

December 2012

**House of Lords European Union Committee (Subcommittee on External Affairs)
Call for evidence**

Contribution of the European External Action Service (EEAS)

1. What are the main achievements of the EEAS since its establishment? Where has it been less successful?

Following the adoption of the Council Decision of 26 July 2010 on the organization and functioning of the European External Action Service and associated changes to the financial and staff regulations of the EU, the EEAS was established on 1 January 2011.

The EEAS was established by bringing together existing structures and staff from the European Commission and the General Secretariat of the Council and already working in Brussels and in Delegations on external relations, including Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP). A number of Member States diplomats were recruited from the outset in the service, including at the highest level of the EEAS, in line with the goal of reaching the presence of 1/3 of seconded national diplomats.

Since its establishment, the most immediate challenge for the service has been the promotion of a comprehensive approach to EU external relations and foreign policy in line with the objectives of the Lisbon Treaty. In doing this, the service acts in accordance to its main mandate which is to support the High Representative in discharging the combined responsibilities previously assured by the rotating Presidency in the area of foreign policy, by the High Representative and by the former Commissioner for External Relations. In the short space of two-years, the service has established procedures and arrangements to ensure greater synergy of the EU's external action and more integrated policy making.

In this context, one of the first challenges for the High Representative and the EEAS was to take over the tasks previously managed by the rotating Presidency for chairing and setting the agenda of Foreign Affairs Council meetings, of the Political and Security Committee and of all relevant supporting Council working groups in Brussels. Similarly with the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, EU delegations around the world had to take on the additional responsibilities of local co-ordination with the diplomatic missions of Member States and external representation of EU foreign policy with third countries and multilateral organizations.

Policy areas on which the HR/VP and the EEAS has particularly focused over the past two years include:

- the strong EU response to the Arab Spring and related events in the Southern Mediterranean, drawing on the instruments of the European Neighbourhood Policy and the crisis response capacities of the EU;

- the lead responsibility for the High Representative in the E3+3 negotiations with Iran on its nuclear programme;
- a stronger EU effort to move forward in the Middle East peace process through a more active role for the Quartet;
- the central role of the EU in bringing together the parties in the Belgrade-Pristina talks;
- a new concept of Task Forces, bringing together EU institutions, member States, international financial institutions and the private sector, to support partner countries in their reform programmes. This innovative approach has been used so far in Tunisia, Jordan and Egypt.
- a renewed commitment on the central place of human rights and democracy in the external action of the EU through the adoption of its ambitious New EU Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy, the appointment of the first ever EU Special Representative for Human Rights and the establishment of the European Endowment for Democracy (EED)
- an active contribution from the EU, based on the concept of the comprehensive approach, to addressing the tensions in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel through the adoption and implementation of new EU strategies..
- a more structured approach to relations with the EU's major strategic partners - including effective co-ordination of preparations for summits and other high-level meetings -,allows for more strategic cooperation on key international issues (Iran, MEPP, piracy, cyber security...). The HR/VP and the EEAS have contributed to strengthening the transatlantic relationship by coordinating approaches with the US in many cases and undertaking a number of joint initiatives including a joint visit to the Western Balkans by HR Ashton and SoS Clinton.
- an inclusive approach to crisis management, in particular through the creation of a crisis platform, which brings together all relevant EEAS and Commission services . This was instrumental in the rapid creation of an EU presence in Libya, South Sudan, Burma/Myanmar and Somalia.

This progress has been achieved in parallel to the very considerable challenge of setting up the EEAS as a functionally autonomous body in a very difficult economic and budgetary context. The EEAS has undertaken two in-depth screening exercises of the use of its human resources in HQ to eliminate duplication between the activities transferred from the services of the Commission and the Council Secretariat. These have led to considerable internal redeployment of staff to meet the new tasks under the Lisbon Treaty and to enable the service to function as an autonomous organization with its own legal service, communication department, financial management and recruitment policies.

The creation of the EEAS is however still work in progress. The creation of a common corporate culture in any new organization takes a number of years – it will take a few more years for the EEAS to reach full cruising speed, taking account of the diverse origins of the staff of the service (national diplomats from all Member States as well as permanent officials and other staff from the Council Secretariat and the Commission).

