Since its inception, the European Union has almost permanently been ‘under construction’, and, over the course of several decades, gradually extended its reach both geographically and substantively. Important structural and procedural changes within the different European institutions have also tended to increase its action capacities in a significant number of diverse policy areas. Since such action capacities bolster European institutions’ abilities vis-à-vis member states in the struggle for power (Panebianco, 1988; Moe and Wilson, 1994), such developments have been interpreted as an expression of executive order formation at the European level (Trondal, 2012; Trondal and Peters, 2013), transcending the Westphalian order (Bàtora and Spence this volume).

Until recently, foreign policy appeared to remain largely unaffected by this continuous development towards ‘widening’ and ‘deepening’ integration, and arguably constituted the last bastion of exclusive nation state power. This changed, however, with the process establishing the European External Action Service (EEAS), which obtained formal approval in July 2010 (i.e., Council decision 11665/1/10 of 26 July 2010) and represents a key part of the new institutional framework conceived in the Treaty of Lisbon to reform EU’s foreign policy governance. In this chapter, we evaluate to what extent the EEAS can be seen as another step in the development towards a post-Westphalian European Executive Order (EEO) by assessing whether, and how, it contributes to the development of common action capacities.
in foreign policy. It is important to note that this represents a hard test-case for such order transformation since it concerns a policy field historically marked by national control and a corresponding lack of EU capacity – legally and administratively.

Throughout our analysis, we rely on EEAS’ recruitment procedures and processes as an indicator of the nature of the emerging political order in the EU. From a theoretical perspective, we will argue that more pronounced independence of EEAS’ recruitment practices would be indicative of order transformation in this policy domain. Building independent institutional capacities at EU level in the domain of external relations indeed represents a shift of ‘locus of policy-making’ that suggest a transformation of political order (Richardson, 2012, 5). Consequently, analysing EEAS’ recruitment process provides important information about the extent to which its capacities in foreign relations remain at arm’s length from the Council and member-states’ influence.

In the empirical analysis, which benefits from 29 semi-structured interviews, strongly suggest that the EEAS can indeed be viewed as another step in the advance of a EEO in which EU institutions acquire extensive influence over public policies (here, foreign policy). This is reflected in substantial independence of recruitment of EEAS personnel, which is facilitated by (i) the supply of administrative capacities at EU level, and (ii) reliance on pre-existing organisational traditions, practices and formats, notably within the Commission.

Moreover, the latter observation suggests that the EEAS is also part of a profound reconfiguration of the EU diplomatic system because the Commission evaluation system was created for assessing experts, not diplomats, and appointed them to oversee the management of its various aid and development programs. In other words, EEAS’ hiring procedures are
intrinsically geared towards the selection of candidates that are not necessarily diplomats in the traditional Westphalian sense. As such, these procedures clarify how the European Union approaches foreign policy – and how it re-invents the meaning of ‘European diplomacy’ in the process (see also Murdoch, 2013 and chapter 4 in this volume).

**A theoretical departure**

This section involves two steps. The first step addresses the question of how we can empirically observe order transformation in the domain of EU foreign policy administration. This step outlines the dependent variable of the study, i.e. the independence of recruitment of EEAS personnel. The second step proposes two independent variables that may account for conditions under which recruitment to the EEAS may become more or less insulated from government influence, and thus conditions under which order transformation may occur.

*Step I: Order transformation through independent recruitment of staff*

A comprehensive conceptualisation of European order transformation includes (at least) three variables (*independence, integration, co-optation*), of which the first variable is applied in this chapter (Trondal and Peters, 2013). Order transformation necessitates the rise of *independent* administrative capacity at EU level. One necessary factor in building a common political order is the establishment of common administrative institutions serving the common interest. In a European context, it entails the development of administrative capacities that supply the European Commission (Commission) with the capacity to act relatively independently from pre-existing executive orders at the national level. If one focuses on the integration of public administration in Europe, what matters is the extent to which a new European executive centre (here, the EEAS) *in practice* (e.g. regarding its recruitment of personnel) is autonomous from key components of an intergovernmental administrative order.
Independence can be assessed both when institutions are created and reformed, and during everyday decision-making processes. Analysing the recruitment of personnel during the formative stages of a new institution (i.e., EEAS) one important question is how independent the recruitment process is from the influence of member-state governments (Bátora, 2011). Two proxies can thereby be applied: i.e., perceptions of appropriate qualities of candidates to EEAS posts, and the formal organisation of the recruitment apparatus.

