

Career path for EEAS AD staff

The present paper presents orientations for a future career policy which aims to provide rewarding careers for all EEAS staff in line with the needs of the service and the provisions of the new Staff Regulations.

The two guiding principles are mobility and the creation of polyvalent profiles supported by targeted training.

The career of EEAS diplomats recruited at entry level AD grades would be composed of two parts: a first phase focussing on mobility and rotation alternating between different kind of posts in HQ (geographic departments, administration, CSDP structures) and Delegations; this to allow staff to gain comprehensive experience in the different fields of EEAS activities. In a second phase, staff would choose between different career paths according to their interest and abilities. They could go for a management career, an expert's career or remain generalists.

While it is relatively easy to design a career path for staff recruited at entry level, the EEAS faces a particular challenge in defining interesting and motivating career perspectives for 68 % of existing EEAS AD staff, graded already AD10 – AD14¹. Over time this disproportion between junior and senior staff should ideally level out, but in the meantime, and in view of the provisions of the new SR, special attention needs to be paid to officials in grades AD 12 and AD 13. These members of staff represent 43% of existing EEAS AD staff of which less than a third are in management positions². The second career phase outlined below, is meant also as an orientation for the existing more senior EEAS population, in particular in view of the implementation of the new SR.

The EEAS needs a permanent core staff at all levels and in all three career paths set out in this paper, combined with TA's who bring complementary skills and plug any gaps in the EEAS talent pool. The same principles of the different career phases therefore apply by analogy to the TAs recruited from MS. Upon contract renewal TA mobility should follow the same logic of varied experience and gradually increased responsibilities.

I. First Career phase: Diversification/staff recruited at entry level

Recruitment: Assuming that in the medium term, the EEAS could start recruiting to ensure a regular inflow of entry-level diplomats based on EEAS recruitment needs in terms of qualifications and numbers.

Entry-level recruitment should continue to take place via EPSO assessment centres.

¹ Figures based on officials and TAs from MS in the respective grades

² Figures based on officials and TAs from MS in the respective grades

First Career phase: Regular rotation and mobility would facilitate the creation of polyvalent profiles among junior staff in the first career phase, i.e. staff movements between Delegations (including those in more difficult environments) and Headquarters, between different fields of expertise (geographic, horizontal, administration, CSDP) and ideally also a stay in another EU institution or a secondment to a MS. Lower graded EEAS staff would be encouraged gradually to assume more responsibilities. The readiness to take on different and new challenges and the variety of experience gained, should be considered favourably in the further career progression (promotion, pre-selection for new post etc.). As a matter of principle, and in line with the SR, promotion in the lower grades should, on average, be considerably faster than in the more senior grades.

To that end, junior EEAS staff could be encouraged to build their career around the following elements:

- regularly alternating postings between HQ and Delegations, including those in more difficult places,
- assignments in different **geographic/thematic/CSDP areas**, including in CSDP missions or operations when possible within existing resources
- possibly serve in an **administrative function** (ex. MDR or in DEL),
- possibly a period of service in another institution (Commission, Council, EP, Cabinet), MS FM, embassy or a secondment to an international organisation or third country.

Targeted training should accompany and support the diversification of junior EEAS staff, focussing on, community policies, diplomatic, management skills, language training etc.

II. Second Career phase: Consolidation or Specialization/existing EEAS staff

The second career phase could aim at consolidation or specialization of careers taking into account the individual abilities, skills and knowledge of the official. In line with the new SR, three different tracks of careers could be envisaged:

- 1) a generalist career
- 2) a management career, or
- 3) an expert career.

The different tracks are “permeable”, i.e. a later change will remain possible and could be supported through training.

Generalist career (AD 9-12)

Colleagues wishing to remain generalists could be moving between a range of jobs, doing a wide variety of work in HQ and in Delegations. The mobility and rotation exercises offer opportunities for a varied and satisfying career. Also here mobility between different policy areas, other institutions, or secondments to MS with an increasing level of responsibility (e.g. Heads of Sections, Head of Sectors) should be considered an advantage in the career development and for promotions. The generalist career path would allow for promotion up to AD12.

