

**The European External Action Service:  
Improving synergy between the Union and its member states**

The European External Action Service (EEAS) is a major instrument for safeguarding the strategic interests of the Union. In a globalising world where more and more countries and non-state actors are claiming a place, it is vital that the European Union deploys all the means at its disposal, adapts them to new realities and develops new ones as needed. The effectiveness of EU external policy also largely depends on its ability to mobilise and coordinate the resources of the Union and its member states.

Our success will primarily depend on cooperation between the EEAS and the diplomatic services of the member states (art. 27 TEU) which requires permanent and active engagement by the member states, both in Brussels and in the field. The European External Action Service (EEAS) must create synergies between the actions and means deployed by the Union and its member states. It must aspire to the highest standards of diplomatic activity and (cost-) efficiency, giving effective expression to the Union's global ambitions and putting it on a par with the main international players.

In response to the call made by the European Council of 16 September 2010, this memorandum contains several initial thoughts on how to create more synergies between the European and national levels, enhance coordination between institutional actors, improve the integration of relevant instruments and policies, and step up cooperation between the EEAS and the member states.

The Foreign Affairs Council should, on a regular basis, evaluate the EEAS' interaction with the diplomatic services of the member states, with a view to assessing the progress made and identifying necessary improvements.

Better cooperation on the ground in third countries and international organisations

The EU is not yet represented everywhere, nor are all of its delegations at full strength. It is important at this initial stage as well as later for member states to support the EEAS and vice versa, through efficient cooperation and sensible burden-sharing, so as to achieve maximum synergy between the EEAS and the foreign missions of member states. Union delegations will have to keep the locally accredited diplomatic missions of member states fully involved in the analytical work and in the search for common approaches.

It would be advisable to evaluate cooperation between the EEAS and member states in third countries and international organisations, including by reviewing best practices worldwide, with a view to defining common guidelines by autumn 2011. We suggest that the High Representative puts forward some suggestions of common guidelines to the PSC by autumn 2011.

Exchange of information, joint analyses, coordinated programming

Increased information sharing and joint analyses will enhance mutual confidence, a sense of common interests and synergetic effects. The EEAS should aim to work as openly and transparently as possible, with the necessary safeguards for external protection and confidentiality. EU delegations should increasingly have access to each others' reports. Exchanges of information, including of reports from EU delegations, should be ensured between EU delegations and member states' missions. Member states not represented locally should have similar access to the reports of the EU delegations. Similarly, exchange of information and reports should be ensured between the EEAS headquarters and member states.

The EU delegations and member states' missions could increasingly produce joint reports including joint analysis, operational recommendations and lines to take for discussion in Council bodies. Member states and the EEAS should continually inform each other of travel plans and outcome of visits by their senior representatives.

Joint press analyses or translations of documents could generate economies of scale, including for member states that are not locally represented.

The member states' intelligence services and the EU's Joint Situation Centre (SITCEN) should increasingly share confidential information and analyses. Agreements must be made and working methods developed for this purpose.

These exchanges will require a secure system of communication between relevant EU institutions and member states, both in third countries and between Brussels and member states' capitals. We suggest that the HR make proposals to this end, taking account of budgetary constraints.

#### Consular cooperation

The Council Decision establishing the EEAS provides that the Union delegations can support member states in their role of providing consular protection to citizens of the Union in third countries. Responsibility for consular tasks lies primarily with the member states, but the EU has added value to offer in this field. To enable the Union's delegations to play this supporting role, their capacities to act in this field should be progressively developed. This role can of course only be taken up by a particular delegation on behalf of EU member states once it has the necessary resources. Further exploration is also needed of the areas in which joint action is useful, for instance when the Union can have a greater impact than individual member states. Possible examples include demarches on child abduction and on the treatment of detained persons.

Implementation of article 23 TFEU on consular protection will also require better cooperation among member states and in particular a better mutual knowledge of the rules on consular protection in the different member states.

