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THE NEW EU DIPLOMACY:  
LEARNING TO ADD VALUE

Josep M. Lloveras Soler



**EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE, FLORENCE**  
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## **Abstract**

The European External Action Service (EEAS) which came into existence on 1st January 2011 has the potential to bring coherence and visibility to the external action of the European Union (EU). It could go beyond, giving new impetus to the Union's external action and contributing to the emergence of an EU foreign policy. But it could also end up as a mere juxtaposition of previously existing organizations and policies with uncertain added value for the Union. This paper looks at the EEAS from a functional perspective and in the context of a nascent EU diplomacy. It analyzes how training can contribute towards fulfilling the EEAS objectives and in nurturing a new EU diplomacy. It proposes a training approach built around three poles – knowledge, skills and attitudes- and three levels – preparatory, pre-posting and career-long training – and presents the main parameters and options for implementation.

## **Keywords**

European External Action Service, European diplomatic training, EU diplomacy

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## 1. Introduction\*

There is a shortage of academic research on diplomacy in general and EU diplomacy in particular, and this shortage is notable in the field of diplomatic training<sup>1</sup>.

The literature on the European External Action Service (EEAS) began about 10 years ago, although its precursors can be found as long ago as the European Political Cooperation of 1970. It gathered momentum in the first years of this century in the context of the Convention on the Future of Europe which prepared the Constitutional Treaty. However, when this initiative stalled in 2005, following the French and Dutch referenda, the subject was put aside and returned to the agenda only in 2009, following the second Irish referendum and the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty. Since then it has generated continued attention, coupled with high expectations of the new service.

The creation of the EEAS has been viewed as one of the main innovations of the Lisbon Treaty. It has been hailed as a unique opportunity to bring coherence to the Union's various external actions and policies and to raise the profile and visibility of the EU as a world player. From a legal point of view, however, it does not add new responsibilities to the Union in the area of foreign policy, or alter the basic division of roles in this respect amongst its players. It does not represent any transfer of sovereignty from Member States (MS) to the Union, as declarations 13 and 14 annexed to the Lisbon Treaty explicitly recall<sup>2</sup>. From a functional point of view it does not add new elements either, with the notable exception of an integration and coordination role, explicitly mentioned in the Treaty.

For the less ambitious, the EEAS represents simply a more rational and effective coordination mechanism, aimed at bringing closer together policies and resources hitherto scattered across different players. Those that considered the previous system sufficiently functional may even suspect that EEAS could become a 'solution in search of a problem' (Smith 2010). For some, the EEAS sets the basis for a clearer external representation system, capable of projecting a more identifiable and coherent image of the Union in the world, but others downplay this potential<sup>3</sup>.

For the more ambitious the EEAS can constitute a first step towards further integration of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), including the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) and the Union's other external policies, traditionally referred to as Community

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<sup>1</sup> "Diplomacy is a neglected, almost obscure subject within contemporary academic research, and its practice has not been adapted to the transformed environment in which it must operate" Copeland, p 2.

<sup>2</sup> "The new provisions do not affect the responsibilities of Member States for the formulation or conduct of their foreign policy, nor their national representation in third countries and international organizations" (Declaration 13). "The new provisions will not affect the existing legal basis, responsibilities and powers of the Member States in relation to the formulation and conduct of their foreign policy, their national diplomatic services, their relation with third countries and their participation in international organizations, referring explicitly to their membership of the UN Security Council" (Declaration 14).

<sup>3</sup> "I have problems explaining that an Estonian or a Lithuanian or a Greek representative of the EU mission can represent Czech interests in Namibia", Vaclav Klaus addressing students at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies on 23/09/2010

policies. This could eventually lead to a true EU foreign and security policy, seen by many as a condition necessary to avoid the EU falling into irrelevance (Solana 2010). Under this perspective the EEAS could be viewed politically as a foreign service in search of a foreign policy, organizationally as a structure in search of a strategy, or spiritually as a body in search of a soul.

It is still too early to tell whether the EEAS will succeed in becoming an effective coordination and representation mechanism, or evolve even further into an instrument in support of a nascent EU foreign policy. This paper argues that a positive answer to both questions will crucially depend on finding adequate solutions for learning and training. These will be presented as a precondition to unleash the full potential of the EEAS and bring added value.

The paper looks first at the political and institutional background of the new service. It continues with an examination of the context in which it will operate, as presented by the evolving nature of diplomacy in general and an emerging EU diplomacy in particular. It then considers the functions and structure of EEAS and the resulting challenges with implications for learning and training. Different approaches and lessons learned in diplomatic training practice in Member States and EU institutions are then reviewed. This leads to the recommendation of training parameters with a portfolio approach, i.e. recognizing that different objectives and target populations will require different solutions. Lastly, some strategic options are proposed to implement the new system.

The work is based not only on interviews, readings, and comments received on a preparatory reflection note, but also on the author's practical experience in the field of external relations. It benefited from the Conference "Learning and Training Challenges for a new EU Diplomacy" organized at the European University Institute, Florence, by the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies (RCSAS) within its Global Governance Programme<sup>4</sup>.

The term "EU diplomacy" is used here to refer to the European External Action Service (central services in Brussels and Delegations in the fields) and refers principally to the personnel who appear in the official diplomatic lists, though by extension it may refer to other civil servants. The term EU "diplomatic training" is understood in a broad sense, to include the main forms and levels of professional training required, not limited to traditional contents or formats of diplomatic training.

The paper argues for a learning approach (as opposed to a training-only approach) which implies changes for the individual as well as the organization and is based on a close integration of training and management.

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<sup>4</sup> My appreciation is extended to L. Francescon, T. Klaar, M. M. Leinonen, D. O'Sullivan, C. Ruiz Serrano, and S. Zervoudaki at the EEAS, N. Jardine, G. Ruiz Calavera and D. Walker at the European Commission, G. Avery, formerly of the European Commission, R. Galvez Via, and N. Pascual de la Parte at the Council Secretariat, W. Lehmann of the European Parliament, Ambassadors P. Bernard and D. Gowan, various people at the EUI and, in particular, S. Bartolini, M. Cremona, P. Culpepper, C. Lavallée, M. Del Panta, M. Maduro, B. Van Boeckel and P. Vennesson, also to P. Demaret and S. Gstöhl at the College of Europe and to all those that participated at the EUI conference on Learning and Training Challenges for a New EU Diplomacy in 2010 (see <http://www.eui.eu/SeminarsAndEvents/Index.aspx?eventid=60883>) including J. Borrell, M.A. Moratinos, F. Nelli-Feroci, P. Skytte Christoffersen and J. Batora.

## **2. The background**

The creation of a ‘double-hatted’ High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy who is also Vice President of the European Commission (HRVP) (TEU Art 18) is a key innovation brought by the Lisbon Treaty. The ultimate objective is to improve the Union’s understanding of and relationship with the broader world in order to improve its influence. This is in turn a precondition to promote EU values and interests and to better protect the citizens of the Union (TEU art. 3.5). The more immediate aim is to increase the coherence and visibility of the European Union’s external policies (TEU Art 21.3), itself part of a broader effort to ensure greater coherence across the Union’s institutions and policies in general. But this instrumental objective should not dilute the ultimate aim.

Article 18 also gives responsibility to the HRVP for presiding the Foreign Affairs Council. Therefore, Lady Ashton, chosen to fill the post, assumes three previously distinct roles: that of High Representative (though not Secretary General of the Council) previously covered by J. Solana, that of European Commissioner for External Relations and that of President of the Foreign Affairs Council. Any of these could constitute in itself a full time job, but there is a fourth one: to assure overall responsibility for coherence across external policies. The latter is not only the result of the HRVP’s position as “primus inter pares” amongst the Commission’s Vice-Presidents but, explicitly, an obligation stated in TEU art. 18.4. It is, therefore, not surprising that the job has been considered by many as an impossible mission.

The Treaty establishes a European External Action Service (EEAS), under the authority of the HRVP, to assist her in her tasks (TEU Art 27.3). Since her tasks are so complex, it is clear that a heavy burden, as described above, falls also on the service. It could be argued that bringing together under the same roof the different jobs mentioned would in itself ensure coordination and policy coherence. This would be a simplification, as mere juxtaposition, in the absence of integration systems, does not guarantee synergies. There is, moreover, an explicit obligation of sincere cooperation between the Union and its Member States (MS) also enshrined in the Treaty (TEU Art 4.3) which includes the EEAS.

Following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2009 a number of steps were taken for the creation of the service. An intense political “quadrilogue” involving the HRVP, European Parliament, Council and Commission found a good balance between different positions and interests, reflecting the new political equilibrium emerging from the Treaty with an enhanced role for the European Parliament (EP). This resulted in a set of key parameters for the EEAS which were endorsed by the Council in the form of a decision on its creation (hereinafter referred to as the Decision)<sup>5</sup>. The Parliament approved the initial 2010 budget and allowed the needed revisions to the staff and financial regulations, which were endorsed by the Council. Following top management appointments from October 2010, the EEAS was officially launched in December 1<sup>st</sup> 2010 and became operational as of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2011 with the transfer of civil servants from Commission and Council Secretariat<sup>6</sup>.

