

The European External Action Service: Changing the Nature of Diplomacy or Old Wine in New Bottles?

A conference at Europe House organised by the London School of Economics, and the Wyndham Place Charlemagne Trust

Thursday 22 November and Friday 23 November 2012

CONFERENCE REPORT

Welcome by David Spence from the LSE, Cannon Guy Wilkinson from the WPCT and Marie-Madeleine Kanellopoulou from the European Commission

David Spence welcomed the guests and speakers on behalf of the LSE, underlining the unique mix of academics and practitioners present in the room. The latter would be able to give rich insights into the current workings of the EEAS, as well as the transition from the pre-Lisbon era. Given his belief that European diplomacy should equally be grounded in ethics, and not only foreign policy and security necessities, he underlined the importance of co-organising the conference with the Wyndham Place Charlemagne Trust. Its Chair, Cannon Guy Wilkinson, then welcomed the participants on the trust's behalf, citing the organization's work within the policy, ethics and faith nexus. While he was happy to leave the discussion on the technicalities of the EEAS to the experts present, he hoped that the conference would equally contribute to an appreciation of European diplomacy as driven morally by soft power and peace building considerations in its attempt to be something 'new' in international relations.

Marie-Madeleine Kanellopoulou picked up this common thread in her introduction on behalf of the European Commission's office and the European Parliament's Information Office in London. She stressed that while the EEAS was not a fully-fledged diplomatic service, it could make a potentially useful contribution to smart power in foreign policy. She stressed the uniqueness of the EEAS, citing the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy on the question of a single European voice. Baroness Ashton had argued that the EEAS goal was not to develop such a single voice, but rather to develop a single European message on foreign policy questions.

Why we needed the EEAS and what still needs to be done

Robert Cooper, LSE and former Director General for external and politico-military affairs in the Council of Ministers; Counsellor to the High Representative, EEAS

Chair: Professor Christopher Hill, Cambridge University

This presentation by Robert Cooper offered an analytical overview of the underlying reasons for establishing the EEAS, the process of its creation, as well as a roadmap of the objectives that it still needed to achieve. He argued that the reasons for creating the EEAS could be found in Europe's failure to react to the Balkans crisis in the early 1990s, when the EU's foreign policy was lacking a political component and long-term analytical perspective. Cooper then explained that this was the underlying motivation for ultimately creating the EEAS after a number of intermediate steps such as

the creation of the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy or the set-up of the European Security and Defence Policy. He spelt out why he believes the EEAS offers a unique opportunity to create a world-class diplomatic service. The importance of the EU's external competences, such as in the trade and aid realm, and their major impact in many third countries, should help attract the best diplomats from member states' diplomatic services into the EEAS, making it capable of producing high quality political analysis and contributing to decisions ultimately facilitating consensus on foreign policy questions at European level.

Cooper gave an overview of the problems present at the time of the EEAS' creation. On one hand, the European Commission and the Council Secretariat were keen on keeping as much of their responsibility in the relevant policy domains as possible, while the new Service was immediately required to achieve 10% budget cuts. The creation of the EEAS, unlike that of the role of the High Representative at the end of the 1990s, occurred in a period of a general European crisis and a feeling of disillusionment with the European project as a whole. However, despite these problems Cooper saw important benefits in the establishment of the EEAS. The system as a whole is less confusing than that of the Troika, and the current High Representative enjoys good relations with important political figures abroad. Its mere existence helps the gradual emergence of a more political and strategic vision of foreign policy in Brussels, and fruitful cooperation with the Commission already exists.

Yet, to make the most out of the EEAS, some important changes needed to be implemented. First, a stronger emphasis on the EEAS delegations abroad and the integration of personnel with very different work experiences. Further, hierarchies need to be flattened and individuals in the Service should acquire more decision-making power. A key obstacle is insufficient coherence between the EEAS and the Commission—a recurring theme throughout the conference—and this can only be achieved through increased cooperation and coordination. After all, the Council and the Commission own the service jointly. It is not separate from the rest of the EU's institutional set-up. Finally, Cooper argued that the EEAS could offer important benefits for member states not represented in some countries, and serve as information and operation hubs for national foreign ministries from smaller states—if properly equipped and permitted to do so.

