THE EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE

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THE EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE: A PRELIMINARY EVALUATION

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This work examines the new European diplomatic corps launched within the framework of the Lisbon Treaty. Based on the decision from 26 July 2010 by which the Council of the European Union established the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service, this work constructs a comprehensive ex-ante evaluation of the latter. Several essential criteria are analysed and assessed, such as the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, utility and sustainability of the future diplomatic corps. Accordingly, the study comments on the coherence and implementation process of the Service, consequently revealing the potential risks linked to its launching on the basis of current provisions. Finally, the work tackles the issue of steps that still need to be undertaken by the actors involved in the decision-making process as well as of the matters to which the latter need to pay special attention in order to launch and sustain the Service successfully.

1. INTRODUCTION

Heated debates arose during the past few months over the organisation, functioning and accountability of the new European External Action Service (EEAS) headed by the Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Baroness Catherine Ashton. As different scenarios concerning the implementation of the new European diplomatic corps emerged, so did the cleavages within the EU. Currently, it seems that the majority of the necessary agreements have been reached so the Service could be launched on the symbolic date of 01 December 2010; exactly one year after the entry, into force, of the Lisbon Treaty. Yet, an important question has been raised asking whether the agreed blueprint of the new European diplomatic body will prove effective enough to deliver on its self-identified objectives.

Given that the agreements concerning the work of the Service have only recently been reached, and that the EEAS began functioning at the end of 2010, the only method currently available to estimate its effectiveness is an ex-ante evaluation; the purpose of which consists of gathering all available information about the project and analysing the existing data in an exhaustive framework. This method of enquiry allows scholars to define precise objectives of the action to be deployed as well as to de-

termine if they can be met on the basis of the instruments available. The analysis will assess the existence of an eventual expectations-capabilities gap as well as estimate the potential risks of the project.

While the analysis of this work provides insights which were visible before the launching of the Service, it nevertheless allows an assessment towards which the outcome of negotiations gravitated around. Two possibilities arise: either the compromise reached by the actors involved in the decision-making process is indeed the basis for the optimal functioning of the new body or there is a risk that the outcome of exhaustive negotiations, while satisfactory for all the parties, does not provide necessary inputs for the European diplomatic corps to fulfil its mandate.

Małgorzata Gałęziak

2. The General Context

The strategy of setting the EEAS had been first discussed during the debates in the framework of the Convention for the Future of Europe. Consensus of European leaders held that modern challenges could not be properly addressed by individual EU Member States. Therefore, having a truly united, coherent and consistent foreign policy throughout the EU emerged as a new and ambitious objective to be achieved by the EEAS, designed as an efficient instrument. Given the failure of the ratification process of the Constitutional Treaty, the provisions concerning the amendments of the European Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and, consequently, the creation of the External Action Service entered into force only recently with the Lisbon Treaty.

The heated debates about the role, organisation and functioning of the Service have not only been present in the inter-institutional environment but equally in the academic milieu. Indeed, many experts in the field including: Józef Batora, Antonio Missiroli, Brian Crowe, and Richard Whitman, have published important contributions.[1] Equally, various research organisations such as the Overseas Development Institute,[2] the European Centre of Overseas Development Policy Management,[3] the International Policy Analysis[4] or the Challenge Observatory[5] have assessed the development of the European External Action Service. However, these publications mostly preceded the decision taken by the Council on the organisation and functioning of the EEAS. The current report seeks to, on the basis of the latter decision, assess ex-ante the question of whether the Service will become an efficient instrument to address global challenges.

3. Analytical Framework

The purpose of the ex-ante evaluation is to determine several criteria that

will ultimately provide an estimate answer to four broad questions:[6]

    1. Is the establishment of the European External Action Service a relevant strategy?
    2. Is it likely to be effective?
    3. Is it likely to be efficient?
    4. Will the likely impacts of the Service provide a long-term solution for the broader needs of the EU external action and therefore evidence its utility and sustainability?

In order to reach the evaluation stage of the analysis, it is crucial to first define the correlation between the overall functioning of the Union in terms of external action and the particular strategy of setting up the EEAS. Such a correlation needs to be set on the basis of six indicators[7]

Needs and problems	Objectives	Inputs	Outputs	Outcomes and results	Impacts

The objectives, inputs and outputs are indicators relating specifically to the strategy. The other three indicators are connected to the broader environment. In other words, the strategy is designed in order to provide a solution to specific weaknesses of the EU external action. The outcomes, results and wider impacts of the programme will hopefully remedy the gaps that were found in the initial situation.[8]

Given that the present study consists in an ex-ante evaluation, only a limited number of indicators can be analysed. Thus, only the former three indicators (needs and problems, objectives and inputs) are addressed in the present study. In contrast, in order to describe and examine additionally the latter three indicators, an ex-post evaluation will be necessary.