The EEAS should facilitate coordination between the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), including the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP), on the one hand, and the Union’s external policies and external dimensions of internal policies, on the other. It does not alter, however, the different decision-making procedures applicable: the intergovernmental

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<sup>5</sup> Council Decision establishing the organization and functioning of the European External Service (2010/427/EU) of 26 July 2010.

<sup>6</sup> 1.114 civil servants have been transferred from the Commission (585 from DG Relex, 436 from Delegations and 93 from DG Development), 436 from the Council and 118 new posts created, bringing the total to 1.668. There are 2034 other posts in delegations attached to the EEAS, mainly in administration functions, bringing total EEAS staff to about 3.700.

method for the former, and the Community method for the latter. Similarly the implementation of CFSP/CSDP remains under the responsibility of the HRVP and MS, while the Union's external policies continue to be implemented by the Commission. The double-hatting is a creative, though complex design, which should facilitate coordination but does not eliminate the potential for tension between the two areas. In this sense the EEAS does not represent a big bang but the beginning of a process (Solana 2010). Ultimately the capacity to build bridges and smooth strains will depend on political will, leadership and human and professional capacities.

According to the Decision, the EEAS is a functionally autonomous service, separate from the Commission and the Council. It is legally and functionally more than an agency but less than an institution, except in budgetary terms and, although it has no legal personality, its creation is not without legal consequences (Van Voren 2010). It is charged with assisting not only the HRVP, but also the President of the European Council (himself another major creation of the Treaty, invested with an external representation role), the President of the European Commission, and the European Parliament, each in their respective tasks in the field of external policy<sup>7</sup>. This central position within the EU institutional architecture, symbolized by the selection of the 'Triangle' building for its headquarters in Brussels (close and equidistant between Council and Commission and not far away from Parliament), raises the need for close inter-institutional communication and coordination. This is most obvious between the EEAS and the Commission, as the Decision explicitly establishes<sup>8</sup>.

Success of the EEAS will largely depend on its capacity to cooperate with others, including MS diplomatic services, Council Secretariat and Commission. This is indeed part and parcel of the obligation of sincere cooperation. Particularly relevant in this connection is the mixed composition of the EEAS: made up of civil servants coming from the Commission, Council and MS diplomatic services and, from 2013, from the European Parliament and other EU institutions as well. This heterogeneous team will have to represent, defend and further EU values, interests and policies in the world. If well-managed, diversity can constitute an asset, but otherwise it can become a liability. The outcome will hinge on the ability of EEAS to build an "esprit de corps", a genuinely European identity, and a distinctive corporate culture.

The European Parliament was already sensitive a decade ago to the training needs of what was referred to as a "common Community Diplomacy"<sup>9</sup>. Some MS shared this concern<sup>10</sup>. Training requirements in this context were equally examined by academics (Monar 2000), (Duke 2002). The working group on external relations within the European Convention preparing the Constitution made, by the end of 2002, a detailed proposal for EEAS. This proposal included the creation of a European diplomatic academy which, given its importance, is fully quoted here:

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<sup>7</sup> Council Decision , art 2.2

<sup>8</sup> Council Decision, art 3.2

<sup>9</sup> The Report of the European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights and Common Security and Defence Policy A5-0210/2000 adopted on 24/7/2000 (Galeote Report), proposed:

"That a **College of European Diplomacy** be set up to ensure that Community officials involved in external activities both at the Commission (in the delegations and the RELEX DGs) and the Council (DG for External Relations at the Council Secretariat and the Strategic Planning and Early Warning Unit) are given not only technical training in Community policies, but also full-blown diplomatic and international relations training; the College of European Diplomacy could also be open to Member States (MS) wishing to provide their diplomats with further training and provide training for diplomats of applicant countries as part of their preparation for accession, as well as study, research and training programmes in cooperation with European university bodies."

<sup>10</sup> A parallel reflection was conducted among Member States, using the term academy instead of college. France and Germany tabled in 1999, at an informal meeting of the Council working group on training, a non-paper proposing the creation of a **European Diplomatic Academy**. Some delegations, however, thought it too ambitious and the project was scaled down to the more limited, **European Diplomatic Programme**

“It is clear to many that an effective external action based on the coordination between the various European actors of foreign relations depends inevitably on personal relations, common experiences and mutual knowledge. In this sense, training appears as an extremely effective tool to build up those personal relations at an early stage of a diplomatic career. Training also allows to enhance a common knowledge of the different national backgrounds and interests and the diverse administrative cultures and therefore, to **create a common European administrative culture and a "spécificité du métier diplomatique européen"**. Diplomats and other civil servants not belonging to the external service of the Member States, and EC and Council officials for external relations are the natural addressees of the following proposals:

**A European Diplomatic Academy (EDA)** should be created. As a first step, training of European diplomats should rely upon a network of European diplomatic academies, institutes, University centers and other diplomatic training related bodies to be established. The European Commission should play a coordination role in the network.

An inventory should be made of the existing resources in terms of training programmes offered by diplomatic schools and institutes and other diplomatic training related bodies, including those offered at the Community level, like the European Diplomatic Programme and the Association Programme. A coordination of training programmes should be established. Some studies evidence that communitarian chapters represent an average of only 10% of the programmes of access to the diplomatic career, and that the differences in the situation among the Member States and the candidate countries are enormous.

A common foundation diplomatic programme (“programme common de base”) should be developed in order to achieve a basic level of harmonization around some minimum required European contents. This common foundation programme should include a modular approach, a lifelong learning approach, and a European approach. E-learning mechanisms should be developed, building on the experience of the Canadian Foreign Service or the Mediterranean Diplomatic Academy to give an adequate response to the enhanced responsibilities and increasing political role of the Delegations personnel<sup>11</sup>.

The above proposal was not followed, as some MS felt it could imply a transfer of sovereignty to the Union<sup>12</sup>. Significantly, the idea resurfaced in 2010 in the report to the European Council by the Reflection Group on the Future of the EU 2030, which states that “a European diplomatic academy would contribute to a sense of common diplomatic culture”<sup>13</sup>.

It follows that diplomatic training at the EEAS needs to be considered, in the first place, in its political dimension. Clearly, whenever a permanent training institution is suggested, the question of a physical seat comes to mind, which is perceived as impinging on sovereignty. Moreover, diplomatic training presents a strong potential as an identity builder. It is therefore

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<sup>11</sup> Secretariat of the European Convention, “*Towards the establishment of a common European Diplomacy*”, Working Group VII External relations, Working document 55, 3/12/2002

<sup>12</sup> These sensitivities are reflected in the already quoted declarations 13 and 14 annexed to the final act of the Lisbon Treaty.

<sup>13</sup> “The impact of the EU’s external action will in large measure depend on its ability to adapt to the many challenges it will face in the run up to 2030. Securing the EU’s economic strength and internal cohesion will therefore be an indispensable condition for the EU to be able to project its power externally. But when devising its external position, the process of policy formulation must not only be driven by events. There is an urgent need for a common European strategic concept. This concept should pull the EU’s diplomatic, military, trade, and development policies together with the external dimensions of its common economic policies (EMU, energy, transport, etc). Only by merging all its available tools will the Union be able to act as a transformative power and contribute to reshaping the rules of global governance. By means of a White Paper, which would be regularly updated, the strategic concept would help to define the Union’s long-term priorities and become the reference framework for day-to-day external action. This could be done by setting up a European forecasting and analytical unit, as part of the European External Action Service and working in close cooperation with national centers under the principle of shared intelligence. Such a unit would help focus attention on the need to continuously revisit current policies. **In addition, a European diplomatic academy would contribute to a sense of common diplomatic culture**”.

natural that the Decision on EEAS takes up the issue in its article 6.12, which establishes the need to provide common training to its staff, building in particular on existing practices and structures at national and Union level. It also sets a deadline to take measures to this effect by mid-2011.

We should not end this chapter without a short reference to the economic background. The EEAS is born at a time of financial and economic crises with serious budgetary implications. Thus the Decision explicitly refers in its introduction to the need for cost-efficiency, budget-neutrality, avoiding unnecessary duplications of tasks, functions and resources with other structures and the use of all opportunities for rationalization. The EEAS has been granted over 100 additional posts to start with, but it is unlikely to get more, unless a more ambitious approach is adopted within the Union's new multi-annual framework from 2013<sup>14</sup>.