First, independent recruitment of candidates to the EEAS would imply that decision-makers perceive the following qualities of candidates to be particularly appropriate:

- Recruitment by merit – understood in terms of ‘candidates’ ability, efficiency and conduct within the service during their career to date’ as well as the required skills and professional experiences expressed in the individual vacancy notes (European Commission policy as quoted in Duke and Lange, 2013, 10-11) – rather than nationality (i.e. country of origin) (Ingraham, 1995).³ The reason is that EEAS officials are expected to be relatively less attentive to the concerns of member-state governments if they are recruited on merit rather than nationality. Moreover, geographical balance of candidates may signal some degree of ’flag-posting’ of staff to the EEAS.

- ‘Technical’ expertise of candidates rather than their diplomatic expertise.⁴ This derives from the fact that technical expertise was central to the Commission’s hiring in external relations, while the diplomatic expertise reflects the legacy of member-state recruitment of diplomats.

- Prior diplomatic experiences in Brussels rather than prior diplomatic experiences globally.
Secondly, the formal organisation of the recruitment apparatus is measured by the extent to which:

- A direct application system is installed at EU-level ensuring that applicants need not apply via an indirect application system in member-state governments. A direct application system would supply the EEAS with administrative capacities for recruitment. One implication might be that the EEAS becomes less dependent on administrative capacities for recruitment at member-state level.

- The composition of (pre-)selection panels is dominated relatively more by Commission and/or EEAS staff than by member-state representatives. A recurrent problematic in political science and public administration pertains to those who hold public office. Who are they? The demographic profile of officials might affect their decision-making behaviour. Thus, (pre)selection panels dominated by Commission officials would be expected to be biased towards common/European concerns and thus relatively independent of the concerns of particular member-state governments.

**Step II: Independent recruitment – under what conditions?**

Under which recruitment of EEAS personnel is likely to be relatively independent of government influence. We address this using an organisational theory approach. In such framework, the behaviour of civil servants is argued to be considerably shaped by the organisational structures embedding them. Essentially, the organisational capacities embedding civil servants may guide their decision-making behaviour by providing a means to deal with their computational limitations. In short, the ‘organizational properties compensate for the cognitive constraints of individual decision makers’ (Bendor, 2003, 450).

Organisational capacity may thus regulate, constitute and construct the (recruitment) decision-
making processes that emerge within political institutions, ultimately affecting the decisions being made. Organisational theory may thus succeed in explaining decision-making processes and human behaviour by focusing on dimensions such as formal organisational structures, roles, routines and standard operating procedures, physical structures, demography and recruitment (Egeberg, 2003). According to this line of argument, two propositions follow as regards recruitment of EEAS personnel:

1) First, the supply of administrative capacities at EU level relative to those in the member-state governments would strengthen EEAS’ capacity to nurture an independent recruitment of its personnel. Studies suggest that the supply of independent organisational capacities inside the Commission in practice tends to safeguard its autonomy vis-à-vis member-state governments (Trondal, 2012). Organisational capacities supply the Commission with capacity for independent policy learning, accountability practices, recruitment processes, etcetera (Richardson, 2012, 352). Previous work on the establishment of the EEAS also demonstrates that intra-institutional organisational capacities benefit inter-institutional negotiations: The relative strength of the Secretariat-General of the Commission strengthens its influence on the formation of the EEAS relative to other EU institutions (such as the Council) (Murdoch, 2012). Thus, the rise of independent administrative capacities for recruitment within the EEAS may contribute to independent recruitment practices of EEAS personnel.

The following proxies are used to gauge administrative capacity: (i) the degree to which exclusive organisational capacities are installed within the EEAS and/or the Commission for the recruitment of EEAS personnel; and (ii) the provision of relevant
information by the EEAS and/or the Commission to new EEAS candidates during the recruitment process: The crucial question is if such information is offered by the EEAS equally to all member-state governments (shared information) or if member-states supply relevant information mainly to their own candidates nationally (local information).