In order to provide a detailed evaluation of the Service's relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, utility and sustainability, the first stage will consist in the definition of the pertinent indicators.

4. Problem Analysis

The functioning of the EU is elaborated on the basis of the primary and secondary sources of law; primary sources are the Treaties and secondary sources consist of the legislative acts adopted on the basis of these Treaties. These can be regulations, political statements, and recommendations (etc). The legal sources of the Union often set general principles or ideals that should be pursued by the Member States and the European institutions. The definition of a specific problem or the assessment of

4

needs is usually based on the gap that exists between such an ideal or general principle and the action taken in reality and all programmes and strategies undertaken by the EU aim to fill such gaps with consistent action.[9] The rationale for the problem analysis is twofold: it provides justification for the deployment of the strategy while offering a reliable starting point to assess needs as well as define the objectives of the strategy.[10]

The definition of the problem relevant for this study can be traced back to a crucial document that has shed new light onto the threats brought with the 21st century. This document, the European Security Strategy (ESS)[11] (and subsequently its implementation report) has drawn a new perspective on the way the EU should act.[12] Indeed, facing the new threats described by the Strategy as well as combining them with the recent economic and financial turmoil, it became clear that the individual EU Member States are in no position to address the new global situation on their own. Therefore, if the new challenges are to be addressed, the EU needs to be more united and the Member States need to act together in order to eventually become a single global actor. In this context, the report calls for an EU foreign policy that would be coherent, active and backed by the necessary capabilities. The gap that exists between the vision drawn by the European Security Strategy and the reality of EU foreign policy is rather wide. The CFSP that has been initiated together with the Treaty of Maastricht did not experience such a significant progress as the other EU policies. Due to the fact that foreign policy is considered as one of the major components of national sovereignty, European leaders showed continuous reluctance to fully integrate this area. However, an EU characterized by (currently) 27 different foreign policies cannot aspire to become an effective and visible actor in international politics. Thus, further coordination and enhanced flexibility are necessary to address existing challenges.

5. Needs Assessment

In order to assess particular needs, it is crucial to delimitate the target group affected by a defined problem.[13] In the case of the present study, the "target group" is threefold: **the leaders** of the EU Member States which have the political will to make the EU external actions more coordinated and consistent, **the EU citizens** as well as **the external actors** have expectations in this policy area. Indeed, candidate countries and international organisations would expect the EU to have a clearly defined single foreign policy. Thus the needs and interests of the target group affected by the problem can be more easily defined; the former being to face the global threats and the latter to seize the opportunities brought by globalisation.

The problem definition and the needs assessment are phases naturally followed by the elaboration of objectives. In this case, the objective for the EU in general would be to tackle its weaknesses CFSP and evolve into a global actor. However, to carry out a valuable ex-ante evaluation, objectives need to be redefined much more precisely.

6. Objective Setting

As defined by the European Commission in the relevant working paper, 'the purpose of this part of ex ante evaluation is to translate high-level policy goals into more tangible quantified or otherwise measurable objectives, and to define on what basis achievement will be measured.'[14] The stage of the objective setting is one of the most crucial steps of an ex-ante evaluation. Given that the study occurred before the launching of the analysed strategy, it is impossible to describe its outputs, outcomes, results and impacts. Therefore, this scrutiny will describe the objectives set for these indicators. On this basis, three categories can be emphasised – the general, specific and operational objectives.

7. General Objectives

The general objectives are set in accordance to the desired outcomes or ultimate impacts. In order to express such an outcome or ultimate impact, very broad indicators are used, such as economic growth or competitiveness.[15]

The general objectives for the deployment of the new strategy i.e. the establishment of the European External Action Service can be found in the first Chapter of the Title V of the TEU, entitled General Provisions on the Union's External Action. Article 21 §2 of this Chapter reads: 'the Union shall define and pursue common policies and actions, and shall work for a high degree of cooperation in all fields of international relations.'[16] Furthermore, the second indent of the third paragraph of the same Article establishes that :

> 'the Union shall ensure consistency between the different areas of its external action and between these and its other policies. The Council and the Commission, assisted by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, shall ensure that consistency and shall cooperate to that effect.'[17]

On the basis of this article, a global indicator can be defined as being the

full consistency of the EU's external action within the framework of the Lisbon Treaty in order to become a global actor and thus benefit from major influence in international relations. Furthermore, it is crucial that the external action is coordinated and that it remains consistent with any other policy carried out by the EU.