### 3. The specific challenges

#### 3.1 *The changing nature of diplomatic work*

The word diplomacy has been used to embrace concepts as diverse as foreign policy, negotiation, the external branch of a foreign service or personal qualities required, like the more guileful aspects of tact (Nicolson 1969 pp 3-4). The Oxford English Dictionary defines diplomacy as “the profession, activity or skill of managing international relations, typically by a country's representatives abroad”. Modern diplomacy has very much evolved since its birth in the Italian peninsula in the fifteenth century. The label diplomacy was created by Edmund Burke in 1796. Before it was known as negotiation, as Cardinal Richelieu defined it. France created a Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the early XVIII century under Louis XIV. The UK opened its foreign office in 1782 and the US its Department of State in 1789 (Berridge 1995). Information gathering, negotiation and communication were traditionally considered the key diplomatic functions (Neuman 2008). Smoothing frictions and representation and protecting own country citizens abroad have later been added to the list. The negotiation function has been increasingly transferred to the capitals due to growing technicalities, not least of an economic and legal nature, resulting in a rising role for headquarter specialists, often placed outside diplomacy itself. As a result, diplomats, while mostly remaining generalists, have often needed some specialization, geographic or thematic.

Fast developing information and communication technologies have provided new tools but also brought new challenges to traditional hierarchical lines and information flows. Commonly accepted categorizations (like east-west, north-south, first-second-and-third-world, center-periphery) have lost meaning while globalization has placed new themes at the top of the global governance agenda, like climate change, energy security, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, organized crime and international terrorism, to mention a few. Economic and trade realities also play a growing role in diplomatic work, which the financial and economic crises have further brought to the fore. This evolving environment has raised the professional requirements for the new diplomat to a very demanding level.

Late Ambassador Ernst Sucharipa defined the “new age” diplomat as one possessing:

- a pluralistic education
- linguistic skills
- patience to listen and observe
- proficiency in intercultural communication

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<sup>14</sup> Emerson and others advocate for a significant increase of EEAS resources in the new financial framework as part of a broader rationalization of EU diplomacy.

- sensitivity to socio-cultural differences
- familiarity with latest communications technologies
- ability to perform at ease in public
- free of elitism
- service orientation
- a high level of tolerance
- neither a "softy" nor the "elbow type"
- readiness for life-long learning
- resistance to stress, coolness in crises
- management skills
- ability to work in teams, collaborator instead of competitor
- a keen interest in global issues<sup>15</sup>.

It is remarkable that amongst the new qualities required most are untraditional, non-cognitive skills<sup>16</sup>. It is difficult, therefore, to find people that possess them concurrently. Hence, the need for thorough recruitment but also to fill the gaps by means of non-traditional forms of training.

With the growing power of the non-governmental sector and the media, public diplomacy is now also considered a fundamental part of diplomatic work (Gregory 2008). The growing importance of public opinion in international relations was already noticed by Lord Palmerston in the XIX century, who acknowledged that "opinions are stronger than armies and may in the end prevail against the bayonets of infantry, the force of artillery and the charges of cavalry". The term public diplomacy began to be used in the 1970's in the US, which currently has an Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. Most EU countries, Canada, India, Japan and several other countries have public diplomacy departments, as well as NATO and the UN. Today public diplomacy tops the diplomatic agenda in many countries and international organizations under different headings: information and communication, strategic communication, political communication, cultural diplomacy, perception management or, sometimes, simply propaganda.

Copeland (2009) considers that the new diplomat needs to combine the tools of the public diplomat with the classic qualities of guerrilla warfare: agility, adaptability, improvisation, self-sufficiency and popular support. He therefore coins the term "guerrilla diplomacy

The massive leak of US diplomatic cables by Wikileaks in November 2010, which is still spreading ripples around, presents new challenges to diplomacy that will take time to evaluate and digest. It underlines the tension between diplomatic discretion and secrecy on the one hand and public accountability on the other. It touches on the limits of what Nicolson defined as "democratic diplomacy". This author distinguishes foreign policy and diplomacy: the first subject to democratic control but not the second. He recalls that Woodrow Wilson, prophet of open diplomacy – "open covenants of peace, openly arrived at" – had to contradict his intentions in Versailles, where the treaty was openly publicized and even known in advance, but hardly openly arrived at. The dilemma remains unresolved and will need to be revisited.

Diplomats from MS, who have been facing this changing diplomatic environment for years, should in principle be better equipped in diplomatic skills (though not necessarily in political

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<sup>15</sup> in Sucharipa E, "21<sup>st</sup> Century Diplomacy", (1997) available at <http://textus.diplomacy.edu/campus/lms/pool>

For Nicolson the seven virtues of an ideal diplomat are: truthfulness, precision, calm, good temper, patience, modesty and loyalty.

<sup>16</sup> "Class, pedigree, and social status, once amongst the defining elements of the trade, have been eclipsed by personal and professional skills not easily acquired at Ivy League schools" (Copeland 2000) page 4.

ones as often assumed) than civil servants coming from the Commission or other EU institutions. Conversely, the latter may have a relative advantage in other areas. For instance, they will be naturally better informed about the EU in theory and in practice, may have more experience in managing personnel of different nationalities and in dialogue with civil society. Smoothing these differences and building common ground will be part of the training challenge.

### 3.2 The emerging EU diplomacy

EU diplomacy could be very broadly understood as the sum of diplomatic services of different EU MS, but this would hardly provide an operational definition for our purposes<sup>17</sup>. A functionally more accurate concept should be limited to MS diplomats working on CFSP/CSDP matters plus civil servants at the EEAS. Under this perspective EU diplomacy could be defined as the profession, activities and skills needed to manage EU-specific international relations and external actions, as distinct from those pertaining to individual MS, relying on the latter or the EEAS as appropriate. For our practical purposes, however, and as already mentioned, we need an even narrower definition: this will include the EEAS and its network of delegations only.

In spite of the evolving nature of diplomacy its “raison d’être” in the post-Westphalian order has remained the promotion of national interests. It seems therefore natural to find the most sovereignty-minded civil servants amongst diplomats and the military<sup>18</sup>. This begs the question whether the emergence of the European Union has already brought a new type of EU diplomacy or simply an additional layer to the national one. Although this debate has not produced a definite answer, the creation of the EEAS has already introduced a new dynamic which should result in the emergence of a new EU diplomacy<sup>19</sup>. The dilemma can further be put in the following terms: does diplomacy standardize the EEAS or does the EEAS contribute to the standardization of diplomacy?.<sup>20</sup> The answer may be finally found somewhere in between.

The conception of a common European interest in diplomacy can already be traced back to the late XVIII century in the face of the Napoleonic danger; it evolved in the XIX century into a European system that shattered completely in 1914 (Nicolson pp 36-37). The nature of national and European interests has been changing since the creation of the European Communities and is further evolving. “Apart from simple commercial competition within the EU and between member states, the weight of ‘pure’ national interests of individual member states in foreign affairs that are different to those of other member states, or which can be advanced without winning support at the EU level, has surely been declining as a function of the twin dynamics of European integration and globalization” (Emerson & others, p 18).

The emergence of an EU diplomacy since Westphalia till today has been the subject of a study with interesting insight on the formation of CFSP by Davis Cross (2007). It concludes: 1) that diplomats in Western Europe are agents of international cooperation, 2) that they have emerged as an epistemic community, capable of exercising agency, thus collectively pushing the boundaries of their autonomy and 3) that this was particularly determinant in the context of the formation of CFSP, which would have been impossible to establish without their intervention,

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<sup>17</sup> Emerson and others refer to 3.164 embassies, consulates and other mission in the 27 MS, with 93.912 staff and an annual cost of €7.529 million or over 15 times the EEAS budget. They propose their rationalization in view of the creation of the EEAS.

<sup>18</sup> This does not contradict the fact that when working in EU missions they normally show a remarkable capacity to assume EU interests.

<sup>19</sup> ‘It may be that CFSP still represents procedures without policy, yet the fact of daily collaboration is doubtless creating a European reflex which clearly provides a context for national foreign ministries action and an incentive to seek administrative and policy making synergies and cost-effectiveness....the EU’s enlarged scope in diplomacy may be interpreted as the basis towards an EU Foreign Service, despite the absence of any clearly expressed intention to move ahead in this direction’ in Hocking B (1999), ‘Foreign ministries: change and adaptation’ Basingstoke, Macmillan p 262. With the EEAS in place we are one step ahead.

<sup>20</sup> Presentation by Jozef Batora “Essential tools for the new EU diplomat” at the conference “Learning and training challenges for a new EU diplomacy” EUI, 6/12/2010 (unpublished).

as it was perceived by several EU statesman as heavily encroaching on state sovereignty. Common training is considered one of the key factors allowing the formation of such an epistemic community. These conclusions suggest that the EEAS could become a driver of EU foreign policy and that common training could play an important role therein.

Public diplomacy acquires particular importance in the context of the new EU diplomacy. This is very much related to the fact that the EU formulates its policy in public and that secrecy is inimical to its way of decision making<sup>21</sup>, thus raising the need for information and communication. It is also related to the ‘soft power’ approach of the EU, which requires persuasion<sup>22</sup>. Indeed, a notable dimension of EU diplomacy is its transformative nature as the EU is a normative power focusing on the promotion of its values and normative framework. This represents a departure from traditional diplomatic practice, based on the principle of non-intervention, enshrined in art. 41 of the Vienna Convention. Although intervention is hardly new, as it was already part of the diplomatic activity of the great powers during the cold war, it is most visible and explicit in the EU (most obviously in its enlargement and neighborhood policies). This transformative character calls for specific skills<sup>23</sup>.