To develop beyond that level, there are two potential streams:

Management career (AD 9-14)

As part of an overall career policy, it could be envisaged to start identifying colleagues with management potential at an early stage in their careers. Particular attention could be given to the appointment of Deputy Heads of Division/Heads of bigger Political Sections in Delegations. The group of Deputies/Heads of Sections could be used to create a pool for identifying colleagues with the potential to assume greater management responsibilities. Deputies will be appointed exclusively through a transparent selection procedure.

A targeted training programme (e.g. in cooperation with the European Union School of Administration), composed of different modules over a longer period of time could be developed and prepare participants for future management functions (“staff college”). Towards the end of the assignment, colleagues could be invited to participate in a kind of 'screening'/special selection procedure (possibly via assessment centres). This could lead to a short list of potential managers. Successful completion of this process would become a *sine qua non* condition for becoming a manager (eg. Head of Division; Head of Delegation).

However, the assessment centre option would require considerable financial resources. If the successful completion of the training programme/assessment centre becomes a *sine qua non decision* for EEAS staff to becoming a manager, further thought would need to be given to how to ensure a level playing field with external candidates for middle-management posts.

In any event, in order adequately to perform management duties, an EEAS manager³ should have experience in different geographic/thematic/administrative areas of the service, a certain track record in team management (e.g. as Head of Sector or Deputy) and should have (ideally) served in a Delegation. The principles of mobility between the different parts and policy areas of the EEAS should continue to apply and be considered an advantage in selection and promotion processes.

EEAS managers should, over time, develop certain skills and competences, defined in a specific “EEAS management competency framework” currently under development. Targeted and regular management training and coaching should accompany EEAS managers and facilitate the creation of an EEAS “management culture”.

³ Chairs of Council Working Groups and Chargés d'Affaires are considered equivalent to Management .

Transitional measures for Deputies

At present there are 62 Deputy Heads of Division in the EEAS. A framework for management training is being developed consisting of a mix of courses offered by COM HR and specific EEAS training. Pending decisions on a more formal and specialised training and selection/screening programme for Deputies, defining a range of mandatory courses from the training offer that Deputies are encouraged to follow over a certain period of time (e.g. 2 years), could be considered. In addition, and for those Deputies with the ambition of taking up management functions, assessors could be asked to pay particular attention to the management potential of the colleagues concerned in the annual appraisal exercise. Special guidance could be given to line managers in this respect.

Expert careers (AD 9-14)

Incentives could also be offered to staff to develop an expert or specialist profile. This could apply to those colleagues who have a particular interest/ knowledge in one or two areas and who are not necessarily interested in / skilled for a management position.

The development of an **expert career** in line with the new Staff Regulations would be an alternative to today's "career = management" equation. An expert career would become interesting for staff by allowing for promotions beyond AD 12 and could be further 'upgraded' by providing the possibility of specialised training (e.g. language training, fellowships) or prolonged/more frequent postings in relevant Delegations. It could be an interesting path for colleagues with experience in particular fields (including geographic areas, relevant languages etc.), or specific technical or other skills of importance to the EEAS.

Experts (AD 9-14) could be selected via a specialised selection procedure or publication following the identification of the expertise/posts the EEAS needs to meet future challenges. In addition to specific training, postings in MS FMs or other institutions could allow for further skills development. It would also be possible to fill posts with a specific expert profile by recruiting experts from MS for a given period of time.

The identification of the required expertise should be based on a screening of EEAS resources and the experience gained during the first four years of the EEAS (see Annex 2): A selection process for these posts could be based on the following criteria: a) posts requiring a certain seniority to ensure high level coordination tasks, b) posts requiring specialized expertise (cultural, language), c) posts necessary for the service in at least a medium term perspective. The needs assessment for senior expertise obviously needs to be reviewed at regular intervals and adapted to new tasks and new challenges in the EU's external policies. The specific situation of experts will need to be reflected in the EEAS mobility policy.

Transitional measures for the selection of experts

According to Annex XIII, Art 30.3 SR a limited number (5% of all statutory AD staff on 31.12.2013) of officials holding special responsibilities may be assigned by the appointing authority before 31 December 2015 to the type of post "Head of Unit or equivalent" or "Advisor or equivalent". The EEAS could therefore propose up to a total of 46 posts to be considered equivalent to Heads of Division for promotion purposes.