Małgorzata
Gałęziak

8. Specific Objectives

This category of objectives is the intermediate level that needs to be fulfilled in order to reach the general objective. It is of a more immediate and precise target. In other words, these objectives are determined by direct and short term results. The accomplishment of the results set can be influenced by external factors, independent from those who administer the strategy. However, they are more in command of the administrators than the general objectives which usually tend to be influenced by other factors to a large extent.[18]

In the case of this study, the specific objective is the deployment of the strategy itself; to launch the EEAS and ensure it functions effectively. Thus, the Service would coordinate the EU's external action and relations guaranteeing their consistency as it will be taken care of by a single body. Moreover, all the Union delegations will be coordinated by the latter and the external representation will be guaranteed by the head of the EEAS (the High Representative) so the external action should become much more coherent and consistent.

9. Operational Objectives

The operational objectives are determined by the most direct effects of the strategy deployed (i.e. the output indicators). An example of an output indicator could be the number of worked hours or the number of projects that have been carried out. The operational objectives are the most controllable by the administrators of the strategy. Moreover, they can be subject to a direct verification and evaluation which is not possible with the two previous categories.[19]

In the final and official Council's Decision[20] establishing the organisation and functioning of the EEAS many output indicators are already referred to. The operational objective that may be regarded as the most present in the Council's Decision is the support and cooperation role of the Service. In fact, the EEAS, once launched, should provide support to various bodies. Besides the High Representative of the Union for Foreign

Affairs and Security Policy in all the mandates that this position encompasses, the EEAS is called upon assisting the President of the European Council, the General Secretariat of the Council, the President of the Commission and the Commission itself, the diplomatic services of the Member States, the European Parliament and other institutions and bodies of the EU (among others the European Defence Agency, the EU Satellite Centre, the EU Institute for Security Studies and European Security and Defence College). Besides the support indicator, another output often mentioned in the Decision is the coordination and management role. In fact, the Service should ensure the full coordination between its interior structures and with other actions and policies of the EU. As for the Union Delegations, the task of management and coordination with other EU policies is entrusted to the Head of Delegation. Similarly, the representation of the EU in the third country where the Delegation is located as well as the power of concluding contracts is likewise vested in the Head of Delegation.[21]

Other operational objectives that can be found in the Council's Decision of 26 July 2010 are the participation in preparatory work carried out by the Commission in various areas, the insurance of the budget transparency, the guarantee of the staff mobility and its unique allegiance to the EEAS and the High Representative as well as the active participation in the deployment of the relevant instruments.[22]

10. Provision of Inputs

The input indicators encompass the amount of funds, materials or efforts that are put in the project. In other words it represents anything put into a system to achieve a specific output or a result. The assessment of the inputs for the European External Action Service will provide a valuable basis for the ex-ante evaluation. Such data will enable to determine if the relation between the capabilities and the expected results is realistic or, on the contrary, there is a gap being present already at the beginning of the strategy deployment.

The inputs of the EEAS are represented by all the capabilities that are put into the system in order to achieve the targeted results. Therefore, the Council's Decision on the organisation and functioning of the EEAS gives an almost exhaustive list of inputs involved.

The first category of inputs can be referred to as structures, involving the institutional architecture of the Service. In the Decision it can be found that the Service shall be composed of both the central administration (located in Brussels) and of Union Delegations. The former will encompass a series of directorates-general, 'comprising geographic desks

covering all countries and regions of the world, as well as multilateral and thematic desks'[23] and for 'administrative, staffing, budgetary, security and communication and information system matters.'[24] With few exceptions,[25] the EEAS will include from the General Secretariat of the Council the policy unit, the CSDP and crisis management structures as well as the Directorate-General E, and from the European Commission the Directorate-General for External Relations, the External Service and the Directorate-General for Development. Moreover, if the necessity shall arise, both the Council and the Commission are required to provide assistance to the Service.[26]

These structures will be led by the recruited personnel of the EEAS on the basis of merit but carefully equilibrated both in terms of geographical and gender representation, will encompass 'officials from the General Secretariat of the Council and from the Commission, as well as personnel coming from the diplomatic services of the Member States.'[27] To this could be added, if necessary for the work of the EEAS, the specialised seconded national experts. The most crucial positions in the Service' hierarchy will be the Executive Secretary-General, followed by two Deputy Secretaries-General and a series of Directors-General. The staff, established as being proportionally one-third from the Member States and 60% of permanent EU officials (both at AD level), will benefit from a common training in order to most efficiently carry out the work of the Service.[28] Finally, a major input for the Service will be embodied in the involvement in the management and programming of the external assistance instruments.[29]

The determination of the inputs provided for the EEAS represents the last indicator that can be examined in an ex-ante evaluation given that the outputs, outcomes and impacts cannot be determined at this stage.