The session's Chair, Prof. Christopher Hill commented on Cooper's presentation, raising the question of circularity between the establishment of a diplomatic service and the existence of a foreign policy. The creation of the EEAS reminds us of the debates on functionalism and neo-functionalism in European integration research. Hill pointed to many issues arising from the co-existence of very different national foreign policies with that of the EU. Hill also highlighted the debate on the changing nature of national diplomatic services, as national governments increasingly rely on expertise from specific ministries and the availability of public information. Cooper disagreed with this assessment, believing diplomats are needed to supply the specific analysis to support foreign policy decisions. Asked about the achievements of the EEAS so far, Cooper insisted that diplomacy only has effects in the long-term, and an early assessment for a diplomatic service that has barely existed for a year and a half makes little sense.

EU diplomacy in a changing global diplomatic environment: does the EEAS change the nature of European Diplomacy?

Jozef Batora, Comenius University, Bratislava

Prof Christian Lequesne, Sciences-Po, Paris

Chair: Professor Mike Smith, Loughborough University

This session's aim was unpacking how the EEAS fits within the changing patterns of diplomacy worldwide. The contribution by Prof. Jozef Batora underlined that the uniqueness of the EEAS increases the heterogeneity of diplomacy. For him, as for Prof. Hill, it will take some time until its true potential will be fully appreciated. While the EEAS came into existence within an already densely populated environment of diplomatic models, the EEAS structure is unique: its staff is drawn from three different sources. Yet, the functioning of the Service is not entirely new. It builds on existing European structures and is unique in that the EU is not a state, implying that the EEAS lacks some important elements of the classic diplomatic toolkit. First, the EU cannot recognise other states in its own right. Its diplomats are dependent on their respective member states to facilitate their integration into the diplomatic landscape - through diplomatic passports, for instance, as the EU can only issue *laissez-passers* similar to those of the United Nations. The EEAS is also different from other actors in that it features a strong military dimension resulting from its inheritance of parts of the EU's crisis management apparatus and experience. Batora argued this provides potential for innovation of national foreign ministries, with the EEAS even serving as a blueprint for integrating diplomacy with other elements of foreign policy.

Prof. Christian Lequesne argued that the EU's foreign policy mechanisms extend beyond the workings of the EEAS in Brussels to include national foreign ministries. There are thus coherence and consistency issues. He cautioned against assuming the EU's multi-level foreign policy is automatically less coherent than national foreign policies. While one of the overall aims of the EEAS was to reduce transaction costs vis-à-vis other institutions, these have nevertheless increased. Lequesne cited relations with actors such as the European Commission and the many bureaucratic negotiations this has required. Horizontal coherence thus does not appear to have been facilitated. As to vertical coherence there is a mixed record. With the new legal basis of the EEAS in place, the task of EU heads of delegations has become less antagonistic to member state embassies. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the head of delegation is now particularly powerful. One should not confuse the capacity to coordinate with power. Within international organisations, moreover, the new position of EU delegations has created tensions with certain member states.

A further element of concern is the information created by the EEAS. Some stakeholders within large foreign ministries appear to be oblivious to the added value provided by the EEAS. Lequesne argued that while the EEAS produces good political reporting, some of its officials still have to adapt to the style of political writing necessary in a diplomatic service. While the EEAS is already producing new ideas, it does not have the capacity to develop global strategies for Europe. He concluded by asking how far the EEAS actually depends on the personality of the High Representative, looking ahead to the new appointment in 2014.

The European External Action Service: Practical Problems and Prospects

Cesare Onestini, Head, EEAS corporate board secretariat

Chair: Prof Richard Whitman, Kent University

Cesare Onestini stressed his insider status. Expectations for the EEAS were unreasonably high, and the continuity of past structures was underplayed in public. The transition process had been rendered more difficult by the failure of the constitution project - officials in Brussels were not allowed to prepare the new structures, so as not to pre-empt the outcomes of various referenda. The political decision to set up a self-standing and budget neutral service also made for tight conditions overall. In Brussels, the service was created in stages after the Lisbon Treaty came into force. The new High Representative's first tasks were to develop its operational basis, coordinate with the Union's political process and deal with basic practical issues. While the speed with which these tasks were achieved did not appear impressive in hindsight, many had feared that the overall process could take much longer.

The transition to the Lisbon Treaty's provisions worked differently for the EU delegations abroad. Here, the Commission's offices took over the role of speaking for the EU from day one despite the fact that the EEAS was not established in Brussels for another year. The transition worked surprisingly well for most delegations, as the focus was put on achieving business continuity with respective third countries.