The new EU diplomacy is also characterized by a heavy management component. Any diplomat with responsibility for a team is also a manager. In particular, Heads of Delegation and other EEAS civil servants, exercising direct responsibility over teams at headquarters or in the field, should be viewed as managers irrespective of the formal classification of their posts. In EU Delegations there is typically only one officially recognized management post, in the larger delegations two (including a Deputy) and, very exceptionally, three (including the Head of Administration)<sup>24</sup>. In practice, however, about one in ten posts involves management responsibilities, or five times the official number. At headquarters there is a closer correlation between actual and formal management posts as units are much smaller than delegations.

This places particular management responsibilities in the new EU diplomat, most obviously in Delegations, where daily life differs greatly from the often idealized view held by outsiders, and pressures are growing, not least in crisis situations. This presents particular challenges for persons who may join the EEAS as Heads of Delegation, without prior comparable management experience. But the management challenge will also be important at headquarters, particularly amongst senior management. The stated objective of a budget-neutral EEAS further raises demands on management. EU diplomatic training must therefore include management training as a core element, not an option, to turn the EU diplomat into a global manager<sup>25</sup>. This needs to begin with self-management, largely ignored so far.

Personnel seconded from national diplomatic services will in due course make up at least one-third of the EEAS, while being on temporary assignment. Turning national diplomats into European diplomats is neither automatic nor simple, because of the distinctive features mentioned. Moreover, the notion of European diplomacy touches on questions of identity,

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<sup>21</sup> Presentation by Marise Cremona “What does an EU diplomat need to know about the EU” at the conference “Learning and training challenges for a new EU diplomacy” EUI, 6/12/2010 (unpublished).

<sup>22</sup> This does not mean that the EU has been particularly successful in information and communication in the past.

<sup>23</sup> Batora argues that this calls for transformative skills like change management, society craft, governance and democratic responsiveness.

<sup>24</sup> Heads of Administration posts are in practically all cases covered by Assistants (AST Officials) . Given the size and complexity of delegations such posts should be filled by Administrators (AD officials), so as to be able of assuming heavier human resources management responsibilities, thus liberating the Head of Delegation for political work.

<sup>25</sup> For Poul-Skytte Christoffersen the two training priorities for the EEAS should be: 1) management, 2) public diplomacy. Mentioned at the conference “Learning and training challenges for a new EU diplomacy” EUI, 6/12/2010.

loyalty and allegiance<sup>26</sup>. It will require socialization, including through training. A new reading of contemporary European history from an EU integration perspective would be of great value to facilitate a common EU identity and understanding<sup>27</sup>.

#### 4. Roles and structure of the EEAS

The Treaty is vague at defining the EEAS tasks, leaving it to the Decision. But the latter is not more explicit and in its article 2 reverts to art. 18 and 27 of the TEU. In the Decision the structure of the service is defined in art. 4, in respect of top positions in the central administration, and in art. 5 concerning delegations. Also an annex lists the services and functions to be transferred to the service. On these bases it is possible to identify the key roles of the EEAS. However, its functioning is still surrounded by considerable uncertainty and will only be clarified over time. In the meantime experimentation through trial and error will play an important part.

The EEAS can find significant advantage if it capitalizes on its autonomy, newness and relatively small size compared to EU institutions in order to exploit flexibility. This means that the new service can utilize the institutional experience acquired across the EU, while avoiding mistakes and can mobilize existing resources without duplicating them. At the same time it is not bound by existing procedures and practices, beyond the accountability obligations defined in the Decision. It can therefore minimize bureaucracy and innovate, not least in the field of training. The Decision opens the door to early adaptation by establishing that the HRVP will provide by mid-2013 a review of the organization and functioning of the service that may lead to a revision (art 13.3).

The roles of EEAS can be defined as follows:

##### 4.1 Understanding the world

The first role of the EEAS must be seen in its connection with the wider world<sup>28</sup>. This extroversion is in line with its ultimate transformative objective. A vision of the EEAS as a mere coordination mechanism would lead to a technocratic, EU-centered service that would greatly limit its potential. The HRVP needs the EEAS in the first place to support her in policy formulation and implementation, since she is expected to contribute by her proposals to the development of CFSP and CSDP (TEU art 18). This necessitates understanding of the outside world in terms of geopolitical areas, key global issues and security threats as identified in the European Security Strategy<sup>29</sup>. It requires intellectual curiosity, open-mindedness and an understanding of the historic, social, economic and cultural background. This should allow for high quality political and economic intelligence that can provide input for a permanently updated vision of EU interests and strategic partners.

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<sup>26</sup> “You might expect foreign ministries, whose very *raison d’être* is to promote national interest, to resist the notion of common European interest or wider international ones” Foreword by Chris Patten (2002) to Hocking B, Spence D (eds), *Foreign Ministries in the European Union: integrating diplomats*, Basingstoke (England); New York, Palgrave, Macmillan. A number of diplomats coming from MS have argued, however, that the loyalty issue should not be exaggerated and that a good professional diplomat has the ability to adjust in this respect.

<sup>27</sup> Institutions like the European University Institute could greatly contribute in this area.

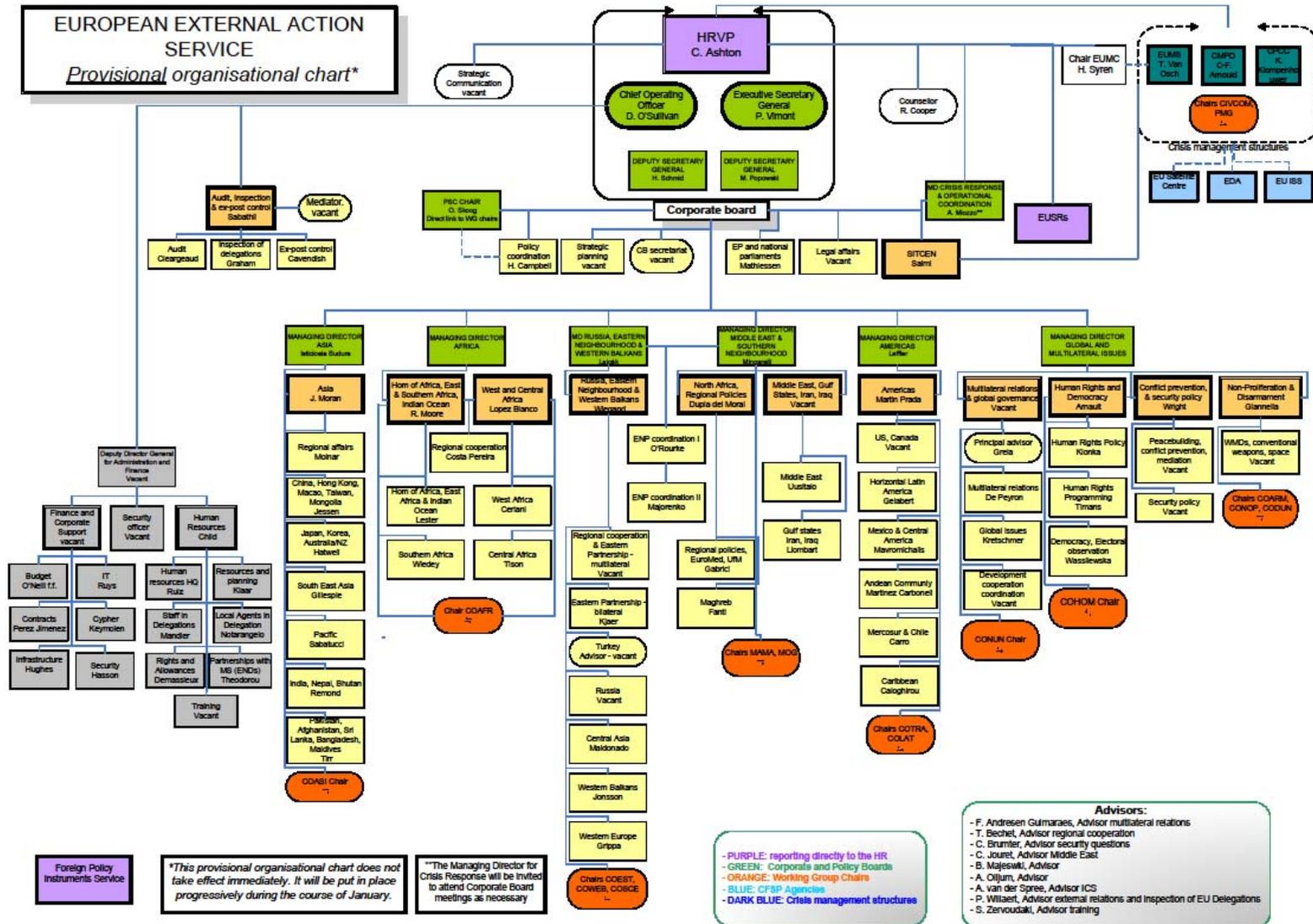
<sup>28</sup> P. Vennesson emphasized this point at the EUI conference “Learning and training challenges for a new EU diplomacy”.