II. Evaluation

With the four stages described above – problem definition, needs assessment, objective setting and input provision – the basis necessary for the ex-ante evaluation is complete. Therefore, enough data is collected in order to answer to the questions outlined at the beginning of the section.

Relevance of the strategy is one of the most crucial stages of the ex-ante evaluation as it determines whether it is pertinent in addressing the needs identified or not. In other words, the strategy proves to be relevant if the objectives set provide solutions to the recognised problems and needs. The effectiveness is in contrast based on the relation between the objectives and the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts. In an ex-ante evaluation, the effectiveness will take form of an estimation based on the level of probability that the objectives will be achieved. The efficiency

of the strategy can be evaluated on the basis of inputs. It will determine if the inputs are likely to be translated in an optimal way into concrete results. Finally, the evaluation of utility will ascertain whether the final impacts of the strategy are likely to influence the broader needs, defined

during the first stage of the analysis.[30]

There are several additional aspects that should be addressed in addition to this evaluation framework. These would consist in the determination of internal and external coherence of the system, the quality of the proposed implementation programme and finally the assessment of potential risks associated with the deployment of the strategy.[31] These factors shall be addressed as additional criteria, completing the ex-ante evaluation and providing a more detailed panorama of the deployment of the new European diplomatic corps.

12. Relevance: Do the Objectives Meet the Needs?

As stated previously, the general objective of the considered strategy is to achieve full consistency of the EU external action as well as to ensure the coordination between the latter and other EU policies. Through achieving this target, the Member States as well as the EU institutions would be guided by the principle of stronger cooperation aiming towards a single EU foreign policy. Thus, once the EU Member States reach an agreement in terms of a common foreign policy, the EU would be able to rise as a single global actor hence capable of consciously facing the global threats of the 21st century as well as taking hold of the opportunities created by globalization. Accordingly, the achievement of a consistent external action within the EU should in consequence provide tools to address the needs and interests of EU Member States in this particular policy field.

In terms of more specific objectives, one can perceive that the external action of the Union was always featured by a certain division between institutions. This issue was among other mirrored in the three separate mandates dealing with external relations, namely the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, the Foreign Affairs Council chair and the DG RELEX Commissioner. While striving for overall coordination on the one hand between institutions and on the other hand between the Member States, the full consistency could not be accomplished with such a divided institutional architecture. Concurrently with the Lisbon Treaty, these three mandates have been brought together in a single person – the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Accordingly, the deployment of the European External Action Service will bring together all the departments from the Council and the European Commission that dealt with external relations.

The formation of this new body, specialised specifically in EU external action and subject to the unique authority of the High Representative (both the central administration and the Union delegations to third countries) ensures a much more effective coordination. Furthermore, as the High Representative carries the task of representation of the EU in terms of foreign policy both the EU visibility and the consistency at the international arena have much more aptitude for being achieved. This stage, enabling through the deployment of the EEAS the realisation of the general objective, constitutes an intermediate phase on the path towards addressing the needs and thus resolving the initial challenge.

Małgorzata Gałęziak

Consequently, it can be assessed that the discussed strategy is relevant as the achievement of targeted objectives would create an essential instrument. In other terms, if the Member States reach the consistency of the EU external action and, consequently, act in common 'in all fields of international relations,'[32] they will equally be able to find a common way to address the global threats and seize the opportunities. Hence, the needs for the purpose of which the strategy has been created will be tackled.

13. Effectiveness : are the objectives likely to be achieved?

Unlike the determination of the relevance of the strategy, its effectiveness cannot be assessed on the basis of the general objectives. Indeed, especially in the context of an ex-ante evaluation, the question whether the general objectives are likely to be achieved is impossible to answer due to the fact that the latter are influenced by external factors to a large extent. Consequently, to achieve these objectives the sole strategy is rarely sufficient. Furthermore, the other factors that will influence the way in which the targets will or will not be reached are frequently out of the strategy administrator's control. Thus, in order to assess the effectiveness, the focus needs to be shifted from general objectives to specific and operational ones.