So as to prevent duplication in transferring existing structures to the EEAS and in an attempt to reach the 10% budget cut, existing resources were screened and redistributed where necessary. Given the different backgrounds of the EEAS staff, the most important challenge was and will be to strengthen its operational coherence, but also to ensure that expertise is capitalised on to develop new ideas. Further, it was important to define the relations between the EEAS, the Commission and the European Parliament and to find new working procedures.

Onestini concluded that the current member state presence in the EEAS—while certainly imperfect and in need of future revision—could be a blueprint for the future of the EU civil service. Issues raised in the questions and answers session revolved around the impact of Member State diplomats' integration into the service. While they obviously retained allegiances to their national diplomatic services due to their career interests, their access to other information sources equally meant that different and additional expertise was brought into EEAS meetings.

The EEAS and the member states: cooperation or rivalry?

Rosa Balfour, European Policy Centre, Brussels

Hugo Shorter, Head of Europe Directorate-External, FCO

Chair: Professor Iver Neumann, Montague Burton Professor of International Relations, London School of Economics

Rosa Balfour offered first insights from a research project into the EEAS and its relation with Member states with researchers from 15 countries. Currently there appears to be neither

cooperation nor rivalry between the two levels, and cooperation was bound to occur eventually, the main question being the degree. Overall, the creation of the EEAS had not led to a leap forward in Europeanisation patterns, nor had there been a step back, as its inception neither caused major changes in the structures of foreign ministries nor in policy substance. Balfour explained that aside from having a strong interest in good staffing decisions, member states had not developed an overall strategy towards the EEAS. While many diplomatic services had undergone budget cuts, none had rationalised their operations taking into account the existence of the EEAS. At the same time, there had not been a major backlash against the EEAS, with the exception of the EU's representation in international organisations - an issue to be addressed from different angles throughout the conference.

Balfour commented that initial research suggests that even sceptical member states expect the EEAS to play a role in coordinating foreign policies, and most seem relatively satisfied with the current outcomes. A difficult issue is differing views on political reporting, as member states are reluctant to share their information with the European level, another common theme over the next 1.5 days.

When looking at the overall issue of cooperation and rivalry, the key role for the EEAS is to be complementary. Member states have no desire for EEAS interference in their affairs. So far the EEAS has been humble in its relations with foreign affairs ministries. While the dual ownership of the EEAS was meant to bring the member states on board, there is also a risk for overall leadership, as states are bound to defend their involvement in foreign policy issues. Ms. Balfour concluded by reiterating that the necessity of politics of scale will eventually lead to a situation in which member states will have to cooperate with the EEAS.

Picking up the optimistic note, Hugo Shorter began by arguing that given that the EEAS and foreign ministries are extremely complex organisations, the EEAS had had a strong start. There are indeed a number of areas where the EEAS is making real differences to the outcome of European diplomacy. Using the negotiations with Iran, Shorter underlined the role of the EEAS in managing a demanding and complex diplomatic strategy. This was increasingly the case in regions such as the Middle East or the Balkans. Given this particular role that the EEAS has created for itself, one cannot speak of rivalry between it and the member states. While there are divergent views arising from different historical and democratic heritages in the European diplomatic landscape, this has to be seen as a healthy debate, rather than rivalry. The EEAS, as Catherine Ashton and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office have argued, is not perfect, however. There is a demand for it to create more policy initiatives and to develop an outlook that goes beyond the sum of member state interests. To this end the delegations abroad should be involved more closely in developing policies to be tabled in Brussels, and expanding the flow and security of information within the over-arching issue of the need for closer policy cooperation.

EU Diplomacy, Competence and International Law: Legal aspects of the new EU Diplomacy

Professor Ramses Wessel, University of Twente

Chair: David Spence, LSE

Given the nature of international diplomacy, the EU—when setting up its diplomatic service—had to base its operation on existing international law built mainly for the interaction of national diplomacies. Prof. Ramses Wessel, commented on the difficulties that the EU’s delegations abroad face under international law. Their roles and responsibilities are laid out in the EU’s Treaties, and are thus defined by European law. Their main purpose is to represent the Union, as well as its various policies in third countries and international organisations. This is rendered difficult by the fact that the EU is not a state, and diplomatic cooperation relies on recognition by other states. It is inherently difficult for other states legally to enter into diplomatic relations with the EU.