The posts concerned will fall into two groups:

- Posts with requiring a specific expert profile that will be filled by future selection procedures (Annex IIa);
- Posts already occupied by staff with a relevant expert profile who could be included "*ad personam*" (Annex IIb).

Annex I: Future career path for newly recruited EEAS staff

1st Part of Career: Diversification

Mobility, generally 3-4 different postings:

- Different geographical/thematic/CSDP areas
- DEL posting(s)
- Possibly one ICV 30% (+) country
- Serve in an administrative function (MDR or DEL)
- Possible posting in another institution (Commission, Council, EP) MS MFA/Embassy

[Some posts both in HQ and Delegations would be designated more specifically "beginners" posts, and some others "advanced [desk officer]" posts. A very linear career would then progress from a "beginner" post to an "advanced desk" post to a "Head of Sector" or "Deputy" to management, jumping between HQ and Delegations. This could also make arguments towards MS easier why some posts are graded AD 5]

2nd Part of Career: Specialization/Consolidation

Pool of Deputy Heads of Division/Heads of Section in DEL/future EEAS managers

Develop
ment
Centre

Publication

Experts

- Regional/horizontal/technical specialisation, incl.
- Support for specialised/individual /university training

Managers

- Further development of management skills

Generalists

- Posting/training according to EEAS service needs

Annex II:

a) Expert Careers - (AD 9–14 with publication)

The number of expert careers including annex IIa) and annex IIb) nominations should not exceed 5% of AD statutory staff. The exact number and scope of the posts would, however, need to be confirmed through a more thorough assessment: It is suggested that MDs should make a well justified case for the need of expertise in their respective areas. As a general rule, the need for specific expertise could be guided by considerations such as a) posts requiring a certain seniority to ensure high level coordination tasks, b) posts requiring specialized expertise c) posts necessary for the service in at least a medium perspective (no 'short-term experts'). It is important to note that the identification of expert profiles should be based on a strictly functional approach, i.e. independently from the person possibly occupying this post at the moment⁴.

The Corporate Board would then examine and decide on the final list of areas in which the EEAS would want to start introducing expert careers. The list would need to be reviewed on a regular basis.

By analogy to the Head of Division positions, the expert posts would be filled through:

1. Selection procedure with publication – Art 29 (1)(a) SR - once the posts become vacant
2. Internal mobility– Art 7 SR

b) Transitional measures (ad personam nominations) – without publication

According to Annex XIII, Art 30.3 SR a limited number of officials holding special responsibilities may be assigned by the appointing authority before 31 December 2015 to the type of post "Head of Unit or equivalent" or "Advisor or equivalent". The EEAS could therefore propose a limited number of colleagues to be considered equivalent to Heads of Division for promotion purposes. Assuming that the identification of expert posts through the procedure of Annex IIa) will lead over time to a significant number of posts equivalent to Heads of Divisions, it is suggested to limit the *ad personam* nominations at this stage⁵ to a maximum of 25 persons.⁶

The *ad personam* nominations could follow the logic presented in this paper; i.e. reflecting the need for specialised expertise in certain areas (see Annex IIa). Contrary to Annex IIa), the *ad personam* nominations concern the current job-holder. He/she will continue to be a "Head of Unit or equivalent" even after he/she has left the post

⁴ Working Group chairs and Chargé d'affaires have already been designated as equivalent for promotion purposes.

⁵ Since the possibilities of *ad personam* nominations are limited in time, the number of functional posts identified under Annex II a) can evolve as *ad personam* nominees might leave the service.

⁶ This figure does not include experts currently on Advisor posts already promotable to AD14.

Procedure for the identification of potential *ad personam* nominations:

The functional approach of identification of necessary experts post (Annex IIa) and *ad personam* nominations (Annex IIb) will be conducted in parallel. In certain cases, the two exercises would overlap: e.g. if a specific profile is maintained according to Annex IIa) and a colleague with the relevant skills is already working in the department, he/she could be confirmed on the post without a new publication/selection procedure).