The assessment of the probability of achieving specific and operational objectives is more realistic. This is due to the fact that in these two categories less external factors are involved. The specific objective, namely the launching and deployment of the European External Action Service is quite likely to be achieved. Undeniably, much effort has been put in the negotiations as to create the most adequate body that would meet the set targets. First of all due to the imposition of the Lisbon Treaty provisions and second of all given the agreement reached between the European institutions as to the living architecture, the European External Action

Service has been officially launched on the date of the one-year anniversary of the entering into force of the Lisbon Treaty (1st December 2010). However, the launching is currently followed by an initial experimental phase during which the provisions agreed upon on paper will need to be tested and shaped in reality. The question that is left open in the context of the specific objectives is the ensuring of the correct working of the Service. In fact, it may occur that the provisions negotiated between the institutions will fail to be the most effective way of coordinating the EU external action. In order to verify if the appropriate working of the EEAS is likely to be achieved, the attention must be turned towards the operational objectives.

The operational objectives can be divided into broad categories. Arguably, the details of these output indicators do not need to be discussed as they have been cautiously considered in the above section. Therefore, in order to assess if the operational objectives are likely to be achieved, essentially key words will be taken into consideration. The first category that will be discussed is the coordination and management role of the Service. Indeed, it has been emphasised that the essential role of the EEAS is to ensure the overall coordination of the EU external action. The latter would consist on the one hand in the work within the central administration and between the latter and the Union delegations, and on the other hand between the work accomplished by the Service in general (the central administration and the Union delegations) in terms of external action and foreign policy with all other EU policies. The first type of coordination within the Service, including the Union delegations, seems likely to be achieved. This is due to the fact, that all the personnel involved in these structures would be under the unique authority of the High Representative. This unique allegiance, also an output indicator, is a necessary factor for achieving the coordination objective. If the structures composing the Service would depend on several higher authorities, this particular operational objective would be much more difficult to achieve. What seems more complex to attain is the coordination between the work done by the EEAS and the other EU policies. This kind of coordination is much more demanding as it involves additional time for inter-institutional negotiations, debates and agreements. As the coordination of the EU external action management with other policies is a provision present in the Treaty, it will in fact need to be achieved. However, it can eventually be mirrored by a less active Service reluctant to undertake more innovative actions. The third key word category of operational objectives is the support and assistance. The support and assistance of the Service for the European institutions, Member States and other bodies and agencies seems somehow correlated to the coordina-

tion and management task. Indeed, given that the Service will become the body coordinating the entire external action of the Union, it will represent the ultimate source of assistance to other actors that aspire to undertake action related to external relations and foreign policy of the Union. This objective displays a proportional pattern to the coordination task. In other terms, the higher the coordination level that the Service will achieve, the higher will be its ability to provide valuable support for other institutions. Therefore, the probability of achieving this particular operational objectives is strongly dependent from another one.

Thus the effectiveness of the strategy is already a much less evident criterion to be assessed. While it is almost certain that the specific objectives will be achieved, the operational ones are strongly dependent on the one hand from one another and on the other hand from the inter-institutional environment of the EU.

14. Efficiency: Are the Inputs Sufficient to Be Translated into Set Results?

The major input, as described in the first part of this section, is the movement of the structures responsible for the external action from the General-Secretariat of the Council and from the European Commission. These structures, while remaining the same, by the act of being brought within the same body and under a single authority should eventually multiply their efficiency thus leading to concrete results in terms of consistency. The transferred departments will be accompanied by the Directorate-General for internal management that will ensure the correct functioning of the various units and to concentrate all administrative matters. The transfer will not only be a theoretical input but, equally, a physical. Indeed, the relevant documentation, archives and personnel shall be transferred along with their respective departments thus providing all the information and competencies necessary to carry on the efficient functioning. Thus the only practical modification of these structures will encompass the change of authority which, as mentioned above, should greatly enhance and speed the process of action deployment.

With staff coming from the General-Secretariat of the Council and from the European Commission, the EEAS will need to complete the remaining one third of the personnel by officials coming from the Member States. These, recruited by merit and qualifications while keeping the geographical and gender balance should provide a valuable asset to the Service and guarantee the adequate representation of the Member States. Equally, in terms of staff, the Service will present a more pyramidal structure with under the High Representative an executive Secretary-General,

assisted by two deputies Secretary-Generals and followed by Directors-General in charge of different departments. The question of hierarchy was part of the red lines in the negotiations preceding the final decision. In fact, it is difficult to assess whether this living architecture will be more likely to achieve concrete results than a more horizontal structure. Arguably, given the multitude of engagements that the High Representative needs to attend, a strong figure that will ensure the correct functioning of the Service and a second authority should provide a positive asset for the running of the Service. However, this structure needs to be deployed before any conclusions as to its aptness can be drawn. In contrast, what is a very positive input in terms of staff, is the elaboration of provisions as to a common training for all the personnel of the Service. Indeed, given the diverse environments from which the staff will come from, a common training will provide the entirety of personnel a collective knowledge basis. This input should rapidly translate into concrete results as the productivity and efficiency of the staff after the training should be enhanced.

