by PREVIOUS affiliation (source of recruitment) (Total n=130)

SIGNALS	Intergovernmental (MS and SGC) recruits (n=46)			Supra-national (COMMISSION) recruits (n=84)		
	(Very) important (%)	Somewhat important (%)	Less/not important (%)	(Very) important (%)	Somewhat important (%)	Less/not important (%)
European Council	83	13	4	75	19	6
Foreign Affairs Council	83	11	7	77	15	9
European Commission	77	10	13	83	13	5
European Parliament	53	22	24	72	22	6
'Big' MS	73	21	6	50	20	31
'Medium- sized' MS	33	52	15	36	33	31
'Small' MS	30	52	18	23	34	43
Domestic Government	19	25	55	20	11	69
Political level/ senior management	94	2	4	90	7	3
Direct hierarchy	94	2	4	90	7	3
International	23	43	34	27	40	33

Organizations						
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Table: Political signals PREVIOUS affiliation (Total n=130)

Original code list: 'Very important' (value 1), 'important' (value 2), 'somewhat important' (value 3), 'less important' (value 4), 'not important' (value 5), 'can't say' (value 6).

The highlighted (*in bold*) results above indicate a rather sharp difference when it comes to political orientation between the two staff-groups: former Commission staff is much more receptive towards signals from supra-national institutions, such as the European Commission and the European Parliament, than their counterparts recruited from the member states. The latter are paying slightly more attention to European Council and the FAC and significantly more attention to signals from the big member states. Less surprisingly for hierarchically structured organizations, the officials' sense of accountability and responsibility is most strongly developed towards the political leadership/senior management and their own direct superiors.

The relatively strong standing of the EP among former supranational officials can maybe be explained be the fact that over the last years the EP has come to be perceived as an advocate of the 'European cause' (Shore 2000). In spite of the earlier resistance to increased Parliamentary scrutiny and more vocal MEPs with regard to EU foreign policy, officials have maybe come to see the EP more as their 'natural ally' (Interview # 34) with regard to the MS.

These patterns are even more pronounced comparing EU officials' present affiliation, namely by employer. While those, working directly for the EEAS (EEAS and MS' seconded diplomats), are 'more intergovernmentally oriented', officials, working in EU external relations but employed by the Commission (serving either in EU Delegations in third countries or for the Commission services at the disposal at the HR/VP), are clearly more committed to their supranational overseers:

Table 8: Political signals by PRESENT affiliation (current job) (Total n=142)

	EEAS and MS staff (n=119)			COMMISSION staff (n=23)		
SIGNALS	(Very) important (%)	Somewhat important (%)	Less/not important %	(Very) important (%)	Somewhat important (%)	Less/not important %

European Council	79	18	3	63	16	21
Foreign Affairs Council	83	13	4	53	21	26
European Commission	78	15	7	95	0	5
European Parliament	65	25	10	70	5	25
'Big' MS	59	22	19	47	11	42
'Medium-sized' MS	34	45	21	32	21	47
'Small' MS	26	43	31	15	30	55
Domestic Government	19	19	61	15	0	85
Political level/ senior management	94	4	2	85	10	5
Direct hierarchy	95	4	1	91	9	0
International Organizations	24	43	33	35	30	35

Table: Political signals by PRESENT affiliation (Total n=142)

Original code list: 'Very important' (value 1), 'important' (value 2), 'somewhat important' (value 3), 'less important' (value 4), 'not important' (value 5), 'can't say' (value 6).

CONCERNS THAT MATTER IN DECISION MAKING

The same patterns show comparing the actual EEAS staff by source of recruitment: both recruitment cohorts keep their sensitivity for concerns that are emphasized by the different groups of personnel. Although overall, action orientation is directed towards the interests of the Union, some slight differences can be observed: With regard to concerns, Commission recruits tend to be more inward looking, focused on their own department, and less attuned to political/diplomatic and especially MS' concerns than intergovernmental recruits:

Table 9: Concerns by PREVIOUS affiliation (source of recruitment) (Total n= 147)