2) Secondly, an organisational approach suggests that recruitment practices are likely to be fashioned by *pre-existing organisational traditions, practices and formats* (Olsen, 2010, 96). Organisational theory ascribes an autonomous role for pre-existing organisational structures to account for the emergence and institutionalisation of new organisational structures, and their effects – even though the match between environments and new institutional structures is not automatic and precise (Olsen, 2010). The compound institutional terrain and the ‘genetic soup’ of pre-existing political institutions may serve as important sources of resilience and opportunity in the genesis of recruitment structures and practices (Olsen, 2010; Pierson, 2004, 47). The pre-existing organisational structure of the Commission served as the building-blocks also for the new EEAS (Smith, 2013, 9). Particularly in periods of rapid institutional formation – as faced by Europe at the time of the establishment of the EEAS – new institutional arrangements may be particularly fashioned by pre-existing organisational forms, creating compound institutional architectures (Olsen, 2013, 5). Moreover, lack of time when creating new institutions makes decision-makers’ ‘pursuit of intelligence’ *bounded* and their search for solutions *local* (March, 2010, 19). They may tend to replicate what is commonly perceived as past successes, even though the origins of the EEAS in different European institutions will then automatically imply dealing with different cultures within the Service (Spence, 2012). Learning from
experience, however, is also associated with the sample size of past experiences (March, 2010). In cases with a large sample size of past experiences, the likelihood of institutional reproduction may be fairly high. It can therefore be expected that member-states with strong organisational capacities, resources and traditions for recruitment of diplomats are likely to co-ordinate the recruitment of EEAS officials more strongly than member-states with few domestic capacities and traditions for diplomatic recruitment. Similarly, the Commission’s tradition of calling upon policy experts rather than diplomats may become reflected in the recruitment of domestic diplomatic personnel to the EEAS.

**Data and methods**

The empirical analysis predominantly builds on information obtained from 29 semi-structured interviews with 31 respondents conducted, recorded and transcribed by the authors. These interviews took place between March 2011 and February 2012. The interview guide presented five general items for discussion: Background characteristics of the programme coordinators, structure of the recruitment programme, objectives of this programme, the practical operation of the programme, and finally selection criteria and support for candidates. Moreover, further validation of the (potentially subjective) information from the interviews was obtained by cross-validating it with a number of secondary sources related to EEAS recruitment such as the minutes of the core group of the Consultative Committee on Appointments (CCA) and the EEAS Staffing document of June 2012.

It is important to highlight that the interviews were conducted during, and mainly concentrated on, the hiring rounds for 31 (deputy) heads of delegations between January and March 2010 and that for posts in EU delegations and EEAS Headquarters starting in the
summer of 2010. Crucially, these were the first two hiring rounds in which member-state officials could apply for a position in the EEAS, which is decisive from a theoretical point of view since, as indicated above, it allows analysing the recruitment of personnel during the critical formative stages of a new institution.

In terms of our respondent selection strategy, our interview list comprised of the officials responsible for EEAS recruitment in all 27 member-states’ foreign affairs departments, as well as members of the EEAS’ Human Resources directorate. In the latter case, we interviewed the Deputy Head of Division in the HR directorate in the EEAS responsible for recruitment of temporary member-state officials. For member-states, interviewees were officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in 25 out of 27 countries (with positions ranging from Head of Unit to Director-General and diplomatic ranks from Counsellor to Ambassador), while for the remaining two countries they were employed in the country’s Permanent Representation in Brussels (both at the rank of Counsellor).