Finally, the remaining two inputs that are very likely to be translated into concrete results is on the one hand the fact that the Union Delegations' staff will come from the EEAS central administration and on the other hand that the Service will have at its disposal various external assistance instruments. In what concerns the former aspect, the fact that it is the personnel from the EEAS central administration that will be appointed to work in the Union Delegations should most likely become a factor of effectiveness. The delegated persons will already be familiar with the work of the Service and thereof will be more suitable to ensure the coordination between the central administration and the delegations to third countries. As to the second factor, the external assistance instruments, they are necessary to fulfil the intended function of the Service. Indeed, when the position of the new High Representative was created, the rationale behind it was to merge the authority and the budgetary capacity as to truly boost the EU external action. Consequently, for the sake of its effectiveness, the Service requires a series of instruments that it could deploy opportunely. The fact that the instruments will be managed jointly by the Service and the relevant Commission departments, could eventually slow down the process of their application. However, almost certainly the available external assistance instruments will be translated into concrete actions that will enhance the visibility and efficiency of EU as a global actor.

It is worth highlighting that not all of the inputs to the EEAS can be assessed in the current study. This is due to the still pending negotiations on the subject of staff and financial regulations.

Nevertheless, the already adopted provisions show a definitive aptness to achieve a high degree of efficiency. With the already available inputs, the Service is most likely to accomplish its dual role of one the one hand assisting the decision-making process, and on the other hand representing the decisions taken within the EU on the international arena.

Małgorzata Gałęziak

15. Utility and Sustainability: Are the Estimated Impacts Likely to Provide Long-term Solutions to the Defined Needs?

Following the analytical framework set at the beginning of this study, the estimated impacts are in other terms the general objectives defined in the first part of this section. In this light, it is useful to reformulate the question. Thus, can the fact of identifying and undertaking 'common policies and actions'[33] as well as cooperating 'in all fields of international relations'[34] establish a system that would function to effectively address the global threats? Importantly, it has to be kept in mind that the latter are constantly changing (as evidenced by comparing the European Security Strategy and its implementation report) thus in order to provide long-tem solutions it is not a concrete plan of addressing specific global threats that is needed, but rather a procedure of common action to be applied to any threat triggered by globalisation.

The achievement of a single EU foreign policy is a very ambitious target. It is for a reason that even after nearly 20 years of having the Common Foreign and Security Policy the attitudes of the Member States still have not converged. Given the historical context of each Member State, to have a truly single EU foreign policy demands many sacrifices in terms of sovereignty. Nevertheless, in the light of the global threats and opportunities, the EU Member States need to realise that there is not a single one of them that can become a global actor and thus have any influence on the international area. The CFSP was the first step on the path towards a politically integrated EU. The EEAS is the second step. It is a tool that, if endowed with the adequate inputs, should eventually establish a procedure that will make the set objectives a reality. If such a system could be elaborated, it should indeed provide long-tem solutions as no matter what global threat or opportunity appears, the Member States will be able – through negotiations within an established framework – to determine a common foreign policy solution (implying a single response) whilst maintaining consistency with all other EU policies.

Coherence
Once the core of the ex-ante evaluation is constructed, it is useful to ana-

lyse some additional criteria that will help assess the potential success of the strategy. Coherence is one such criterion. Indeed, if the strategy is showing incoherencies in its elaboration, there are few chances that such flaws will correct themselves once the strategy is launched. Therefore, it is important to ascertain if the design of the strategy is fully consistent. There are two dimensions that can be examined as far as coherency is concerned – internal and external.

Internal
The internal coherency of the EEAS encompasses the coordination of structures within the central administration and between the latter and the Union delegations to third countries and international organisations. This question however, has already been considered in the context of assessing the effectiveness of the Service. Indeed, within the framework of the coordination operational objective, it has been ascertained that due to the single authority to which the entire Service (both the central administration and the Union delegations) will hold a unique allegiance, the internal coherency is most likely to be achieved.