CONCERNS	Intergovernmental recruits (n=52)			Supranational recruits (n=95)		
	(Very) important (%)	Somewhat important (%)	Less/not important (%)	(Very) important (%)	Somewhat important (%)	Less/not important (%)
Political concerns	88	4	8	78	18	4
Diplomatic concerns	90	4	6	87	9	4
Interest of unit/division	75	17	8	83	13	4

Interest of DG/service	73	17	10	84	13	3
Interest of the EU	90	4	6	95	4	1
Interest of own MS	25	14	61	5	9	86

Table: Concerns and considerations by PREVIOUS affiliation (Total n=147)

Original code list: 'Very important' (value 1), 'important' (value 2), 'somewhat important' (value 3), 'less important' (value 4), 'not important' (value 5), 'can't say' (value 6).

Former Commission personnel tends to be slightly more Community-minded and much less attuned (by 20%) to relations with their MS of origin (bold). In addition, the intergovernmental recruits are overall more politically oriented, and feel less strongly accountable to the supra-national organs, represented here by their service (the EEAS) or unit, or the 'interest of the EU' in general.

CONTACT PATTERNS

Comparing such behavioural orientations with the contact patterns and lines of conflicts and cleavages (which cannot be reported exhaustively in this paper), we see that the EEAS is as much or even more and inward-looking institution as the Commission (see Kassim *et al.* 2013). With regard to internal functioning and vertical and horizontal relations between departments and staff, the EEAS has many of the characteristics of the core-executive.

Table 10: Contacts in- and outside the organization by PRESENT affiliation (current job)

CONTACTS	EEAS and MS staff (n=125)			Commission staff (n=24)		
	(Very) frequently (%)	Occasionally (%)	Rarely/ almost never %	(Very) frequently (%)	Occasionally (%)	Rarely/ almost never (%)
<i>Contacts within own organization</i>	45.8 <i>(more)</i>	36.1 <i>(same)</i>	18.1 <i>(less)</i>	30.9 <i>(more)</i>	51.5 <i>(same)</i>	17.6 <i>(less)</i>
Colleagues within unit/division	96	4	0	83	13	4
Head of unit/division	86	13	1	50	21	29
Director	47	30	23* (10 % almost never)	21	25	54* (42% almost never)
Other departments	68	25	7	37	25	37
Other institutions	51	33	16	25	17	58
Commissioner	4	7	89*	17	8	75*

/political head of entity			(56% “almost never”)			(63% “almost never”)
International organizations	33	36	31	54	29	17
Domestic ministries and agencies	22	36	42	71	21	8
Ministries/agencies of other EU MS	34	29	37	58	13	29
Ministries/agencies third countries	38	23	40	67	13	20
NGOs	31	28	41	79	13	8
Business industry	12	25	63	17	33	50
Universities/research institutes	14	41	45	13	33	54
Other (media, civil society etc)	22	35	43	54	15	31

Table: Contact patterns (Total n=149)

Original code list: ‘Very frequently’ (value 1), ‘frequently’ (value 2), ‘somewhat frequently’ (value 3), ‘rarely’ (value 4), ‘almost never’ (value 5), ‘can’t say’ (value 6).

To some extent these differences seem to even out if one compares EEAS employees by source of recruitment. The observation can be made that contact patterns (at least the outward directed contacts) are more evenly distributed for the two groups. This observation indicates that if the SNDs stay long enough with the EEAS the effects of socialization might render the two staff groups more similar over time.

Table 11: Contacts in- and outside the organization by PREVIOUS affiliation (source of recruitment)

CONTACTS	Intergovernmental recruits (n=38)			Supranational recruits (n=98)		
	(Very) frequently (%)	Occasionally (%)	Rarely/ almost never %	(Very) frequently (%)	Occasionally (%)	Rarely/ almost never (%)
<i>Contacts within own organization</i>	45.8 (more)	36.1 (same)	18.1 (less)	30.9 (more)	51.5 (same)	17.6 (less)
Colleagues within unit/division	95	5	0	95	4	1
Head of unit/division	83	14	1	80	15	5
Director	56	33	11	38	30	32
Other	63	34	3	61	24	15

departments						
Other institutions	42	47	11	48	26	26
Commissioner /political head of entity	17	6	78 (44% “almost never”)	8	8	84 (62% “almost never”)
International organizations	32	39	29	37	34	30
Domestic ministries and agencies	27	35	38	31	33	37
Ministries/agencies of other EU MS	34	29	37	58	13	29
Ministries/agencies third countries	42	24	34	43	19	38
NGOs	23	40	37	45	20	35
Business industry	11	16	72	15	31	54
Universities/research institutes	16	37	47	13	43	43
Other (media, civil society etc)	15	39	46	30	30	40