Results

The main objective of the EEAS has been to foster both vertical and well as horizontal foreign policy coherence between the EU and its member-states as well as within and between the different EU policies that has an ‘external dimension’ (Duke, 2012; Gebhard, 2011). In addition to strengthening internal coherence of foreign policy in the EU, the EEAS can also be perceived as the prime institution for forging external coherence by supporting the delivery of ‘structurally harmonized’ outputs in policies – such as external economic, foreign, security, defence and development – and between actors, e.g. member-states’ embassies and EU delegations in third countries and to other international organisations (Gänzle, et al., 2012; Gebhard, 2011). In short, the EEAS is expected to accompany a more coherent EU foreign
policy, thus reflecting a ‘joined-up’ approach to EU foreign policy. While the need for a unified EU foreign policy was first brought up during the ‘Convention on the Future of Europe’ (December 2001–July 2003), its supporting structures – notably the EEAS – were negotiated between HR/VP Baroness Ashton, the Commission, the Council, the member-states and the European Parliament following the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty (Murdoch, 2012). Staffing and personnel issues involved in the EEAS were one of the most difficult key themes tackled during these negotiations. For instance, the design of the organigramme was strategically avoided for both political and legal reasons (Interview 8) and did not even feature in the agreement formalised by the Parliament’s Plenary on 8 July 2010 (e.g., Art. 4 and 5 of the Formal Agreement of July 2010; see also Murdoch, 2012).

The organisation of recruitment within the EEAS

The selection procedure in the EEAS is largely similar for non-management (AD5 to AD8), middle-level management (AD9 to AD14) and senior management (AD15 to AD16) posts. In all cases, applicants have to personally send in their application – consisting of curriculum vitae, a motivation letter and, for officials from Member States, a ‘proof of diplomatic credentials’ provided by their Ministry of Foreign Affairs – to the EEAS HR department. All applications are then assessed according to a points-system (taken over from the Commission’s application system) that translates the provided information into one score on a 20-point scale reflecting the quality of the applicant for the vacancy. The resulting scores for each individual applicant are subsequently given to a pre-selection panel, which selects candidates for an interview on the basis of these scores. Finally, the pre-selected candidates are invited for interviews, which are conducted by selection panels brought together especially for that purpose. These panels consist of people from the EEAS, the European Commission, the Council Secretariat and Member State representatives.
It is important to note that these final stages are somewhat different in the recruitment process for senior management posts. In this case, the selection process is run by the Consultative Committee on Appointments (CCA), which appoints the Heads of Mission as well as posts starting at the Director level within the EEAS Headquarters (Staffing in the EEAS 2012: 2). The member-states have two representatives out of the CCA’s six members (the remaining four ‘core’ members coming from EEAS (2), Council (1) and Commission (1)), while decisions require a two thirds majority. The interviews with candidates short-listed for senior management positions by the CCA are conducted by HR/VP Baroness Ashton herself. Interestingly, this procedure corresponds very closely to that of the selection procedure for senior management appointments in the European Commission (European Commission, 2006).

Administrative capacities and pre-existing organisational formats for recruitment to the EEAS

One of the first lessons often mentioned by our interviewees when discussing the organisational architecture of EEAS’ recruitment of member-state officials is how strongly it builds on pre-existing procedures and processes employed within the Commission and installed long before the EEAS arrived (Interviews 5, 6, 13, 14, 19, 21, 27, 28). This empirical lesson is most relevant as regards the first hiring round for member-state officials in January-March 2010, since it was effectively organised by opening the Commission’s internal rotation system – through which EU officials change post on a regular basis within its missions.

Although this was no longer the case in the second hiring round starting in the summer of 2010, many of the Commission’s procedures for recruitment were retained at this point. For instance, the EEAS’ HR directorate continued to impose upon applicants the Commission
style of composing and preparing the application dossiers (Interviews 10, 24) and pre-selected among the candidates according to the Commission’s point system (Interviews 11, 13, 17, 19). The latter element is particularly indicative of EEAS’ independence since the Commission points system has been notoriously difficult to translate into national equivalents. Moreover, no positions were advertised in ‘the organisational chart related to HR’ (Interview 19), such that the same ‘people who were managing for the Commission, its human resources for delegations abroad’ remained in charge of EEAS’ recruitment (Interviews 11, 19). All in all, it was a system ‘fundamentally geared towards continuation as a Commission body’ (Interview 11), thus suggesting that the organisation of the recruitment was profoundly shaped by pre-existing organisational forms within the Commission.