The service also needs more time to consolidate co-operation with Member States and the other EU institutions (both in Brussels and through EU delegations). Finally, the service will continue to work on developing internal human resources, as well as financial, security and administrative policies to meet the needs of the organization in these areas.

2. How well does the EEAS meet the objectives set out for it in the Lisbon Treaty and the Council Decision? Has the High representative/Vice President fulfilled her mandate and the Council Decision for setting up the EEAS? What remains to be done?

Under the Lisbon Treaty, the High Representative/Vice President is responsible for conducting the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the Union and for ensuring the consistency of the external action of the Union. The EEAS has created the necessary departments to support the High Representative/Vice President in these areas, including divisions responsible for policy co-ordination and strategic planning in the political affairs department under the responsibility of the Deputy Secretary General for Political Affairs. In line with Article 4(3) of the EEAS decision, the crisis management and planning directorate, the civilian planning and conduct capability and the EU Military staff are placed under the direct responsibility of the High Representative. However, consistent with the comprehensive approach, the EEAS has developed effective co-ordination arrangements to ensure consistency between the CSDP work of these services and the geographic and thematic responsibilities of other EEAS departments.

The existence of appropriate administrative structures and co-ordination arrangements within the EEAS is an important precondition for the consistency of the external policy of the Union. However, the coherence and effectiveness of the EU's external relations also depends on the degree of political commitment and consensus between Member States and other institutional stakeholders.

3. How effective has the EEAS been in communicating and promoting the EU's policies and values? Has it implemented Council CSFP and CSDP Decisions effectively?

Public diplomacy is a vital tool to communicate the Union's policies. In 2011, during the first year of its existence, the High Representative and the EEAS issued **593** statements and Declarations. These included 328 statements by the High Representative, 128 spokesperson's statements as well as 51 local EU statements and 86 declarations by the High Representative on behalf of the EU. The latter two categories were co-ordinated and agreed in advance with Member States.

In 2012, the EEAS has thus far produced a total of **544** statements and Declarations – of which 226 have been statements by the High Representative, 185 statements by the spokesperson as well as 75 local EU statements and 58 declarations by the High Representative on behalf of the EU.

EU Delegations also carry out extensive outreach to third countries. This can include démarches to third states and international organisations - where the Union's positions and policies are formally communicated to third states. EU Delegations are also in constant contact with key interlocutors in host countries.

The EU holds around 80 bi-lateral meetings and political dialogues on Ministerial level every year. These meetings provide opportunities to build common understanding, to design joint initiatives and to solve problems on sensitive issues at political level. The political dialogue commitments originate from political commitments with strategic partners (18 per year), with other partners (10) and with regional organisations/bodies (19) and, from legal obligations, such as Association or Co-operation Agreements (27).

There are 14 live CSDP Missions and Joint Actions, in Kosovo, Afghanistan, Georgia, the Middle East, Iraq, Sudan, Congo, the Sahel and the Horn of Africa. These draw extensively on experts and other resources seconded from Member States and are managed jointly by the relevant services in the EEAS and by the Foreign Policy Instruments service of the Commission, both working under the Authority of the High Representative.

The creation of the Strategic Communications Division has ensured a coordinated communication of the EEAS' activities in EU member states, institutions and third countries.

4. Has the creation of the EEAS led to a more coherent and integrated EU foreign policy?

The role of the High representative/Vice President and the support she receives from the EEAS provide the necessary institutional framework for a more coherent and integrated EU foreign policy. In particular as Vice President of the Commission, she is well placed to ensure the consistency of the external projection of Community policies. And the declaration on political accountability associated with the EEAS decision provides a reinforced basis for co-operation with the European Parliament. Finally, the growing presence of EEAS staff from national diplomatic services also contributes to a better articulation between the foreign policy agenda of the EU and the priorities of Member States.

The High Representative not only chairs the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) but is also the permanent EU foreign policy interlocutor for third parties, thereby ensuring continuity and avoiding a the situation where a different foreign minister took this role every six months. The EEAS supports her in all these tasks.