Table: Contact patterns (Total n=136)

Original code list: ‘Very frequently’ (value 1), ‘frequently’ (value 2), ‘somewhat frequently’ (value 3), ‘rarely’ (value 4), ‘almost never’ (value 5), ‘can’t say’ (value 6).

The core difference thus lies in role conception and action orientation of officials, somewhat divided according to patterns of loyalty and allegiance to the institutional logics of their organizations of provenance. In such a systematic manner it would, at least to me, seem that this is a rather unique feature in the institutional landscape of the EU. This may be related to the political salience or the high politics nature of foreign and security policy, a traditional stronghold of national interests and prerogatives.

Conclusions

The EEAS is path-breaking in different respects, in its hybridity with regard to staffing and organizational structure, but also in combining different sectors of government, in coopting and supplementing national diplomatic capacities and in further Europeanizing foreign and security policy. Arguably the EEAS is better prepared to face the EU’s external challenges than the traditional

ways of conducting national foreign policies. To some, “the EEAS may simply represent an avant-garde form of a diplomatic agency fitting the new environment more than any of the established diplomatic services and foreign ministries” (Bátora 2013: 610). As a new organization the EEAS enters the densely populated field of diplomacy, imports new ideas, and practices from a variety of contexts. Its conflicting inherent institutional logics may very well develop an innovative potential, as the salience of existing logics gain or lose currency. As other organizations in particularly prestigious and value-laden environments, as is the diplomatic scene, it may be more targeted by both stakeholders and competitors to adopt and adhere to one particular logic, rather than another.

Designing and executing foreign policy and maintaining diplomatic relationships with third countries have historically been a prerogative of national executives. This article has examined how these prerogatives may have become challenged with the rise of administrative capacities within the EU’s new foreign affairs administration. The ambition of this study has been to empirically assess which decision premises are pre-dominant in the EEAS and which logics personnel follows, when making decisions. The pre-dispositions for action have been analyzed according to variation source of recruitment and type of employment of EEAS staff.

The survey and interview data reported confirms that overall officials follow different institutional logics in their decision-making. Altogether, EEAS officials are primarily inward-looking officials abiding core roles and rules of the EEAS, however with the different tendencies between different groups of staff. Thus the hybrid organizational structure of the EEAS and the background of officials in different types of employment (temporary vs. permanent) and from distinct sources of recruitment (intergovernmental vs. supranational) may sustainably impact the degree of independence, conceived as actor-level autonomy, in EU’s new foreign affairs administration.

However, comparing data on contact patterns but also (although to a lesser extent) receptivity to political signals of staff between present and previous affiliation, an assimilation effect can be detected. From this, it may be speculated whether the engagement of different recruits in a common

practice of EU diplomacy over time leads to socialization and decrease of differences. The two layers of comparisons between two groups of staff and according to previous and present affiliation, to some extent, have overlapping populations that are differently grouped. The data of the 2013 survey is, of course, static. So, one has to be careful with making statements which would actually require time-series studies. However, correlation effects seem to decrease, and differences between the groups become less pronounced if the focus is put on the original affiliation of EEAS staff, as opposing MS and SGC to Commission-recruits.

Another more straight-forward interpretation would maybe object that these differences between inter-group comparisons are due to formal organizational structures and rules, which are distinct between EEAS and COM, prescribing different roles to officials working in different organizations. So, people are supposed to have different action orientations and behave differently. However this does not account for a generally more IG-leaning attitude of SNDs, when it comes to signals and concerns.

The EEAS is indeed a hybrid and compound organization composed of different groups of staff having different decision-making premises and action orientations. Whilst the present organizational affiliation provides the strongest of these premises and orientations, the different sources of recruitment, characterized by different institutional logics indeed influence the decision-making behaviour of officials. Supranational recruits tend to be more inward-looking, abiding by the rules and sensitive to signals and concerns by their organizations and organizational sub-units (department, division or unit). Intergovernmental recruits have a propensity to include more of the inputs from MS and/or the intergovernmental institutions (Council, European Council).