The administrative capacities of the Commission in the recruitment process of EEAS personnel correspondingly weaken small member-states with few administrative capacities. While such organisational ‘copy-paste’ from already existing formats (Interviews 7, 15, 19) can be explained by the urgency with which these procedures were put together (Interviews 19, 21; see also below), the EEAS appears to also have taken a number of strategic decisions in its recruitment procedures to retain a strong position relative to the member-states. First, while information about the application process and recruitment outcomes is critical for member-states to optimise their approach and strategy towards vacancy calls in the EEAS and be able to have an influence on EEAS’ recruitment process (see above), such information was generally deemed by member-states to be ‘not moving freely’ (Interview 20, but noted by most respondents). For instance, prior to the first hiring round, member-states ‘were not at all aware of the selection procedures and methods the EEAS was going to adopt’ (Interview 19) and felt that this ‘leaves our applicants unprepared for the interview, for the whole procedure’ (Interview 29). Similarly, information about the reasons behind applicants’ failure to be (pre-
selected could often only be obtained by personally contacting the EEAS: ‘it was not systematic’ (*Interview 20, also Interview 26*). Although such informational breakdowns might be expected given that the EEAS initially had to rely on relatively few people and operate in a completely new institutional structure, member-states often had the impression that ‘there was a resistance by the EEAS to share certain kinds of information’ (*Interview 21*). Evidently, with the EEAS able to ‘control the flow of information’ within and between institutions (Farrell and Héritier, 2004, 1188), it was able to retain a powerful position vis-à-vis the member-states. Such behaviour is in line with Chisholm’s (1989, 32) warning that the provision of information ‘is often potentially damaging to the party who is supposed to supply it’.

Suggestive of independence of recruitment, the EEAS acted as a very strict agenda-setter in both the timing of vacancy calls relative to their application deadlines (with often very short application windows; *Interviews 9, 10, 13*) and the provision of candidates’ information relative to the sequencing of interviews with information often reaching member-states’ representatives in the (pre)selection panels only a few days before the recruitment committee meeting (*Interviews 4, 7, 11, 14, 19*). Such tight control over the agenda, and the apparent strategic use thereof, by the EEAS obviously has a vast impact on member-states’ ‘capacities for action’ (Crozier and Friedberg, 1980, 42). Moreover, by limiting the number of vacancy calls ‘in the central office, where (…) policy decisions are made’ (*Interview 27*) and excluding positions related to the HR directorate (*Interview 19; see above*), the EEAS not only illustrated its independence in deciding about the recruitment process, but simultaneously signalled its desire to remain independent also in its future decision-making behaviour.
The individual applications should be submitted directly to the EEAS, not via the member-states’ administrations. Even though member-states’ MFAs are required to provide a letter illustrating the candidate’s ‘diplomatic credentials’, which might open for the possibility of pre-selecting potential candidates by Member States (*Interviews 3, 24*), this *direct application system* clearly implies that member-state governments would be bypassed: ‘If you apply an open approach, you cannot really control or steer’ (*Interview 4*). ‘We don’t pre-cook anything’ (*Interview 17*). Consequently, it effectively curtails the potential influence of member-states on the proceedings.