The EEAS and the Commission have jointly presented initiatives on a range of issues including a new strategy for the European Neighbourhood, a partnership for democracy and shared prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean. The creation of the EEAS has also contributed to closer co-operation between the relevant geographical and thematic services with the EU Special Representatives, appointed to add visibility and focus to the EU's engagement in key policy areas.

The transformation of former Commission Delegations around the world into fully fledged EU Delegations performing political analysis and reporting and being in charge of EU coordination contributed to a more coherent and effective EU action on the ground.

5. Has the EEAS been effective in its response to crises?

The EEAS has strengthened the EU's capacity for crisis response, including the creation of a new position of Managing Director with overall responsibility for this area. The service has also created a Crisis Management Board to co-ordinate the different EU actors involved in responding to crises and holds regular meetings of the Crisis Platform in response to specific

crisis situations in third countries, involving relevant expertise across the EEAS as well as the Commission. These structures have made a positive contribution to the EU response in Libya, Ivory Coast, the Horn of Africa, Syria and elsewhere.

6. How does the balance of responsibilities between the EEAS and the Commission work out in the development area? Has the creation of the EEAS improved the implementation of the EU's development policy?

The EEAS decision (article 9) establishes the division of labour between the EEAS and the services of the Commission in the management of external action instruments and programming.

The guiding principle is that decisions relating to development assistance are prepared through close cooperation between the EEAS and relevant services in the Commission. In particular the EEAS prepares - in consultation with the Commission's Directorate General for Development Cooperation - decisions regarding country strategies and indicative allocations of funds.

This co-operation has worked well particularly in the preparation of the new generation of instruments submitted to the budgetary authority under the next multi-annual financial perspectives. Pending a decision on the new Multi-annual Financial Perspectives, work is under way between the EEAS and the Commission to start preparing the programming of the new instruments, under the leadership of the Commissioner responsible for the Development Policy and the HR/VP.

Once agreement is reached on the next Multi-annual Financial Perspectives, close cooperation between the Commission's services and the EEAS will continue to finalize the programming exercise and ensure implementation of the new programmes.

7. How well does the relationship between the EEAS and the Commission work in the trade area? Does the EEAS have a role to play in EU trade policy and its implementation?

The Commission has lead responsibility for the EU trade policy. Trade issues are naturally an important component in the overall relationship between the EU and many third countries and are therefore subject to the responsibilities of the High Representative/Vice President in coordinating the external relations policies of the Union. The EEAS, working in particular through the geographical services, supports the High Representative in this task.

8. How well does the EEAS work as an institution?

The EEAS is not formally an EU institution under the Treaty, but is treated as an institution for the purposes of the EU staff regulation and the financial regulation. One of the main challenges in setting up the service has been to develop the necessary policies and systems for management of human resources and financial management, in the absence of additional resources for this purpose. The EEAS has made considerable progress in these areas, with the support from relevant services in the Commission and the Council Secretariat under a number of service level agreements (SLAs). These SLAs have provided a viable basis for the EEAS to function, without duplicating administrative capacity in-house, but have in some areas had as a consequence a lack of flexibility to meet the specific needs of the service.

9. How well has the objective of a geographically and gender balanced staff been met? How well has the objective been met of one third of staff from the diplomatic services of the Member States by mid 2013, a third from the Council Secretariat and a third from the Commission? Have staff been adequately trained to perform the diplomatic role? If not what are the omissions?

The EEAS circulated detailed figures on the staffing situation in the service on 24 July 2012. This sets out progress in relation to the objectives of ensuring a meaningful presence of nationals of all Member States as well as the increase in the number of women in the service, including in management and Head of Delegation positions. By November 2012, 249 of the 901 staff at AD level in the EEAS were temporary agents from national diplomatic services, representing a proportion of 27,6%. In EEAS Headquarters, 19,9% of staff at this level were temporary agents from national diplomatic services, and in the EU Delegations, the proportion was 39.5%. (The proportion is lower in EEAS Headquarters because there have proportionately been fewer vacant posts to fill, although in absolute numbers the recruits to headquarters equal almost the number of recruits in delegations.) Thus the service is approaching the 1/3 target for seconded national diplomats, notwithstanding the challenging budgetary context. The EEAS is committed to making further progress with the recruitment of national diplomats by the target date of mid-2013, depending on the available posts within the establishment plan.