Ideally, conducting a time-series study with a similar survey design at later stages of the EEAS' development would provide the opportunity to compare these patterns with the next cohorts of MS-diplomats and reveal consistencies and changes over time that allow for better founded analysis and prediction of trends and tendencies.

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ANNEX 1: Research instruments and data sets

After conducting a series of elite interviews with foreign policy makers during 2011 and 2012, an online and paper-based survey study among EU officials (including seconded staff from national foreign ministries), was designed to gather data on contact patterns, rules of loyalty and accountability, importance of political signals and professional concerns, conflicts and cleavages, and changes in the work situation of officials. Both interviews and survey were designed as two complementary instruments for the empirical research on the EEAS.

Based on an interview guide, three rounds of semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted, during 2 field-visits to Brussels, face-to-face with HQ officials; and one series of interviews over the phone with diplomats in EU-Delegations. Building on data and insights gained from 47 interviews, the survey questionnaire was intended to follow-up and deepen the understanding of officials role perception, loyalty and allegiance, contact and communication patterns as well as conflicts and cleavage structure, supplemented by questions on institutional ambiguity and work situation. The questionnaire was designed as a blend of standardized and open questions, gathering some basic biographical information on affiliation and function (Q1-3), moving to questions on previous and present work situations (Q4-6), the interviewee's opinions on the organization of new service, its ways of working and its organizational culture (Q7-11), collecting data on contact patterns, allegiance, concerns and considerations, as well as political signals and sources of political input (Q11-17), and ending on some demographic questions.

I will describe the data set in more detail here below:

Institutional affiliation and provenance

With regard to their organizational provenance, most officials in the survey (74 persons, 41 %) were recruited (transferred) from DG RELEX, 19 respondents (11%) from the Council Secretariat General (SGC), and 24 respondents (13%) from MS Ministries of Foreign Affairs. The 24 seconded national

diplomats in the survey come from 18 different member states. While most of the supranational personnel (Commission) came from DG RELEX, 21% of the respondents were working for other Commission DGs before 2011, i.e. Aid and Cooperation (AIDCO), Development (DEV), TRADE, and Enlargement (ELARG):

Table A.1: Source of recruitment supranational (COM, EP) and intergovernmental sources (MS, SGC) (N=184)

	Previous affiliation (%)	Present affiliation (%)
EEAS	-	75
Council SG	10.6	-
COM DG RELEX	41.1	-
COM DEVCO	-	12.5
COM DG AIDCO	8.3	-
COM DG ELARG	0.6	2.2
COM DG TRADE	1.1	1.6
COM DG DEV	12.2	-
MS MFA	13.3	2.2
EP	1.1	1.1
Other	11.7	5.4
N	180	184

Table: Source of recruitment and present affiliation (total N=184)

For the sample of 680 eligible respondents the response rate is thus close to 30 per cent. The data is reasonably representative with regard to officials' previous affiliation, geographical balance (country of origin), place of assignment, educational background, as well as age and sex. With regard to nationality the survey could gather nationals of 23 different MS, with the 'bigger' MS overall more strongly represented than the smaller ones. Also in terms of place of assignment the distribution of respondents is almost equally balanced between officials working at headquarter (52%) and EU-Delegations to third countries (47%).

Distribution of respondents by member state

Table A.2 Number of respondents from the survey and interview study, by MS as compared to EEAS population

MS (By category)	Survey respondents	Interview partners	Total	EEAS population (March 2013)	
	(All)	(AD and SND)		(AD)	(AST)
BE	14	1	15	60	166
BG	-	-	-	12	4
CZ	3	1	4	23	11
DK	2	-	2	23	16
DE	22	9	31	84	42
EE	1	2	3	12	8
IE	2	-	2	22	14
EL	1	-	1	33	26
ES	5	2	6	81	41
FR	12	5	17	12	56
IT	13	3	16	98	49
CY	-	-	-	4	1
LV	2	-	2	10	3
LT	-	1	1	10	5
LU	-	-	-	3	-
HU	4	2	6	21	10
MT	1	-	1	8	4
NL	10	1	11	30	25
AT	8	8	16	28	11
PL	4	-	4	38	23
PT	1	-	1	27	28
RO	2	1	3	13	16
SI	2	-	2	6	9
SK	1	1	2	8	4
FI	5	1	6	22	18
SE	7	3	10	35	28
UK	9	4	13	68	31
Not specified	53	1 (NO)	18	-	-
TOTAL (N)	184	47	231	899	649