Any kind of diplomatic interaction with third states needs to be based on an ad hoc agreement. This begins with simple questions, such as whether EU delegations are to be regarded as embassies, and if a head of delegation is indeed an ambassador. In some states they are regarded as such, and the EU’s ‘ambassadors’ thus enjoy the same immunity as national ambassadors. In this view, the EU indeed adopts state-like functions in the field of diplomacy. However, this is hindered on the European side by the fact that there are no EU diplomatic passports. While one of the delegations’ responsibilities is to protect EU citizens abroad, the absence of an EU nationality makes this task difficult. Legally the EU’s delegations, in their responsibility to provide consular protection, are unable to act on behalf of individuals at the moment, as this can only be done for member states’ nationals. Other issues, such as jointly providing consular services such as issuing passports or coordinating citizen rescue can be implemented more easily. One aim is to save money.

The tasks of diplomatic missions according to the Geneva Convention are to protect, represent and to negotiate agreements. As to the tasks of the EU’s delegations, this fits theoretically into the existing legal regime despite the above-mentioned difficulties. However, international law will have to be adapted to the specificities of the EU case. As the EU’s diplomatic ambitions are a long-term project, the EEAS will seek to see its delegations recognised as fully-fledged embassies by third states.

The sociology /anthropology of European diplomacy: recruitment, training and staff perceptions in the EEAS

Dr. Karolina Pomorska, University of Cambridge

Dr. Simon Duke, EIPA, Maastricht

Chair: Professor Cris Shore, Auckland University, New Zealand

In a session that departed from the legal aspects of EU actorness in the field of international diplomacy, Dr. Karolina Pomorska discussed the sociological side of the diplomatic service. The focus of her presentation—based on an on-going interview-led study conducted jointly with Ana Juncos—was on the emergence of an *esprit de corps* in the EEAS. Dr. Pomorska argued that there are several obstacles preventing the emergence of a cohesive “team spirit” within the EEAS, thus influencing external perception of the Service negatively. First, there is a lack of leadership and a need to define the strategic visions of the Service and provide its staff with a sense of common purpose. Secondly, internal communication—another fundamental factor influencing the degree of *esprit de corps* within an organisation—has been ineffective, to the degree that the officials interviewed by Dr. Pomorska had reported that the EEAS’ establishment constituted an example of

how not to communicate. In fact, staff were left wondering what were the “rules” according to which they are expected to operate. This has had a negative impact on the public image of the EEAS, making it largely one of unmet expectations, while EEAS-wide mutual trust, another component of *esprit de corps*, was lacking. Finally, the study revealed a “training deficit” within the Service, as none of the officials interviewed had undergone post-specific training, which would have solidified the focus on the team versus the individual and thus contributed to the emergence of a dedicated *esprit de corps*. All these findings point to significant challenges for effective leadership and management.

Dr. Simon Duke discussed personnel training within the EEAS in addition to geographic and gender imbalances within the Service. First, he lamented that the EEAS is currently “drowning in strategies, but does not have a strategy”, leading to a sort of existential crisis that is coupled with ever-tightening budgetary constraints. Dr. Duke’s overall argument was that although EEAS staff selection criteria seemed to include “merit, adequate balance and meaningful presence of all [EU] nationals,” these were subjective concepts - left vague, given general reluctance in the Service actually to address issues of (im)balance, in turn partly due to the biggest member states’ inherently privileged status when it comes to supplying qualified candidates for EEAS positions and diplomatic resources. Thus, it should not be a big surprise that the representation of the Big Three member states is heavy within the EEAS.

Gender balance is a slightly different matter, but there are similarly few surprises here, in terms of women being under-represented in higher role grades, and “over-represented” in the lower grades. Within delegations, there is even less female representation, due to, in Dr. Duke’s view, practical aspects of family and spousal employment provisions.

In terms of improving the balance situation, there have been symbolic gestures and Baroness Ashton’s concern is evident. If lasting progress is to be made, however, concrete measures are required, such as greater sensitivity to gender issues on the part of the Consultative Committee on Appointments, mentoring schemes, better spousal employment opportunities, better parental leave arrangements and perhaps even a dedicated task force. Regarding geographical balance, an obvious solution is increasing the focus on training and preparation of EEAS staff, which itself necessitates longer induction course periods and coordination with other training bodies such as the EU Defence College and DEVCO, for instance. Other solutions include prioritising training of locally-engaged staff in the delegations, as well as carrying out a “needs analysis” of skills which EEAS needs and wishes to foster.