Finally, the EEAS decides upon the composition of the (pre-)selection panels, and thereby appears to consistently place representatives from member-state governments into, at best, a minority position. In fact, member-states are ‘not represented in the panels for heads of division, for instance (…) not in all the middle management and junior positions’ (*Interview 19*). When they are represented, they consistently face a numerical majority from the EU institutions. For example, in the Consultative Committee on Appointments (CCA), the member-states have two representatives out of six members (see above) – with decisions requiring a two thirds majority. Moreover, unlike for the representatives from the EU institutions in the CCA, for the representatives of member-states ‘it functions on the rotation basis, so (…) there’s not really a consistency and coherence on who is representing’ (*Interview 11; also Interview 4, 14*). This is, however, already an improvement since no representation was awarded to member-states during the first hiring round, nor was such participation even considered when Baroness Ashton first set up the CCA (*Interviews 3, 4, 10*). Even so, requests for a more equal say were ignored by the EEAS: ‘probably the one single change which was *not* incorporated was precisely more participation’ (*Interview 4*).
All this, however, need not imply that member-states did not attempt to influence the results of the recruitment process in their favour. In fact, they developed a number of strategies with exactly this aim in mind. The most far-reaching of these consisted of ‘a work of diligent and smart lobbying activities’ (Interview 5; also Interviews 14, 15, 19, 28) – although this mostly applies for postings at higher (political) levels (Interviews 5, 14). More conventionally, many member-states attempted to professionalise the way they manage vacancy notices from the EEAS. Although voluntary preparatory workshops and information booklets for EEAS applicants were thereby widespread (confirmed by most interviewees), bigger member-states tended to thereby exploited well-established routines and programmes – ‘our career development concept, let’s say’ (Interview 27) – while ‘new’ and smaller member-states often relied on more ad hoc procedures (Interviews 6, 21, 22, 23, 29), which in many cases relied more directly on input from EEAS officials (Interviews 14, 24, 29). These patterns might illustrate a gap between old and new member-states when it comes to the rate of success in terms of bringing national officials into the EEAS. Indeed, albeit to varying degrees, new member-states are under-represented in the new Service: ‘Out of 134 people who applied for 10 senior management posts in Brussels, there were 34 “new” diplomats, 74 “old” ones and 26 EU officials. None of the “new” ones got through’ (Rettman, 2012). Under-representation of officials from new member-states may be related to genuine shortages of skill and experience for historical reasons. Building on our interview data, however, the lack of well-established organisational capacities in new member-states to receive training appears to be an important factor in explaining such differences, which illustrates the effect of administrative capacity for recruitment in member-state governments.

Regarding the actual recruitment practice in the EEAS, it is illustrative to regard the relative importance attached by the EEAS and member-states to certain qualities of candidates, and
how this translates into EEAS’ recruitment decisions. We thereby concentrate on three elements: The relative emphasis put on merit versus nationality, technical expertise versus diplomatic qualifications, and the importance of work experience in the Brussels institutions for candidates to EEAS posts.

First, while the EEAS favours merit over nationality, many member-states have argued that ‘this one third quota needs to be fulfilled proportionally by all member-states’ (Interview 29), implying a need to have some degree of geographical balance (Interviews 4, 5, 12, 18, 24, 21, 28). The issue of nationality appears, however, to be treated by the EEAS as a matter of relatively minor concern. Several respondents indeed indicated that ‘how the panels have been working, it has been merit proof’ (Interview 7), while geographical balance ‘does not seem to us to be happening right now’ (Interview 12). Hence, even though geographical balance may signal some degree of national ‘ownership’ of international institutions, there is little evidence of member-states’ ability to impose positive weight on candidate’s nationality in the recruitment process. Although recruitment into (Deputy) Head of Delegation positions has been particularly favourable to officials from the twelve Member States that joined the EU since 2004, this seems to predominantly reflect a catch-up process inherited from DG RELEX as well as the importance attached by the HR/VP to geographical (and gender) balance (Staffing in the EEAS 2012, 8; see also Duke and Lange, 2013).

Second, technical expertise has been a key concern in Commission’s hiring in external relations, while diplomatic qualifications form a core requirement for member-states. These credentials, most often acquired at diplomatic academies and always following a highly competitive selection process, are often perceived as the cornerstone of the diplomatic *esprit de corps* (Benson-Rea and Shore, 2012; Hocking and Spence, 2006). Following
Commission’s posting practices, EEAS has put substantial weight on candidates’ technical and management expertise (Interviews 4, 11, 14, 16, 17, 27) despite its formal requirement that member-state candidates should have relevant ‘diplomatic credentials’. As a response, several member-states allowed for a fairly broad and encompassing interpretation of ‘diplomatic credentials’ when deciding on granting the candidate a ‘letter of support’ (Interviews 3, 4, 11, 19, 22, 24). Such leniency in interpretation was thereby seen as a key means to satisfy a desire to ‘maximise our success possibility’ (Interview 19). Evidently, a lenient translation allows sending in more applicants, which increases the chance of having at least some successful candidates (Interview 14, 19). However, it might also increase member-states influence on EEAS’ recruitment process if EEAS conforms to this broader interpretation. Exactly such readjustment of the EEAS’ application requirement occurred after the first rotation (see also Murdoch, 2013). Although this initially suggests that member-states had at least some influence on the decision-process of the EEAS, the EEAS did not communicate exact nature of the changes in its application requirements at the time of the change (Interview 3, 6, 20). Clearly, such ambiguity benefits the EEAS’ ability to retain independence of its recruitment practice, as it keeps member-states continuously lagging one step behind.