Distribution of respondents by hierarchical level

Many seconded national diplomats have entered the service at the higher if not top hierarchical levels. However, as can be shown, both groups of survey respondents, intergovernmental recruits and supranational recruits are almost equally represented at the different hierarchical levels, with a intended overall survey bias for higher (management, diplomatic and political) levels of hierarchy.

Table A.3: Task/level by PREVIOUS affiliation (n=172)

	Intergovernmental recruits (%)	Supranational recruits (%)
Political/diplomatic	58.3	51.8
Managerial/administrative	36.7	45.5
Technical/Operational	5	2.7
N	60 (100%)	112 (100%)

A second explanatory factor for differences within staff groups with regard to contact patterns and receptivity, concerns and conflicts could be linked to the place of assignment of officials. Indeed, there is a slight imbalance in the distribution of the two groups over the different workplaces: IG recruits among the survey respondents are slightly (by 10%) more likely to be employed at delegations. This however corresponds to the EEAS population, where the overall share of MS diplomats is 32.4% of AD level officials, whereas in Delegations diplomats amount to 45.4% of staff (EEAS 2014).

Table A.4: Place of Assignment by PREVIOUS affiliation (n=169)

	Intergovernmental recruits (%)	Supranational recruits (%)
Headquarters	61	49,1
Delegations	39	50.1
N	59 (100%)	110 (100%)

Some limitations do however apply: The study does not account for a potential self-selection bias, the likelihood that more Europe-oriented MS diplomats would more frequently apply for (and be successful in) the selection process for EEAS jobs. In the same vein, I cannot account for pre-socialization of staff, i.e. whether and how their Europe-mindedness has been formed by education, social and professional background. As for the background variables (used as controls) in the survey (age, gender, education) no consistent correlation patterns could be detected, with the exception of a weak relationship between education and role orientation, however mostly below statistical significance. One reason probably is that practically all officials in the sample were highly educated, variation thus rather low.

One methodological point, concerning the measurement of autonomy in public administrations, should be addressed: why would we care about officials' perceptions of their autonomy and behavioural discretion. The answer is that the purpose of my survey was to find out about autonomy of the EEAS at the actor-level and was looking for indicators of officials' decision-making behavior. The concept of bureaucratic autonomy is not neatly defined in literature (Kelemen 2005: 174; Verschuere 2006). A working definition applied is that 'autonomy is about discretion, or the extent to which [an organization] can decide itself about matters that it considers important' (Verhoest et al. 2010: 18-19). Whereas most literature on the autonomy of international bureaucracies assesses autonomy by considering their *de jure* formal-legal design (e.g. Gilardi 2008; Hammond and Knott 1996; Maor 2007), far less attention has been devoted to studying the *de facto* or 'real-world autonomy' (Maggetti and Koen 2014: 245) of international bureaucracies. This article examines the *de facto* 'real-life' autonomy of the EEAS by *assessing actor-level* variables, i.e. the decision-making behaviour, role perceptions and institutional allegiances of the EEAS personnel (Henökl and Trondal 2013). The autonomy of the EEAS is thus assessed by the behavioural perceptions reported by EEAS officials. In the formulation and blend of questions, I was guided by Sowa and Selden (2003: 703) who recommend "an individual level-measure [...], one that captures how much discretion individual administrators perceive themselves as having in the operation of their duties". More recently, also Jackson (2014) or Yesilkagit and Van Thiel (2012) confirmed the relevance of perceptual data for assessing administrative discretion and *de facto* or 'real life' autonomy in public organizations, arguing that autonomy has an interactive dimension and only affects administrative behavior when it is perceived to be present.