<sup>29</sup> The European Security Strategy of December 2003, drafted under J. Solana, identified five main threats to EU security: terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass distraction, regional conflicts, failed states and organized crime, which are related to poverty, disease, competition for resources and migration. An updated report 5 years later added climate change, energy security, cyber-crime and piracy.

In the face of this task the EEAS has come up with a rather classic organization, which resembles a typical Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the addition of crisis-management structures. The provisional organigramme (see below) is made up of a combination of geographic and thematic departments, an administration, other support services, plus crisis management structures. It leaves many questions open. The Delegations do not appear in the organizational chart. Some hierarchical lines are not specified, notably which parts of the organizations report to individual members of the Corporate Board. It is not clear how the various elements will interact in practice amongst themselves or coordinate with other key players outside the organization. This confirms that the EEAS is, from an organizational point of view, a ‘work in progress’.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> David O’Sullivan, Chief Operating Officer stated in a conference at the IIEA in Dublin on 14 January 2011: “Realistically, I would say we need three years to build the kind of service we need: a modern, agile and service-oriented organization that is able to complement national diplomacies in a rapidly changing operating environment.”



## **4.2 Integrating policies**

Integration is to be understood as bringing together CFSP/CSDP with the Union's external policies and external dimensions of internal policies, while respecting the different decision-making procedures and implementation mechanisms. It is part of the responsibility for coherence mentioned in the Treaty. It is also one of the main potential sources of synergies and added value of the new system. But it is equally a possible source of tension, since the fundamental duality remains. It constitutes perhaps the most obvious internal challenge for the HRVP. Those that have worked under the old system remember tensions between the two sides of Rue de la Loi on various files, posing obstacles to coordinated and effective action. Integration needs to start by linking the constitutive elements of the EEAS closely amongst themselves and also with the Commission.

The potential for synergies through integration is important between CFSP/CSDP and the other external EU policies like trade, development, humanitarian aid, enlargement or neighborhood and also across the latter. The same can be said of the external dimensions of important EU policies like energy, environment, freedom-security-and-justice or monetary union. It is obvious that this needs to be accomplished without sacrificing the ultimate objectives of such policies as established in the Treaty. For instance, development policy needs to pursue *inter alia* the fight against poverty as opposed to being a simple appendix of foreign policy; and trade concessions should not be granted simply for political reasons. However, the mutually reinforcing elements cannot be ignored.

An example taken from the work of Delegations will illustrate the potential but also the practical difficulties of integration. Delegations have been in charge of assistance (development or other instruments) already for a number of years. Assistance should enhance political leverage and provide input to refine political analysis. Conversely, through political weight, implementation problems related to assistance can most often be unblocked. The experience from Delegations indicates that such integration benefits do not accrue automatically, but rather require serious efforts. If it is already difficult to bring synergies in Delegations under a common roof it is easy to understand how much more complex it becomes across separate organizations like EEAS and Commission.

From the EEAS side, this will require a thorough understanding of what the Commission does in the field of external Union policies and viceversa. It will also require a basic understanding of the "community *acquis*" i.e. its objectives and main features. The "*acquis*" has grown and diversified over the years to such an extent that, in spite of efforts at its simplification and rationalization, it increasingly requires multiple, specialized knowledge. The new EU diplomat, most often a generalist, will need at least to acquire an understanding of the interplay between different Union policies and globalization challenges. This should include a good knowledge of CFSP/CSDP (including conflict prevention, peace building and crises management). Familiarity with the legal basis and functioning of EU institutions, including decision making procedures is also essential. Equally important is the area of Freedom, Security and Justice (FSJ), the building blocks of external policies (Trade, Development, Humanitarian Aid, Enlargement, Neighborhood) and the growing external dimensions of internal policies (Energy, Transport, Environment, European Monetary Union, etc). The list is non-exhaustive but indicates the extent of the training agenda. Civil servants coming from EU institutions and MS diplomats previously associated with EU affairs should have an advantage, but will still present gaps to be filled.

### **4.3 Coordinating with key players**

The EEAS needs to liaise with a number of key players to fulfill the coordination role assigned to it:

- Commission
- Council Secretariat
- Council Presidency
- Member States.
- European Parliament
- International organizations like UN, OSCE, Council of Europe, NATO, etc
- Non-state actors.

As mentioned above, coordination with the Commission will need to be closest and most comprehensive, embracing different policies and services. Coordination with the Council Presidency will need to take into account that, despite the new role of the High Representative (HR) in external relations, the rotating presidency still chairs the Foreign Affairs Council in trade matters and other Council configurations dealing with external issues other than CFSP. Cooperation with individual MS will also be essential for the emergence of an EU foreign policy<sup>31</sup>. Also for the advancement of EU external policies, like trade, and for coherence and coordination in shared policies, like development. In Brussels the EEAS is asked to chair many Council working groups as shown in the organigramme. In delegations it is the Head of Delegation who now chairs meetings of Heads of Mission, previously chaired by the Presidency. Coordination with the EP will be particularly sensitive in the wake of Lisbon and the difficult negotiations that lead to the EEAS. This multiple cooperation will require a clear understanding of the respective institutional responsibilities, sensitivity and capacity to listen and constructively work with others.

### **4.4 Representing the Union**

The Treaty leaves a certain ambiguity concerning the external representation of the Union in CFSP matters. It is the responsibility, on the one hand, of the President of the European Council, at his level, but without prejudice of the powers of the HR in this area (TEU art. 15). On the other, it gives representation responsibilities to the HR, including political dialogue and presenting Union positions in international organizations and conferences. But the President of the Commission is also left with an important representation role in respect of the external policies falling under the latter's responsibility. This may be exercised by the President himself, the HRVP in her capacity of Commission VP, or the responsible Commissioner, depending on the case. In spite of this complex set up it is clear that many of the external representation functions will fall under the HRVP and, by extension, the EEAS. In Delegations all representations functions converge in the Head of Delegation.

Representation in international organizations presents particular challenges, given the complex situation inherited and the new configuration resulting from the Lisbon Treaty<sup>32</sup>. In some cases representation was exercised by the Commission, in others by the Presidency in others jointly or by neither. This situation is being revised in order to maximize the visibility of the Union but it will take some time to clarify. The failure to obtain enhanced observer status for the HRVP at the September 2010 UN General Assembly illustrates some of the difficulties. This representation role will require heavy emphasis on traditional diplomatic skills.

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<sup>31</sup> “When the EU does not reach agreement on a foreign policy matter it is not left, unlike in the field of Trade, without a policy, but rather with 27 different ones”. Christoffersen at the EUI conference.

<sup>32</sup> For a through analysis of the issue and possible solutions see Emerson and others.

#### 4.5 Managing the external network

The network of Delegations is one of the main assets of the EEAS and a key instrument in the conduct of any of its tasks. It constitutes the EU “diplomatic service” in the narrowest sense, as opposed to the “external service” managing it from Brussels. But the two are jointly conceived, with a single command structure and respond to a common objective, even though delegations are asked to perform a number of (complementary) tasks on behalf of the Commission. Managing such an extensive network is a major task, unique amongst EU institutions. It involves, at headquarters, strategic guidance, monitoring and supervision and hands-on management on the ground. The EEAS comprises one of the largest diplomatic networks, covering most of the world, with 136 EU delegations accredited to third countries or international organizations and almost 6000 agents of different categories, although only about 2.000 belong to the service and the rest to the Commission<sup>33</sup>. Only France, Germany, Italy and the UK, amongst MS, have more extensive networks, while the vast majority of them have embassies in less than half of the globe.

The complexity of managing this system can be better understood by looking at the size and nature of delegations as compared to typical embassies. Former EC Delegations, now transformed into EU Delegations, have typically between 40 and 100 agents (there are sometimes smaller affiliated antennas in the same country or nearby). Their average size is around 44 as opposed to 30 for MS embassies excluding cooperation, or 50% larger<sup>34</sup>. They are composed of three categories of personnel: officials, contractual agents and local agents in varying proportions and of various grades. Staff report hierarchically to the Head of Delegation –in turn placed under the authority of the HRVP - but, for the most part, report functionally and pertain administratively to the Commission, to the extent that they perform functions under its remit (i.e. external assistance, trade, humanitarian assistance). This large size, compared to a MS mission, is explained by the minimum critical mass needed to manage sizeable assistance programmes in most countries<sup>35</sup>. Delegations have become in most countries heavy external cooperation machineries. This activity absorbs, on average, more than half of human resources in delegations. It should be noticed that the Head of Delegation assumes personal financial responsibility for such programmes, which may amount to portfolios of hundreds of millions of euro involving a multitude of individual operations. This situation is rare amongst MS, where assistance, sometimes managed through specialized agencies, is generally placed politically, though not operationally and financially, under the Ambassador’s responsibility<sup>36</sup>.