In conclusion, Prof. Shore reflected on the two presentations and suggested the addition of a common sense of purpose and shared symbolism to contribute to the emergence of a comprehensive *esprit de corps*. The EEAS was encumbered by the lack of consensus on the real purpose of the EEAS.

The **Q and A session** focused on specific difficulties faced by EEAS staff—particularly those transitioning from national services—such as professional security and clarity regarding their roles within the EEAS and the “sudden” switch to a multicultural, multilingual environments from a national one. A suggestion was ventured that a constant focus on what the EEAS is ultimately for was actually unnecessary and even disparaging, as it was proposed that the Treaty specified precisely what the EEAS was for – namely, supporting the work of the HR and VP, as well as “doing all the work” of the Commission DGs. A recurring theme was a discussion of how “pessimistic” one

must be regarding EEAS problems – could these be “just teething problems” of a new, complex organisation?

The EU as a diplomatic actor: bilateral diplomacy pre- and post-Lisbon: the EU delegations in Rwanda and the Congo

Bruno Hanses, Political Counsellor, EU Delegation, Kinshasa

Daniel Schaer, Political Counsellor, EU Delegation, Kigali

Chair and respondent: Professor Brian Hocking, Loughborough University

The second day of the conference, introduced by Prof. Brian Hocking, moved from the conceptual to the more practical, beginning with two practitioner presentations. **Bruno Hanses** focused on the daily operations of the EU delegation to the DRC. **Mr. Hanses** highlighted stability, security, human rights, democracy and rule of law and economic development as the overarching goals of the delegation. These goals require effective cooperation between development, crisis management, and humanitarian aid structures of the EU presence in the DRC. A large part of the delegation’s work is co-ordination. The EU heads of mission of the ten member states present in the DRC meet weekly, chaired by the EEAS ambassador. The political and economic counsellors also meet regularly, as do human rights, defence and security reform experts. Key actors outside the EU, such as colleagues from MONUSCO and various US bodies, are also invited to relevant meetings. Broader co-ordination takes place in the two multilateral organisations—the World Bank and the UNDP. All this has fostered valuable diplomatic networks. **Mr. Hanses** pointed to the information sharing aspect of the DRC delegation’s work. This involves weekly political reports to Brussels combining news, analysis and opinion. Reports are shared with member states, as a key component of the gradually emerging common EU view of the situation in Congo and its demands. Although political coordination is essential in a diplomatic environment with multiple actors the EU’s work, like that of all large organisations must contend with the delays of a complex administrative environment. A feature highlighted by **Mr. Hanses** is a kind of client atmosphere developing among the member states vis-à-vis the diplomatic service. Without a pre-Lisbon EU Presidency looming, there is sometimes a tendency “to lean back” and leave business to the EEAS. In conclusion, is all this a case of old wine in new bottles or is it diplomacy of a new kind? **Mr. Hanses’** verdict was that “there was a lot of old wine, but not necessarily bad wine.” The goals of the DRC delegation are worthwhile, but impact depends on the ever-critical political will to use the instruments available, rather than getting caught up in detail of legal texts and treaties.

After giving a structural, practical overview the EU delegation in Rwanda, **Daniel Schaer** also turned to the challenges “on the ground.” Inadequate intelligence is one challenge, as the delegations do not have defence attachés, while member states often do not share national intelligence with the delegations. Information may be shared informally on a bilateral level, but is it right to use anecdotal information in taking decisions regarding major funds? **Mr. Schaer** also underlined that there are solutions to such challenges, illustrated in Afghanistan, where the appointment of the EUSR/head of delegation allowed for information-sharing and coordination between all the member states. Previously, UNAMA had been responsible for overall coordination, but was often uninterested in communicating with all the “small member states,” limiting their access to reliable information. This illustrated **Mr. Schaer’s** second point- the importance of the EEAS to small and new member states,

which have fewer embassies around the world. The Service allows them to widen their diplomatic coverage and provides organisational support.