Finally, EEAS appears to also have stood its ground (against member-state demands) when it concerns the importance attached to work experience in the Brussels institutions. While such experience is of lesser importance to member-states – given that countries’ diplomatic traditions often vary substantially from the Commission’s view of external relations – ‘if you look at what is making the grade in the EEAS, it is clear that having served in Brussels gives you an edge’ (Interview 28).
Concluding discussion

This chapter has argued that recruitment practices independent from Member State influence reflect a central characteristic of the advance of a EEO (Trondal, 2012; Trondal and Peters, 2013). Our empirical analysis of EEAS’ recruitment process provides evidence supportive of such order transformation in the domain of EU’s foreign relations administration (see also Vanhoonacker et al., 2010). This is reflected in both the supply of extensive administrative capacities at EU level and the strong reliance on pre-existing organisational traditions, practices and formats (i.e. from the Commission). Given the inherent intergovernmental stronghold of this policy area and the historical lack of EU capacity building within this policy field, this counts as strong evidence in favour of the development of a European Executive Order in foreign policy.

It is important to note here that independence not only buttresses executive order formation, but may also have other (side) effects not explicitly treated in our analysis above. For instance, it could be argued that far-reaching independence introduces some degree of inefficiency in the hiring process, particularly when the EEAS and Member States disagree about the characteristics required by European diplomatic staff. The EEAS’ current recruitment system, as mentioned above, still relies heavily on that of the Commission, which was created for assessing experts, not diplomats, and appointed them to largely managerial (rather than diplomatic) positions. In other words, EEAS’ hiring procedures are intrinsically geared towards the selection of candidates that are not necessarily diplomats in the traditional Westphalian sense, which may lead to an inefficiently low weight being given to more traditional diplomatic characteristics in the recruitment process. As a result, the EEAS propagates a profound reconfiguration of EU diplomacy (see also Murdoch, 2013).
Finally, future work should explore in more depth the relation between independent recruitment procedures and the EEAS’ internal as well as external legitimacy. Internal legitimacy requires that the outcomes of the hiring process meet pre-defined targets in terms of meritology, and geographical and gender balance (Duke, 2010). The independence of EEAS’ recruitment process is likely to have a profound effect on the relative importance of the first two of these elements, though the exact nature of such effects is currently not well understood (see also Rube, this volume). The external legitimacy of the EEAS requires that public officials representing the EEAS are also perceived as such. Once again, the independent recruitment of EEAS’ staff is likely to have important effects for the development of such external legitimacy, but the particular mechanisms through which such effects play out require more scholarly attention.

References


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Notes

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2 Obviously, recruitment processes and procedures are also likely to raise important issues of EEAS’ internal legitimacy, which depends upon whether the outcomes of the hiring process meet a number of pre-defined “criteria of appointment” (such as, the case of the EEAS, “merit, geographical balance and gender”; see Duke, 2010, 34; Rube, this volume). We return to such legitimacy issues in the concluding discussion of this chapter.

3 The Council Decision of 26 July 2010 establishing the Organisation and Functioning of the European External Action Service ensures the primacy of merit over nationality by stating that “[r]ecruitment to the EEAS shall be based on merit whilst ensuring adequate gender and geographical balance” (Council of the European Union 2010, 35). Even so, ‘merit’ may become a subjective issue when knowledge concerning candidates’ track record differs between candidates from the European institutions or from national diplomatic services (Duke and Lange 2013, 11).
Experience suggests that recruitment panels often look for managerial experience when it comes to hiring member-states officials, notably for the EU delegations. Elite positions within the EEAS – such as Heads of Delegations (HoD) – are primarily managerial positions and thereby far different from that of a national ambassador (Bull, 1977, 174–5). In this sense, a new type of ‘technical expert-diplomat’ seems to acquire a place in European diplomacy (see Dietz et al., 2011, 128ff.; Murdoch, 2013)