The Union must play a visible role above all in crisis situations. With due regard for the responsibility that each member state has for its own nationals, the EEAS can play a coordinating role in practical and logistical matters such as evacuations, the provision of shelter and the deployment of expert teams. The EEAS can also temporarily house consular staff for member states that do not have a mission at a particular location.

Other areas where the EEAS could take on tasks are: the provision of information for travel advice notices and on human rights reports that are relevant to asylum cases, support for registration of and communication with EU nationals, and the issuance of European emergency travel documents. Further study is advisable of the possible support that the EEAS could provide in consular matters within the parameters set by the Treaty and the Council Decision.

#### Coherent Foreign and Security Policy decision making processes

The PSC should play an increasingly central role in discussions and decision making on foreign and security policy (including crisis response). It is important that the PSC get its information from the EU delegations and member states. A strong PSC-role in pre-decisional consultations between the EEAS and member states before decisions are made gives ministers and the High Representative the necessary scope to focus in the Foreign Affairs Council on key outstanding political issues and strategic orientations.

In case of emergency, the High Representative and the foreign ministers should all be able to confer collectively in a secure way without having to meet in person. We suggest as a matter of urgency a study on improved and secure video conferencing between capitals and the EEAS.

The External Action Service is also crucial in the coordination and mobilisation of available means within the Union. Fast-track consultation and decision making for crisis response also require clear procedures and chains of command. In case of (potential) crises, all relevant scenarios (disaster response, humanitarian aid, consular protection, civil-military options, diplomatic action) for comprehensive action must be explored. Contingency planning on various options must be activated at the earliest stage of a crisis in order to be prepared for a rapid response to assistance requests. Synergies between crisis response structures are imperative. PSC must ensure full political control and guidance particularly in crisis situations.

Further improvements could follow from a collective 'lessons learned' process on the crisis in the Southern Neighbourhood. The aim would be to improve consultation, coordination, collective communication and joint action between member states and Institutions in emergency situations. The PSC should be tasked to initiate this process.

#### Development Co-operation

The EEAS has also a crucial role to play in integrating development policy (including the objective of poverty eradication) into the EU's overall external action and ensuring better complementarity between the Union and members states. The Council Decision establishing the EEAS gives it major responsibilities for the external action instruments and programming. The EEAS should help to ensure more effective and systematic coordination of aid programmes at EU and national levels, particularly by promoting joint programming, which requires joint analysis for the country strategies and the formulation of joint response strategies. The programming cycles of the EEAS and of the member states should be streamlined as much as possible. As the EEAS will be responsible for preparing the three most strategic phases of the programming cycle (allocation, Country Strategy Papers, national indicative programmes) development and programming credentials are a prerequisite when selecting candidates for key positions.

#### Joint communication

Public diplomacy and communication via social networks are becoming increasingly important, and the EU should take full advantage of the scope they offer to disseminate our messages. The adoption of common lines on important issues would reinforce the coherence of the messages. Each embassy website should include a link to the Union delegation website. A network of spokespersons, both at the delegations and in Brussels, could be established for this purpose.

#### A shared strategic culture

In the interests of an effective diplomatic service, all agents and personnel need to develop a common diplomatic culture. The fact that staff of diplomatic services are being employed on a fully equal basis as temporary agents in the EEAS will help make this happen. Joint training of diplomats and other agents to be deployed at EU and national missions should be a priority.

To step up the process, it should also be made possible for EEAS staff to be temporarily employed by the diplomatic service of a member state, in addition to the employment of member states' staff at the EEAS. Secretaries-general and directors-general could organize an annual meeting with their counterparts in the member states to assess the common approaches and the resources used in the service and to explore ways to make our actions more coherent.

To ensure an influx of diplomats from member states into the EEAS - occupying up to one third of the positions - vacancies must be announced in good time and timelines must be set in such a way that it enables member states to put forward their candidates.