Opening the floor to the Q and A, Prof. Brian Hocking observed that the two presentations reflected what he terms “hybrid bilateralism,” in which national foreign ministers and foreign services are reinterpreting the national interest within the global interest. The questions and comments which followed focused on the interplay between the national, regional, and international aspects of today’s diplomacy. In response to a question about the nature of the “political reporting” carried out by the Service, **Mr. Schaer** attested to his experience of keeping interested member states informed through general analysis followed by concrete suggestions/comments, while **Mr. Hanses** added the attempt to “agree [on the reading of the situation] with member states” to the mix. The example of the EU Rwanda delegation was also given as a case where member state coordination chiefly takes place within the EEAS, although this is different in situations such as Afghanistan, where due to the number of political levels and variations in aid involved, a significant proportion of diplomatic action follows national lines. In the case of the DRC delegation UNSC meetings mean that very few member states are involved and they do not necessarily report back to the EEAS. The theme of member states’ information sharing, or rather lack thereof, with the EEAS was a theme **Prof. Hocking** pointed to in stressing that a good deal of sharing takes place in Brussels, albeit in a confidential, discreet manner. Finally, both speakers were keen to get across the point that their national affiliations do not supersede their roles as EU diplomats, and although they share information, they “do not report” to their governments.

Multilateral diplomacy post Lisbon – the Delegations in Geneva and Vienna

Dr. Joëlle Hivonnet, China Division, EEAS, former Head of UN section, EU Delegation to Geneva

Dr. Lars-Erik Lundin, Swedish National Defence College and former head of EU Delegation, Vienna

Chair: David Spence

The second session of the day turned to the dynamics of the “multilateral” EU delegations in Geneva and Vienna. **Joëlle Hivonnet** noted the lack of common understanding among EU delegations regarding the practical implications of the Lisbon Treaty for their work. This is combined with uncertainty as to the EU’s status in international organisations, particularly the “division of labour” between the Commission and the EEAS in representing the Union. The Geneva delegation had faced the challenge of relations with a number of international organisations and coordination with not only the Commission delegation, the EU mission to the WTO and Council liaison office, but also between various EU competences. Thus, in the early absence of instructions from headquarters, the delegation attempted to function according to a coordination “matrix”, drafted by the EEAS in consultation with member states’ delegations. It was destined to form the basis of permanent arrangements in the course of time, but the matrix served in the short term as a series of transitional agreements. The search for agreement among the various EU actors regarding how to operate once the Lisbon arrangements were in place was an ever-present conundrum. As a result, rotating presidencies still read statements in UN General Assembly debates, despite the adoption of the GA Resolution A/RES/65/276 (which gave the EU its present status/rights). **Dr. Hivonnet** mentioned the difficulty posed by member states’ fears of EU “competence creep”— raised by the UK during the “matrix” discussions, for example. The EEAS was arguably speaking on behalf of the EU, rather than

the (preferred) *EU and its member states*. This might somehow transfer to the EEAS competences not granted by the Lisbon Treaty. Third countries were not actually bothered, however, because they saw no difference between the EU and the “EU and its member states” formulations. Instructions regarding the competence creep issue coming from the UK government were actually emanating from the very top.

Thus, it was safe to conclude that the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty in the multilateral environment was falling short of expectations. The *sui generis* nature of the EEAS as service “between” the Council and the Commission posed issues of balance between member state control and centralisation, but while institutional issues were being worked out, valuable time and ground was being lost as the international situation was changing very quickly.

How then, might such challenges be overcome? **Dr. Lars-Erik Lundin’s** presentation focused on three principles of effective multilateralism, basing views on a review of EU activities in the framework of NATO, the Council of Europe, CIS, CSTO (Collective Security Treaty Organisation) in Moscow, and the OSCE. **Dr. Lundin** urged first putting objectives firmly above “former relationships, meetings, and speeches”, second prioritisation, followed by focus. The EU, OSCE and the UN were priorities, followed closely by a further three: the Council of Europe, NATO, and CSTO. Developing a sense of ownership among all parties involved in a particular policy issue was essential. How would that work in practice? **Dr. Lundin** gave the example of the OSCE 2010 summit in Astana hosted by the President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, which presented the EU with a political and normative dilemma, due to the poor democracy and human rights record. The EU position was formulated on the basis of four priorities (conflict, human rights, transnational threats and arms control) discussed within the Political and Security Committee (PSC). These involved tough choices for the member states and intense negotiations for all parties. Subsequent pre-Summit negotiations took place between heads of mission in frequent meetings with a short list of priorities. Instructions were possible almost in real time from the hierarchies of member states: in many cases, the EU could actually react faster than the American inter-agency process. In the end, member states were able to say that they were not going to approve documents from this Summit unless they fulfilled certain commonly-agreed standards. This would have been extremely difficult to voice unilaterally. Another example was the EU’s ability to “sway a number of significant voting situations” in the IAEA general conference on the Middle East- only possible because of a joint approach involving EURATOM and the Commission.