External
External coherency entails that the actions and policies deployed by the Service will remain consistent with other EU policies. This kind of coherency will be much more difficult to achieve for the Service. Indeed, while designing the EEAS as the best way to produce a single foreign policy, it may contrast with other components of the acquis communautaire. For example the principle of subsidiarity which is an essential element of the assessment if a proposed action should or should not be deployed. Valid arguments could be found both in favour of the added-value of acting at the EU level (as a single EU foreign policy would enable it to become a global actor and address the current challenges) and of acting at the national level as each Member State has a different historical context and thus diverse foreign policy inclinations. Thus, it can be ascertained that the external coherency of the strategy could eventually become a challenging factor once the latter is launched.

Implementation System
The implementation system of the new Service seems to be a comprehensive procedure at first glance. Following the inter-institutional debates, the final decision was adopted by the Council on the 26 July 2010. There are three immediately following stages. Firstly, one month following the Council's Decision, the High Representative presented an estimate of the revenue and expenditure of the EEAS for the following

financial year. The European Commission should subsequently either amend these estimates or consolidate them in the draft budget. Secondly, the institutions should reach an agreement over the Staff and Financial Regulations and their amendments. Finally, the recruitment procedure should start as soon as possible. These phases, currently ongoing, should be finalised before the official launching of the Service scheduled for the 01 December 2010, on the first anniversary of the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. Once the Service is launched, the transfer of relevant departments from the General Secretariat of the Council and from the Commission will take place, currently scheduled to become effective on the 01 January 2011.[35] Moreover, according to the Council Decision, 'in accordance with the Staff Regulations, upon their transfer to the EEAS, the High Representative shall assign each official to a post in his/her function group which corresponds to that official's grade.'[36]

Upon the assessment of the implementation stages, two observations can be made. First of all, while examining the Council's Decision, one can perceive that the many regulations still need to be adopted. Among others, the High Representative will need to adopt specific arrangements with MEPs for access to classified documents and information in the area of CFSP, provisions relating to issuing of instructions from the Commission to Union delegations, rules as to the activity of the EEAS, selection procedures, rules on mobility, security and common training and internal rules for the management of the administrative budget lines.[37] This implicates that there is still a long and complex procedure before the EEAS will be up and running on a daily basis. In contrast, the second observation which indicates a positive assessment of the implementation procedure is the presence of foreseen reports as to the progress of the latter. In fact, the Council Decision envisages a first report at the end of 2011 followed by a review in mid 2013 on the basis of which would take place a potential revision of the Decision at latest at the beginning of 2014.[38]

On the basis of this appraisal, it can be estimated that while the implementation process is rather clearly determined and several evaluation reports are scheduled during the initial phase of the functioning of the Service, there remains several regulations to be adopted as soon as possible. The lack of a precise time frame for their adoption could be a factor delaying the implementation process thus prolonging the initial phase during which the Service cannot reach its full efficiency.

Risk Assessment

One of the potential risks linked to the deployment of the examined strategy is, as assessed, the assurance of its external coherency. Undeniably, the possibility exists that the necessity of finding an inter-institu-

tional agreement on the consistency of each proposed external action with every other part of the acquis might eventually lower the output of the Service.

However, this issue is not the only challenge that the deployment of the EEAS might encounter during its implementation and the initial phase of its functioning. Especially two issues can be referred to in this section. First of all the challenges linked to the recruitment provisions and second of all the matter of the hierarchy within the Service. It is noticeable that both of these issues were part of the red lines during the inter-institutional debates and, while the agreement has been found, doubts persist as to the living architecture.

As far as the recruitment provisions are concerned, two ambiguities can be observed. Firstly, worth highlighting is the paragraph 11 of the preamble of the Council's Decision of 26th July 2010. According to the latter paragraph,

> 'before 1 July 2013, the EEAS will recruit exclusively officials originating from the General Secretariat of the Council and the Commission, as well as staff coming from the diplomatic services of the Member States. After that date, all officials and other servants of the European Union should be able to apply for vacant posts in the EEAS.'[39]

It is arguable that this provision sets an unnecessary obstacle for many qualified persons that could represent a valuable asset for the Service. Furthermore, this provision could be interpreted as being inconsistent with the preceding paragraph 10 of the preamble that reads 'recruitment should be based on merit whilst ensuring adequate geographical and gender balance.'[40] Thus, the obstacle for recruitment of EU officials coming from elsewhere than the General Secretariat of the Council or from the Commission during the first 2.5 years of the functioning of the Service could be a source of discrepancies. As for the second ambiguity linked to the recruitment provisions, it relates to the debate on the geographical balance of the Service. The provisions as adopted by the Council leave virtually no indication as to how to reconcile the three recruitment criteria, namely the merit, nationality and gender. However, these risks have the potential to be clarified in the Staff regulations that are still pending for the adoption by the institutions.