The EEAS decision does not set separate targets for the origin of permanent staff from the Commission and the Council Secretariat. There is however a requirement that at least 60% of the AD posts in the service should be filled by permanent officials. This is the case today.

The EEAS has a range of training courses available for staff, including induction training for newcomers and pre-posting training for staff taking up posts in EU delegations. The service is seeking to develop co-operation with Member States in this area, on the basis of reciprocal access to EU and national diplomatic training courses. EEAS staff also have access to general language and management training offered by the Commission as well as specific courses on EU financial management procedures for Heads of Delegation and other staff with responsibilities in this area.

10. Is the EEAS budget sufficient to meet its objectives? Are there any areas where the EEAS could make savings?

The EEAS budget is set annually as part of the general EU budget procedure.

The baseline budget at the creation of the service in 2011 was €464m made up of transfers from the administrative budgets of the Commission and the Council Secretariat and of a limited reinforcement in staff numbers to provide additional capacity for political work in delegations and to address minimal needs in Headquarters for the services to function on an autonomous basis. Experience in the first year has shown that the baseline budget of 2011 did not accurately reflect the true operating costs of the EEAS. In addition, as a new organization, the EEAS faced unavoidable start up costs. The budget for 2012 – the first prepared by the EEAS - was increased by 5.3% by the budgetary authority to enable the service to meet its statutory obligations and for limited additional staff to enable delegations to respond to the events of the Arab Spring and other political priorities for the EU (including the new delegations in Libya, South Sudan, Uzbekistan and Burma/Myanmar). The budgetary

authority is expected to confirm an increase of just over 4% for the budget in 2013. It is worth recalling in this context that the total EEAS administrative budget represents 0,6 % of the administrative budget of the EU, or 0,04 % of the total EU budget.

In parallel, the EEAS has made considerable efficiency gains by redeploying staff to meet the new needs of the Lisbon Treaty, in particular by taking over tasks previously managed by the rotating Presidency and to support the autonomous functioning of the service. The first screening exercise in 2011 resulted in a 10% efficiency gain through the merging of services from the Commission and the Council Secretariat. A second wave of screening in 2012 identified 20 posts for redeployment from HQ to delegations, although the implementation of these changes has been constrained by the uncertainty surrounding the availability of funds in the 2013 budget to pay for the new posts in delegations. The EEAS has also made savings in 2012 of 10% in travel budgets and 5% in representation costs and has undertaken a range of other measures to ensure that the limited available resources are effectively targeted on the core needs of the service.

11. In what ways has the financial and economic crisis within Member States affected organization and activity of the EEAS?

The EEAS is subject to the same economic pressures as other EU institutions and national public services in the face of the present crisis. This climate of strict budget discipline has proved challenging given the unavoidable start-up costs of creating a new institution. The need for the EEAS to have sufficient vacant posts for the recruitment of national diplomats to meet the 1/3 target requested by Member States has also been a factor in the annual budget discussions.

The difficult budgetary environment for national diplomatic services has been a stimulus for active thinking on co-operation and pooling of resources with Member States, in particular where national authorities are forced to reduce their diplomatic network. This co-operation includes sharing of political reporting, mutual support in organizing high-level visits and co-location of EU delegations and national embassies. The EEAS is very open to closer co-operation with Member States in these areas, in particular where concentrating resources at EU level can produce considerable net savings in national budgets. The EEAS recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Spanish Government on this and we are working on similar projects with other Member States.

12. Has the EU created the right number and distribution of Delegations around the world?

The EU has 141 delegations and offices accredited to third countries and multilateral organizations. The relatively comprehensive coverage of the network responds to the global foot print of the European Union, and has strong support from Member States, in particular from those whose national diplomatic resources are more limited.

Since the start of the EEAS in 2011, new delegations have been set up in Uzbekistan, Libya (Benghazi then Tripoli), South Sudan (Juba) and there are plans in 2013 to upgrade the newly created office in Burma/Myanmar to a full delegation and to create a new delegation in the United Arab Emirates. In 2012 or early 2013 the EEAS will close the delegation in Suriname (which will henceforth be covered from neighbouring Guyana) and intends to close the delegation in New Caledonia given its status as a territory of an EU Member State.