The Head of Delegation is also the voice of the Union on the spot, the coordinator of MS Heads of Mission on Union matters, the contact point for the EP and all Commission services, the eyes and ears of the HRVP and the manager of a self-contained and physically detached organization with a large degree of autonomy in practice. The Head of Delegation is therefore a pivotal figure in the EEAS. This raises the need for thorough recruitment but also solid pre-posting training, with a strong management component, for the Head of Delegation and his closer team.

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<sup>33</sup> Total Commission staff in Delegations (officials and other agents) amounts to 3.800 with the following breakdown: DG DEVCO 3.000, Enlargement 500, Trade 200 and others about 100.

<sup>34</sup> Calculation based on Emerson page 141.

<sup>35</sup> Unlike typical embassies EU delegations do not have military, consular and cultural sections. They often have political and trade sections and information and communication sections. They also need to get increasingly equipped to support the FSJ policy and, eventually, assist MS in consular matters. EU delegations may provide consular protection to EU citizens, at the request of MS and on a resource-neutral basis (Decision art. 10).

<sup>36</sup> The European Commission took the strategic decision in the mid 1990’s to manage foreign assistance internally and not through an external dedicated agency. In the early 2000s it was further decided to progressively transfer management and financial responsibility from headquarters to delegations (deconcentration). This decision, supported by extensive training, successfully strengthened the capacity of Delegations to manage assistance. It lessened however in practice their capacity for diplomatic and political work, in spite of efforts to the contrary, due to conflicting agendas and limited resources. The EEAS needs to correct this unbalance.

## 5. Different approaches to diplomatic training

### 5.1 Experience of Member States

There is a clear distinction between training in preparation for the diplomatic profession and subsequent training for established diplomats and, surprisingly, a lack of research on either. An inventory of access requirements or preparatory training available does not exist in the EU<sup>37</sup>. The level of preparation for what is generally considered a very demanding and prestigious profession is generally high across the Union, but can be reached in different ways. Most countries regulate access through exams (concours), followed by training within the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MFA's), often including a practical period abroad. Some MS possess diplomatic academies, while most rely on public administration training institutions or others.

Training for already established diplomats has not been systematically researched either, but the External Relations Directorate of the European Commission (DG Relex) has conducted an informal survey of EU diplomatic training since 2008 at the request of MS<sup>38</sup>. This study confirms that, although practically all MS deliver training to diplomats, the scope and form differ widely. Training is divided into inception training (for new recruits and pre-posting), and career-long training, with different levels of development. The main focus is clearly on the former. Continuous training is mostly followed on a voluntary basis. Training is often subcontracted to specialized institutions. There appears to be a clear differentiation between training at headquarters and in the field, the latter being mostly short-term and instrumental. Technology-enhanced learning, like on-line learning, has been introduced but remains at an early stage.

Training in EU affairs is mostly optional and little developed. More EU content in diplomatic training within MS should be encouraged as it would facilitate understanding of the EU and better cooperation with its institutions including the EEAS. This may facilitate access and integration into the service to MS diplomats, which could in turn use the experience acquired for training at national level later on.

Most MS cooperate with others in diplomatic training, mostly in an ad hoc manner: sometimes through other bodies, like diplomatic academies, the UN, the EU (Train4Dev) and the OSCE. Some MFAs deliver training jointly with peer MS, through common or exchange programmes. Further cooperation between MS would facilitate transfer of knowledge, sharing best practices and economies of scale. It would also facilitate some EU convergence in national approaches.

### 5.2 Experience of EU institutions

EU institutions have undertaken significant efforts over the past years to strengthen training and instill a life-long learning culture. This is most noticeable in the European Commission but also to some extent in the Council and Parliament. DG Relex was particularly active, providing about 100 executive courses and seminars and 30 policy debates per year using internal and external experts, the latter through a framework contract, in collaboration with European diplomatic academies and other institutions<sup>39</sup>. The DG Relex training (train4diplo) has covered diplomacy, international and

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<sup>37</sup> Only an old study could be found at European level which has not been updated: United Nations Institute for Training and Research (1987), '*Directory on European training institutions in the fields of bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, public administration and management, economic and social development*', New York, United Nations.

<sup>38</sup> Styliani Zervoudaki, Advisor at DG Relex and coordinator of the study has kindly shared this information.

<sup>39</sup> In the Commission, since the Kinnock reform, resources devoted to training have more than doubled, reaching 1% of the administrative budget or more than 8 training days, as against around 5 in the public sector in Europe, and represent € 670 per person per year.

The DG RELEX training policy starts with the Williamson Report of 27/3/1996 and is mainly based on the following:

geopolitical issues, thematic issues (i.e. human rights, crisis management, conflict prevention, energy security), diplomatic skills (negotiation, effective briefing, political reporting) and team building. In addition there has been continuous training for specific categories of staff (Head of Delegation, Head of Political Section, Regional Security Officers, Heads of Administration, etc) and some regional seminars.

There is also extensive training provided by other DGs, notably AIDCO and TRADE and other services, including the European Administrative School (EAS), the Council and the European Parliament. The EAS is the only inter-institutional training body, attached to the also inter-institutional European Personnel Office (EPSO), although it is administratively part of the Commission. It is charged with training in three areas: induction (for new recruits), certification (for officials seeking upgrading) and, most significant in the present context, management training at various levels. There is some cooperation among various EU players in the form of an Inter-institutional Learning Programme in External Relations (ILPER). It should be underlined that training often provides a unique opportunity for socialization and networking.

The supply of EU diplomatic training within the Commission is abundant, diversified and managed and provided from a variety of internal and external sources. It could increase relevance by a better strategic focus. It could also increase impact by better insuring that it effectively reaches its target population. It could also be rationalized and better coordinated to facilitate identification and delivery. Training is currently provided mostly on a voluntary basis, with the exception of inception and pre-posting training and skills-related training for specialist posts. This simplifies management but does not necessarily maximize efficiency and cost effectiveness. Above all, training could be better integrated within management processes.

There are three recognized dimensions to training: knowledge, competences/skills and values/culture. Commission training has been traditionally more centered on knowledge (mainly of its institutions, rules and policies) than competences (like management) and values (like ethics). However, the Commission lately and, particularly the EAS since its creation in 2005, have increasingly filled the gap. Training is mostly provided in formal settings. The use of coaching as a training tool is beginning to gain ground within the Commission.

There is also a geographic dimension to training. Past experience indicates that it has been more accessible to civil servants at headquarters (officials and contractual agents) than to agents posted abroad (which also include local agents with limited training opportunities). This is in part due to logistic reasons, which could be tackled with a more extensive use of regionalized and technology enhanced learning. It is important to bridge this gap and avoid a divide between headquarters and delegations.

### ***5.3 Partnerships of EU and Member States***

There is a common training programme between the Commission, Council Secretariat and MS, the European Diplomatic Programme –EDP, and a mutual Diplomatic Training Programme -DTP, both coordinated by DG Relex in the past. There are also open courses organized at national level under the

*(Contd.)* \_\_\_\_\_

Commission decision E(2002)729 on staff training of 7 May 2002, part of the Kinnock reforms of 2002, which establishes training as a shared responsibility of the individual and the Institution and aims to increase professionalism, promote coherence and “esprit de corps” and develop networks of excellence with external partners.

Communication of Commissioner Patten in agreement with Commissioner Kinnock C(2003)4334 on staff training for the external service, which promotes the building up of specific skills and knowledge through the provision of a common training framework for the RELEX family of DGs and EC Delegations and

Commission Communication to the European Council of June 2006 “Europe in the World”, including proposals for greater coherence, effectiveness and visibility, providing for improved cooperation and a shared diplomatic culture, including personnel exchanges and the mutual opening of diplomatic training schemes.

European Security and Defense College (ESDC) coordinated at the Council Secretariat<sup>40</sup>. There is an informal forum of Training Directors at MFA's, created in the EDP framework, which is a platform for cooperation between MS and Commission in this area which could be further exploited. Training directors also meet in larger frameworks such as the International Forum in Diplomatic Training (IFDT) including non-EU actors.

## **6. A new training paradigm**

We have argued the need for EU diplomatic training in the context of the EEAS and an evolving EU diplomacy. A number of experts confirm this view (Avery and others 2007, recommendation 9). We have examined existing approaches and extracted lessons. The analysis has shown that there is no single "one size fits all" solution or even a single model valid for each category of personnel. There is actually a variety of objectives, professional streams, levels and locations not to mention individual needs. We have also seen the difficulties of finding a neutral solution in political and budgetary terms. It has further come out that a definitive or even long-term solution is unlikely since the EEAS is at formation stage and evolving. At the same time there is no time to waste as the service is already operational and needs to deliver. We need therefore a new, flexible and dynamic model that builds on what is available and remains open to adaptation. We shall examine its main parameters in this chapter and options on how to implement it in the next.

### **6.1 A three-layer model**

Three distinct though related levels of EU diplomatic training need to be considered.