The last issue that could qualify as a risk for the living architecture of the Service is the matter of High Representative's deputies. In fact, during the inter-institutional debates the design of the pyramidal structure of the hierarchy was very strongly opposed by the European Parliament. In fact, it might become apparent that a pyramidal hierarchy could lead

to an unclear division of competencies in contrast to a more horizontal design. However, once again, the legislative process is not yet complete with the Staff and Financial Regulations still to be adopted and the Service remaining to be launched.

The above mentioned aspects are the most apparent inconsistencies that can be assessed ex-ante on the basis of the Council's Decision on the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service. A further evaluation should be carried according to the Council's Decision at the end of 2011 when, after a year of functioning, the living architecture of the Service will become possible to assess.

Małgorzata Gałęziak

16. Conclusion

In light of the above analysis several observations can be made. First, it needs to be taken into consideration to what extent the relevance of the strategy is vital for its further evolution. The fact that the European Security Strategy clearly outlined the weaknesses of the EU in the area of the foreign and security policy as well as the objectives to be pursued, was crucial for the transformations that followed. The latter document established a clear framework on which the reforms in the area of CFSP and former ESDP could be based. In the process of strategy deployment, relevance is one of the most important stages upon which the following design and evolution will depend. It is worth noting that the EEAS strategy does not lack relevance which indicates that both the leaders of the Member States and the European institutions have a clear goal. They know what needs to be achieved in the area of foreign and security policy and thus can create an optimal pattern leading to the accomplishment of these objectives. Nevertheless, there exists a possibility that even with a clearly designed path, the latter cannot be attained. This is the reason due to which the effectiveness of the strategy is probably the most difficult criterion to be assessed in the present study. Indeed, the likeliness of reaching the set goals is inevitably influenced by various factors, often impossible to predict and thus to prevent them from affecting the strategy. More importantly, the effectiveness depends vitally on the attention and precision with which each particular objective is carried as the latter are strictly intertwined and the success of one can be very much dependent on the achievement of another.

The legislative process completed up till now on the subject of the European External Action Service encompasses both positive and negative elements. As stated, the strategy is relevant which means that the final objective is clearly visible, even though very ambitious. Furthermore, it is arguable that the pattern of deployment of the EEAS has the potential

to become both valuable and sustainable. What remains yet unclear is the path from the establishment of objectives to the desired impacts that will meet the challenges that inspired the strategy. This path is yet to be decided. Undeniably, after seven months of negotiations the main actors have reached crucial agreements and established the core on the basis of which the EEAS will be deployed. However, many issues remain to be agreed upon. The European leaders have embarked upon the creation of a sui generis body that cannot be based on anything that already exists within the EU institutional architecture. This has caused much distress during the negotiations as many actors involved in the decision-making process have tried to enclose the Service into already well known structures.

Even though during the negotiations many have referred to the process of creating the EEAS as an institutional nightmare, the provisions that are currently agreed upon do not present any sign of premature defects. As was assessed in the current study, there are several flaws that might, once the Service is up and running, become areas of conflict. However, on the one hand still much needs to be decided and on the other hand the authors of the final agreement have equipped themselves with an error margin. The regular reports and reviews of the decision taken by the Council is one of the most solid assurances that, even though the initial phase of the work of the Service might be confused and chaotic, eventually the new European diplomatic corps will be set on the right tracks to become an optimal strategy.

Finally, it can be observed that the compromise reached by the actors involved in the decision-making process does not need to be defined as being or not the most optimal basis for the functioning of the new European diplomatic corps. Arguably, the inputs provided at this stage are a positive start for the creation of an efficient Service. However, what needs to be kept in mind is a cautious balance between the will of institutions and Member States to keep the EEAS affiliated and fully accountable on the one hand and the provision of necessary inputs for operational capabilities necessary to reach the set objectives on the other hand. If the Service is too limited by preemptive provisions and "in-case" blocking measures, it will never reach the ability to provide the estimated impacts and therefore to address the needs. Consequently, in order to create a truly relevant, effective, efficient, useful and sustainable European diplomatic corps, the general objectives need to be the guiding principle for the ongoing and future agreements thus leading to redefine the EU as a genuine global actor.

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NOTES

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23 Council of the European Union, (2010/427/EU), Council Decision establishing the organization and functioning of the European External Action Service, 26 July 2010, Official Journal of the European Union L201/30-40 EN Published on the 3 August 2010, Article 4 §3 (a).

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25 Ibid, Annex.

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Małgorzata Gałęziak