Priority shortlists and organisational-political capability commitments makes for efficient decision-making, and allows the focus to turn to mustering the necessary resources to achieve goals. Focusing on resources, **Dr. Lundin** discussed the merits of a solution to the Vienna delegation’s under-resourcing problem since the end of the pre-Lisbon era of rotating presidencies. Appointing two EU ambassadors in Vienna, one on the EU and one on the OSCE side, would allow for enhanced impact and continuity. In contrast to Dr. Hivonnet, **Dr. Lundin** concluded on an optimistic note, attesting to the commitment to the EU he found in his diplomatic colleagues from member states, and describing the EEAS as a way for the EU to fill an essential vacuum in international relations.

The **Q and A session** turned to a key problem of EEAS impact and coherence – the inherent legal ambiguity of the Lisbon Treaty and the resulting divergent interpretations of EU competence and potential “competence creep”. Participants discussed differences of opinion regarding creating

external competence through transferring internal competence to the external dimension. This was both criticised and defended on several fronts, as was the UK's apparent lack of cooperation with and trust in EU institutions. A brief debate took place on whether or not "competence creep" concerns were fundamental. The UK's recent co-location of embassies with Commonwealth states rather than with EU might, it was feared, indicate that the UK is "moving away" from the EU.

The EEAS: Democratic control and the European Parliament

Charles Tannock, MEP, London European Conservatives and Reformists' Foreign Affairs Co-ordinator, Rapporteur for the Horn of Africa

Chair: Brian Crowe, UK Ambassador, former Director General for external and politico-military affairs, Council of Ministers

In a discussion focused on the UK, **Charles Tannock**, a Conservative supporter of British membership of the European Union, discussed the role of the European Parliament in exercising "democratic supervision" of the EEAS. After 13 years in office, Tannock argued that the EU, despite its faults and the need for reform and flexibility, was a force for political and economic good in the world - and helpful to British national interests. Similarly, he argued the EEAS could be of great value in charting a geostrategic course, helping the EU better to exercise collective power in key issue areas. Its ultimate success, however, would depend on its performance in various international organisations and the resolution of competence issues. Its ability to garner popular support and resources and, not least, its openness to democratic supervision was crucial. Tannock stressed the necessity for the EU to foster greater accountability "in the pursuit of foreign policy aims agreed behind closed doors."

Many would want the EEAS to do more, but the Conservative view is that the EEAS supplements national diplomacy and must not seek to supplant bilateral relations. Although the British Foreign Office has said that the UK has been able to amplify its foreign policy objectives through the EEAS, there is no evidence to date of any cost-saving through economies of scale (essential for higher budget requests) or burden-sharing in which EU delegations take over some of the national embassy workload.

On scrutiny and oversight Baroness Ashton has granted MEPs new *de facto* powers vis-à-vis the EEAS, such as guaranteed regular appearances in person before Parliament. Tannock mentioned the symbolic but significant gesture of Ashton inviting five MEPs to join her task force visit to Egypt. Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs' is now able to conduct reviews of EU heads of delegation and EU special representatives. So far - because the candidates have been of a very good quality - this power has not yet been significantly tested, but there was encouraging evidence of effectiveness of the EEAS in its role as a messenger for the CFSP. But, there are weaknesses as well. It is essential for the EEAS to engage in more visible foreign policy. The abolition of the post of the EUSR for the South Caucasus and EEAS foot-dragging during the Libya conflict did not help this objective. Turf wars with the Commission in third country delegations (eg. over trade and development issues) are also damaging.

During **Q and A**, **Mr. Tannock** reiterated his opinion that the EEAS has on balance amplified UK national interests, and expanded on his view of scrutiny and oversight as intended to ensure "there was no single foreign policy outweighing British national interests". At the same time, he provided

examples of the EP “flexing its [post-Lisbon] muscle” in foreign and trade policy, such as in the SWIFT vote and free trade agreement negotiations with Peru and Colombia. Nevertheless, as the EU moves into an uncertain future, **Mr. Tannock** reckoned that economics (Eurocrisis) would outweigh politics (CFSP/CSDP). This would also apply to the EEAS, as its economic value (saving national ministries money) could lead to expanded political functions (e.g. consular services in the delegations?).