#### **6.1.1 Long-term preparatory training (a diplomatic academy?)**

Common preparatory EU diplomatic training is not explicitly part of the EEAS mandate. However, the long-term strategic importance of this type of training has been, as we have noticed, well understood by the EP and some MS. The EEAS has a long-term strategic interest in this domain if it is to nurture the new EU diplomacy, and it should find in this direction a natural ally in the EP and the Commission. A diplomatic academy or college could indeed provide ideal up-stream preparation for the new EU diplomacy at postgraduate level, building on the experience of diplomatic academies, the College of Europe (CoE), the European University Institute (EUI) and other training institutions. It could cater for the needs not only of the EEAS, but also MS, diplomatic services outside the Union, the multi-national corporate sector, civil society, academia and the media. This makes the potential market important. It could lay the bases for an EU diplomatic community across the Union and beyond, built on shared knowledge, socialization and networking. The EP and MS particularly sensitive to the idea will no doubt pursue it as a long-term objective. It should nevertheless be recognized that prevailing political and economic circumstances are far from ideal to materialize this initiative in the near future. Therefore in the meantime some alternatives need to be considered.

#### **6.1.2 Pre-posting training**

Pre-posting training – i.e. induction training prior to a posting in a Delegation – is a special category of training, justified on substantive and practical grounds:

- the strategic role of Delegations

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<sup>40</sup> The European Security and Defense College is a virtual network of national training institutions created by a CFSP joint action to put training resources in common. It does not have a budget and costs are born by national administrations. It is coordinated by a technical assistant at the Secretariat of the Council and could be logically integrated into the EEAS.

- the breadth and specificity of their activities
- their diplomatic and representation responsibilities
- the relative autonomy resulting from their distance from headquarters
- the difficulty of providing further training at later stages due to distance and workload.

The main target population is about 140 Heads of Delegation or deputies, about 150 Political Counselors and information and communications officers and about 140 Heads of Administration<sup>41</sup>. Rotation makes it necessary every year to transfer about a quarter of this population, or over 100 persons, which makes it relatively manageable from the point of view of training. Pre-posting training for management posts is currently conducted over two weeks, through a standard package focused on instrumental aspects, which is clearly insufficient for the EEAS.

### 6.1.3. Continuous training

Continuous training includes the types of training needed for a person to fill gaps identified in his professional capacities, to keep up with changing professional demands due to internal or external changes and to facilitate professional advancement. It is particularly important for the EEAS as it has to adapt to a changing environment. The target population for continuous training is the universe of EEAS officials (1000 AD plus 700 AST)<sup>42</sup>. This is a significant population but small compared to the Commission and not large enough to justify a heavy training structure.

We have seen from Commission experience that continuous training has developed to the extent that it practically covers, at least in theory, most needs through an extensive catalogue. But we have also seen that it offers room for simplification, consolidation and rationalization and that it could be made more relevant to collective and individual needs. The need for relevance can be illustrated by looking at the existing performance evaluation system within the Commission. The annual evaluation report gives consideration to training completed by each official during the past year and includes an individual training map for the year ahead. Moreover, personnel files include a training passport or historic account of all training received. However, these instruments are often used too lightly or bureaucratically and are insufficiently internalized as a management tool. This may be due to lack of interest, know-how or time. It must be recognized that the European Commission has been more successful at incorporating new management techniques and procedures than at bringing in the underlying management philosophy required to maximize their practical value. This would have required a process of “cultural change” admittedly more difficult. The EEAS as a new, smaller and autonomous organization is in a position to do better.

## **6.2 A common guiding philosophy**

The above three types of training, and particularly the latter two falling under the direct responsibility of then EEAS, should share a common guiding philosophy which is presented below.

### 6.2.1 All encompassing, action oriented learning

EU diplomatic training needs to be all-encompassing, addressing the individual as a whole and not only his intellectual capacities. The three poles of the learning triangle need to be covered: knowledge, skills, and attitudes. There is a need to supplement and update knowledge, but most importantly to

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<sup>41</sup> Security Officers and Assistants to Heads of Delegation also need pre-posting training. The Commission will also need to pursue in parallel pre-posting training in areas under its responsibility like trade and assistance.

<sup>42</sup> The large number of administrative staff in delegations will need training of a more specialized nature that can be largely provided through on-line or regionalized training.

sharpen skills for better action and develop the attitudes needed to guide it. The emphasis on skills and behavioral dimensions is most needed for an EEAS having “action” in its denomination. This will require the use of “on the job training” as much as possible as opposed to traditional formal training. Experts consider that people learn the vast majority of what they need professionally on the job. Currently, however, training is mostly provided in formal settings. Experts confirm that adult learning should be experience-related, goal-oriented, relevant and practical. On the job training ideally presents these characteristics. It can be provided through a focused manager, but also through other forms of coaching. There are also various forms of action-oriented learning involving learning from experience. They require innovative pedagogic approaches like case work, project work or action learning techniques.

### 6.2.2 Multi-dimensional training built around core training blocks

We now correlate the three poles mentioned with the list of EEAS functions already presented in order to map training blocks and overall training needs in a single training matrix which is shown below.

**EEAS Training Matrix**

Training blocks		Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
<b>Understanding the world</b>	Analytical competence	Geopolitics and global issues	Political analysis and reporting	Curiosity, discretion
	Regional competence	Host country and regional awareness	Languages	Cultural openness
<b>Knowing the EU</b>	Policy integration	EU policies - external and internal	Capacity for synthesis and systems thinking.	Team-playing
	Coordination	EU institutions, MS policies.	Networking, negotiation	Patience, openness
<b>Communicating the EU</b>	Representation, communication.	Diplomacy, public diplomacy	Communicating, negotiating.	Esprit de corps, assertiveness
	Management of Delegations/Units	Human resources, financial management, security of personnel & information	Leadership, emotional & social intelligence.	Results-orientation, ethics, security awareness

We shall see later how to tailor the above to both specific professional streams and individual needs.

### 6.2.3 Multi-supplier training

Such a breadth of training exceeds the capacity not only of the EEAS (thus requiring outsourcing) but also of any single supplier (thus requiring a multi-supplier approach). Geopolitics, global issues, political analysis and reporting and country and regional awareness could be provided by specialized institutions. Language training could rely on the solid Commission capabilities in this area. The EU blocks on institutions, policies and acquis, as well as the procedural and instrumental components of management training, should largely rely on internal trainers from the EU institutions, whose contribution should be encouraged and recognized. Diplomacy and public diplomacy could be delivered by experienced diplomats and communication and media specialists. Skills-related management training is a separate world. The European Administrative School is preparing a package

of new generation management training and consultancy services that should be in place in 2012. It could be made available to the EEAS through a service-level arrangement. This would have the added advantage of facilitating socialization across EU institutions, given the inter-institutional nature of the School.

#### 6.2.4 Partly de-localized training

Both the geographic spread of the EEAS and the diversity of training requirements plead in favor of some form of de-localized training. In some cases, like management training, physical distance from the workplace is a plus. In others, like training for Delegations, it is a must, due to logistics. In any case there is a critical mass of training that needs to be conducted at EEAS or EU premises, for appropriation and identity reasons. An effective means of de-localized training is technology-enhanced learning, based on the powerful existing IT platform. This will be needed to reach out to the delegations and, in headquarters, to make training compatible with work schedules. It should be prepared in coordination with the Commission, given the investment required and the mixed nature of much of the content. It should be supported by adequate remote tuition. However, given the importance of the socialization component it should be recalled that distance learning cannot replace socialization or, as Alvin Toffler summed it up, that “high tech cannot replace high touch”.

#### 6.2.5 Training placed at the centre of the management process

The need to integrate training at the heart of the management process has been a recurrent theme in this paper. The underlying assumption is that training should be viewed as an investment that finds its return to the extent that it contributes to pre-defined management objectives. Otherwise it remains a cost with uncertain capacity to generate value. Managers should, therefore, assume direct responsibility for investing in the training of people under their responsibility. Such a key part of human resources management cannot be simply delegated to human resources departments, whose role is to support and facilitate. This should result in a closer integration of training in all management processes (selection, recruitment, posting, evaluation, career planning and promotion) than is currently the case in EU institutions. The following chapter will explore how to reach this important objective.

## **7. Strategic options**

This chapter looks at the strategic options to implement the proposed model and their relative merits.

### ***7.1 Long-term preparatory training***

#### 7.1.1 Minimalist solution: waiting for better times

A first option consists of not taking any action in this field and leaving it to existing institutions like diplomatic academies, universities and other centers of learning. It is obviously the easiest solution in the face of existing difficulties but hardly one that would by itself lead to a better solution later on. Moreover, the momentum created by the birth of the EEAS would be quickly lost. Although not a desirable option it is the likely default outcome in the absence of a strong leadership willing to move ahead in this important and sensitive area.

#### 7.1.2 Setting up a European Diplomatic Academy

Sufficient arguments have been provided to show that this option, however desirable, is unrealistic in the near future. But it has also been argued that the idea should not be discarded. The EP has the

political leverage, more so than ever under its extended powers, to push forward such an ambitious project.