13. How well do the relationships with the Foreign Ministries of the EU Member States work and how well do EU Delegations cooperate with the diplomatic missions of the EU Member States?

The creation of the EEAS has led to considerably strengthened relations with the diplomatic services of Member States both at the level of Headquarters and through the EU delegations. To a large extent this is a natural consequence of the transfer of responsibility from the rotating Presidency to the High Representative in her role in chairing different formations of the Council. This is also mirrored in the Political and Security Committee and Council Working Groups in Brussels as well as in the work of EU delegations in chairing the local co-ordination with embassies of Member States. The growing presence of national diplomats in the EEAS is also making a very positive contribution to relations with Member States, not least given the established network of contacts that they bring to the service.

As in other areas, co-operation with Member States is still work in progress, with considerable potential to consolidate and build on what has been achieved so far. For example, there are specific issues surrounding the role and competence of the EU delegations to certain multilateral organizations like the UN and the OSCE.

The EEAS also provides support to Member States' national ministries with joint messages on EU lines and useful background ahead of bilateral visits to third countries. The feedback from Member States is positive recognition of the added value and critical analysis from the EEAS.

14. Has the Foreign and Commonwealth Office responded effectively to the establishment of the EEAS? Has the UK been able to second high level candidates to important positions within the EEAS? Has it also seconded a representative number to more junior positions?

All Member States have been supportive of the creation and development of the EEAS. The EEAS has welcomed the constructive input and advice from the FCO as from other Foreign Ministries in Member States. The regular meetings of the Secretaries General of Foreign Ministries have been a particular focus for these discussions, in addition to the normal institutional decision making through the competent bodies in Brussels.

The EEAS has a strong presence of UK nationals in its staffing at all levels, including both diplomats and permanent officials. 20 British diplomats have been recruited to the EEAS as Temporary Agents, in addition to the 49 permanent officials of British nationality working in the EEAS at AD level. This includes 15 in management positions in Headquarters, 11 Heads of Delegations and 2 deputy Heads of Delegation. Overall, and including all categories of staff, there are currently 150 British nationals working in the EEAS.

15. Have the Foreign Services of other Member States all responded with their best candidates for EEAS posts?

The High Representative has made clear that recruitment to the EEAS is based on merit and that she is determined to attract some of the brightest and best staff available in national diplomatic services as well as in the Commission and the Council Secretariat. The consistently high level of interest in published posts from both national diplomats and

permanent officials has enabled the service to remain faithful to this objective, while also making progress on ensuring a meaningful presence of nationals from all Member States and increased recruitment of women to posts in the EEAS.

16. What should the EEAS need to do over the next three years and what should it prioritise? How can it maximize the influence of Member States and the EU in the future? On which areas should the 2013 review focus?

The priority for the EEAS is to consolidate the progress of the last two years in promoting a more coherent and effective external policy for the European Union based on the comprehensive approach concept. In particular this means strengthening the capacity of the EU to define and articulate robust policies on the key issues of foreign policy, taking advantage of the institutional advances in the Lisbon Treaty and drawing on all available instruments at EU and national level.

This applies equally in ensuring an effective response to crises and security challenges, human rights challenges and other areas of traditional diplomacy, as in emerging thematic topics that are increasingly central to international relations like climate change, energy security, migration, terrorism and non-proliferation.

In terms of geographical focus, the EU will need to maintain a strong engagement with the countries of its immediate neighbourhood through the enlargement process and the European Neighbourhood Policy. There is also scope further to develop the level of ambition in the EU's relations with major strategic partners, as well as in strengthening further the EU's crisis response capacity, including through effective use of CSDP instruments and policies.

The mandate of the 2013 review of the EEAS in the Council Decision covers the organization and functioning of the service, including in particular progress with staff recruitment in view of the 1/3 target for national diplomats as well as progress on geographical and gender balance. The review will be conducted by the High Representative by mid-2013 in line with this mandate, covering a comprehensive analysis of the achievements of the service to date and a range of options for future development and improvements. Some of the conclusions of the review may be susceptible to rapid implementation, whereas others may require further discussion.