Normative power Europe: the future of the EU diplomatic system

Dan Smith, Secretary-General, International Alert and *Prof. Steven Blockmans*, University of Amsterdam and Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), Brussels

Chair: Tamara Takacs, Centre for the Law of External Relations, The Hague

The final session of the conference focused on a less tangible and more controversial aspect of the EU’s external influence—that of value-based, normative power. **Dan Smith** questioned why normative power and the EEAS are discussed together in the first place, answering that this is because the EU is not a state, and because the “normative” realm represents an area of “significant comparative advantage” for the EU vis-à-vis other international actors and because there are opportunities “not yet exploited” to exercise normative power. Any discussion of the EEAS as an implementing instrument of “normative power Europe”, he argued, is bound up in the ultimate purpose of the Service. **Mr. Smith** conceded that a major justification for the existence of the Service—even enshrined in the Treaty—is to “promote values” in EU politics and the economy throughout the world. He was, however, “extremely sceptical” of a foreign policy based entirely on promoting values, particularly any kind of “pan-European, good” values. Not only does this open the EU up to criticism of hypocrisy and damage legitimacy, but it also allows those opposed to these very values and the EU in general to “score cheap points” at the EU’s expense. In addition, such “value promotion” requires heavy PR presence across the globe, not a foreign policy making mechanism to which the EEAS aspires.

Mr. Smith proposed an alternative version of the EEAS’ ultimate purpose; developing strong and sustainable peace-building and development strategies in the face of the demographic, political, and environmental pressures facing the world today. He argued that not much was being done to promote these objectives, and the problems involved could not be resolved even by the largest member states alone. Focusing on these dimensions would lead to an EEAS projecting the “soft, normative” power of the EU as a major actor in international affairs. The opportunity to promote solutions to problems, “had not yet been missed” in building the EEAS.....

Partly echoing this perspective, **Prof. Steven Blockmans** observed that the EU’s “normative power”, and particularly its acceptance externally, has considerably diminished in recent years, particularly with the advent of the economic crisis. He focused on a set of recommendations to strengthen the EEAS in light of its 2013 review. Firstly, reiterating a common point throughout the conference, issues of competence and coordination with the Commission and the Council bodies, must be resolved. Specific recommended steps include completing the “transfer” of European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) to the EEAS and integrating the Service with DEVCO, and the resolution of demarcation between the EEAS and the Commission. Prof. Blockmans recommended strengthening the Vice President part of the High Representative’s mandate, for instance by having

this post chair the RELEX Commissioners group in the European Commission, and thus providing the basis for close collaboration with CFSP. Finally, cooperation with member states' diplomacies should be bolstered - centrally, within multilateral institutions and bilaterally. This could involve information and infrastructure sharing.

The **Q and A session** returned the conversation to the relationship between national and EU-wide aspects of foreign policy. Should a *European* diplomatic service promote *European* interests beyond the "narrow, materialist" interests of nation states? **Dan Smith** ventured that a European interest, largely compatible with most national interests, could promote an increasingly law-based international system, not least because member states have separately already "opted" for such a system. **Prof. Blockmans** agreed on the desirability of a law-based multilateral system and reminded that another long-standing European interest was the promotion of peace and security in Europe, recognised by the Nobel Committee. The value added of the EEAS in light of established national foreign ministries was discussed further. **Mr. Smith** believed the transnational pressures identified in his presentation could not be handled institutionally, organisationally, or conceptually by member states' foreign policy structures. He saw the EEAS as a way out of bureaucratic, turf-based boundaries preventing effective policy formation. **Prof. Blockmans** also picked up the added value theme. Better civil-military coordination of the EU crisis management apparatus, by linking the relevant Service structures to the civilian aspects of CSDP, should be the objective.

Closing Remarks

David Spence

David Spence closed the conference with the observation that the discussions had not only been about the EEAS but about the changing nature of diplomacy as a whole. "Structural" diplomacy includes multiple levels of engagement and goes beyond the "typical" foreign policy output of a state. In addition, the EEAS can actually "do" that kind of diplomacy, whereas EU member states are constrained by resource availability and the budgets required for concerted action on all fronts. In sum, the conference had demonstrated that the EEAS represents a value to member states, the EU itself and international affairs in general.