### 7.1.3 Setting up a virtual network

This could take the form of a light, virtual and flexible diplomatic academy network, based on existing institutions (academies, universities and others), focused on the long-term needs of the EEAS and the external services of the European Commission. It could offer a number of the advantages of a full academy, while minimizing real or perceived political and financial costs. It could prepare joint programmes with a multi-functional and multi-national character and issue either its own degree or a joint degrees amongst the participating institutions. It could later evolve into something more stable and permanent, depending on experience and circumstances.

The natural sponsor of this type of initiative is the EEAS, joining forces with the Commission, and could count with the support of the EP and a number of MS. The existing network of MFA training directors under the EDP could also be re-activated in support of this initiative. Some training institutions like the EUI or the CoE could play an active role from their complementary perspectives. Management training institutions and others could also be associated. A project of this kind needs leadership in the first place and funding later on, since, however lightly defined, it is a management intensive operation. The experience of existing networks may be instructive but is unlikely to provide a model that can be replicated. A European Diplomatic Academy, either virtual or fully-fledged, could later become a provider of training services to the EEAS

### 7.1.4 Establishing a joint Master's degree of established academic institutions

This can be a sub-option or an alternative to the above. It could be promoted by some universities and institutions as those mentioned above, and could be supported by the EEAS and the Erasmus Mundus Programme. It should offer something additional to existing Master's degrees in the area of international relations to justify it, like an innovative design, longer duration, active methodology, a management component, a joint degree, geographic mobility. In exchange it should require some relevant prior experience to get access. It could target students interested in the external dimension of EU institutions (not only the EEAS) and, in general, those suggested in section 6.1.1. The existing, EU-supported European Masters Degree in Human Rights and Democratisation and the Joint European Master's in International Humanitarian Action can provide some practical ideas<sup>43</sup>.

## 7.2 Pre-posting training

### 7.2.1 Minimalist option: maintaining the current programme with minor adjustments

The two-week pre-posting programme in place is too short to give a minimum coverage to the building blocks of the training matrix. It is also insufficient to provide time and space to build the basic needed common ground for participants with different backgrounds, like more EU background for those coming from outside EU institutions or diplomatic background to those lacking it. It does not allow for sharpening management or communication skills either, not to mention learning or brushing up local languages or acquiring country or region knowledge.

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<sup>43</sup> <http://www.emahumanrights.org/> and <http://www.nohanet.org/>

### 7.2.2 Major redesign of pre-posting training

In view of the above, a major re-design and extension of pre-posting training seems most needed. It would require that annual rotation decisions are taken one year before departure. This training was managed in the past, within DG Relex, completely apart from continuous training, a separation which does not appear justified or desirable any more. EEAS pre-posting training will need to be closely coordinated with the Commission, given the EEAS-Commission duality that exists in delegations. The redesign should also be done in close coordination and hearing the views of the bureau of Heads of Delegation. A working group coordinated by the EEAS training department would provide the best means to conduct this task within a reasonably short period of time.

Pre-posting training would need to be split in two parts – mainstream and individual - and extended over a sufficient number of weeks, divided in cycles, to allow time to nurture common ground, sharpen skills and influence attitudes. Both parts would need to be essentially practical in approach and based on life material to the largest extent possible.

The mainstream part should be made of a few separate course designs adapted to the requirements of a few key professional streams (Head of Delegation, Political Counsellor, Head of Administration, Security Officer, Assistant to the HoD). Each should cover, at the respective level, the different components of the training matrix.

The individual part should respond to individual needs, covering any area in need of reinforcement. It would, therefore, vary in nature and length per “client”. It should draw on the catalogue for continuous training and therefore does not require a separate design, but simply selecting the right package for each user. This link between pre-posting and career-long training offers not only economies of scale but also integration opportunities between participants from headquarters and delegations, thus preventing two separate worlds. Individual training needs should be identified on the bases of individually prepared pre-posting training maps, starting with the gaps identified at the recruitment stage and completed through a “pre-posting dialogue” between each designated official and his/her manager. Coaching could also be used as appropriate. Such training should necessarily include country and region awareness and host country language, two essential areas currently neglected<sup>44</sup>. The revised system could be in place by the time of the EEAS implementation report (end 2011). The budgetary implications will need to be examined as this approach adds to costs. Given the strategic importance of pre-posting training and its dual purpose it would be most advisable that it is essentially managed and delivered internally by the EEAS and the Commission.

## **7.3 Career-long training**

### 7.3.1 Minimalist approach: maintaining the existing catalogue with minor adjustments

This is obviously the only practical option at the initial stage, but a largely suboptimal one in view of extracting most value. The existing catalogue has not been specially designed for the EEAS and it presents, as we have seen, much room for improvement.

### 7.3.2 Redesign based on an expert review

The required redesign could be conducted by a working group made up of interested parties, including the Commission, under the guidance of the EEAS training unit and with the support, if need be, of external consultants. It should take into account past experience and results as well as new needs

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<sup>44</sup> The EEAS could benefit from British and American experiences in this area.

identified. This approach is relatively simple but does not guarantee sufficient management involvement.

### 7.3.3 Major re-engineering based on serious management involvement

The objective would be to define the EEAS general training needs through the involvement of management at all levels. This could normally be done as part of the standard strategic planning process, but would, in this case, be most effective if organized separately<sup>45</sup>. The concept can be put into action in a few months and could be fully implemented by the time of the first EEAS review in 2013. It would involve the following steps:

a) Setting training objectives (top-down)

It should start at the level of the EEAS Corporate Board and Policy Board to insure consistency and top management support. The process should continue down to the level of units in headquarters and sections in delegations. The further down the line the more operational will the objectives become, while maintaining vertical consistency.

b) Defining specific training needs (bottom-up)

The objectives defined should be translated into specific training requirements per management unit and per job description, starting at basic management levels (Unit, Delegation or sections therein) and continue all the way up. For every job description it should establish expected training results: knowledge, skills, competences or attitudes. A certain quantification of users will also be needed. The process would be organized with the support of training coordinators, the training unit and, eventually, other facilitators. Once needs defined and validated at a given level they should be brought to the next higher management level for consolidation and re-validation, thus insuring overall consistency.

c) Managing training

This phase consists of selecting one or several management entities responsible for administering all or some training components, including procurement, contracting and payments, in line with financial regulations. Various options or combinations exist:

- To outsource it.
- To put the EEAS training unit in charge.
- To establish service-level arrangements with the European Administrative School and Commission services.

The first option may result in the loss of strategic direction. To put the EEAS fully in charge may not be the best use of resources. The European Administrative School would present the advantage of its expertise and inter-institutional character, which would facilitate common delivery and nurture a common culture across institutions. The Commission could be used for some parts.

d) Delivering training

The options are:

- To establish a direct agreement with a single supplier like a future European Diplomatic Academy.
- To establish one or several framework contracts with different training institutions.

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<sup>45</sup> The annual management planning process currently in place at the Commission is too heavy for this purpose and the EEAS has not yet designed an alternative model.

e) Evaluating results

This phase requires the active involvement of the EEAS training unit for quality control purposes. It should include evaluation reports by both participants and trainers. Each manager should also assess the impact of training within his team in terms of contribution to management objectives. This should also be individually examined as part of the annual evaluation exercise. Completion of certain modules or periods of training should be made a condition of nomination (or confirmation of nomination after probation) and promotion.

This approach to continuous learning (itself linked to pre-posting training) would insure maximum management ownership. The organization would learn about its own training objectives and needs at all levels. The output in the form of a revised career-long training catalogue would be as useful as the process through which it would be generated. The latter would result in an equally if not more valuable by-product, i.e. the development of a learning organization and a life-long learning culture.

## **8. Conclusions**

The creation of the EEAS constitutes a unique opportunity to build a European identity, project the European Union in the world and facilitate the emergence of an EU foreign policy. The challenge is huge and the outcome uncertain. It will largely depend on political will and leadership but also, critically, on the capacity to create a well-functioning and flexible organization. The establishment of a high quality training system, adapted to the specific functions and uniqueness of the service, will be critical in this respect. This requires a new, extrovert approach to training with a bias for action. It will also need a balanced approach between nurturing knowledge, skills and attitudes, where the management dimension acquires a special importance. The EEAS should strengthen pre-posting training for those assigned to Delegations, and re-engineer continuous training, closely linking the two. A widespread use of technology-enhanced learning should make it more accessible, particularly to Delegations. Moreover, the EEAS should lead the creation of a virtual diplomatic academy as it would facilitate long-term preparation for the new EU diplomacy. The EEAS should use its central position to develop a cooperative approach to training, capitalizing on experience and resources from different players, particularly, the Commission. It should, most importantly, avail itself of the flexibility and autonomy afforded by its statute to implement a new training model based on close management involvement that integrates training and management. This would turn the EEAS into a learning organization. The more that the EEAS evolves towards a pro-active EU diplomacy, contributing to the emergence of an EU foreign policy, the greater will be its value-added. Training and learning are critical success factors towards attaining this objective.

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