



Le Courrier du SEAE

EEAS Courrier

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Edito

Le Service Européen d'Action Extérieure (SEAE) a été créé il y a six mois, afin de coordonner et d'amplifier l'action extérieure de l'Union.

Ensemble, U4U (à Bruxelles) et USHU (hors Union, dans les Délégations) ont agi, avec les autres partenaires de la Majorité syndicale, pour que ce nouveau service soit le plus proche possible de la Commission. Notre position repose, à la fois, sur des raisons de fond - sauvegarder l'architecture communautaire- et pratiques, financières et administratives.

Ensemble, nos deux syndicats ont œuvré pour que ce service soit doté d'un Comité du personnel unique, commun avec celui de la Commission, ne serait-ce que pour tenir compte des personnels en Délégation qui dépendent à la fois de la Commission et du SEAE.

Malheureusement, nos politiques en ont décidé autrement. Le nouveau service est mis en place comme une institution distincte, mais seulement au sens du Statut.

USHU et U4U, rassemblés dans une structure unique (le Regroupement Syndical), ont décidé de lancer cette nouvelle lettre d'information: "Le courrier du SEAE". Il est destiné spécifiquement aux personnels du nouveau service, tant à Bruxelles qu'en Délégation. Son but est de favoriser la circulation de l'information et de nourrir les débats, pour mieux faire entendre la voix du personnel.

Ce premier numéro souhaite lancer la discussion sur les conditions dans lesquelles le SEAE a été créé.

European External Action Service: building an efficient diplomatic service

The European External Action Service (EEAS) was created to give Europe a single voice on the international political arena. This in order to maximise Europe's impact and to spread European values such as peace, democracy and the rule of law, respect of human rights, and political and economic integration.

The institution of the EEAS was made an independent one, detached from Commission and Council in view to reinforce external policy. The EEAS must fulfill the original expectations of a European diplomatic service of knowledge, geo-strategic vision and impact – a service of excellence.

The creation of the EEAS: state of play and issues

A few months after the creation of the EEAS, some structural problems continue to arise. U4U and USHU are fully committed to identifying and helping solve them.

Organisation chart and functioning:

- Multiplication of hierarchical levels, with overlapping of responsibilities.

- Lack of horizontal structure or mechanisms to facilitate **dialogue, cross-sector team work** and creativity.
- Impression that the challenge of incorporating people, especially top management into a new structure is not really and fully considered.
- The chosen denominations do not correspond to the culture and tradition of the European civil service.

This results in slow decision making that can undermine quick capacity to respond to situations.

Lack of visibility : EEAS is not well quoted by the press, its actions should be better explained.

Lack of transparency: Staff has the impression that the situation has worsened in relation to career development. Top level hierarchy seems to put priority on the incorporation of MS diplomats into the EEAS, without reciprocity.

In addition to EEAS limited one voice capacity in relation to Member States, the split with the European Commission, in particular DEVCO, makes the development of comprehensive external strategies more complex

Gender equality is not enough reflected today in top management recruitment.

Focus on Delegations

The EEAS has to deal with more than 135 places of employment one of which is Brussels and the rest are delegations throughout the world. Many colleagues transferred from the Commission, but mainly, from the Council will have to discover this world. The majority of them will sooner or later work in a Delegation.

How do the Delegations function? What is going on there? Who works there? This and many other

questions are raised by colleagues from HQ. We will regularly inform you about life and work in Delegations and invite you to send us your questions, information, exchange your experiences and views with us in this column.

First of all, it is necessary to have a clear picture of the structure of delegations by staff category and institution:

EEAS STAFF	COMMISSION STATUTORY STAFF	NON-STATUTORY STAFF OF BOTH INSTITUTIONS
Officials	Officials	Seconded National Experts
Temporary Agents from MS (2e type contract)	Temporary Agents	Young experts
Contract Agents (3a type contract)	Contract Agents (3a type contract)	External contract staff (cleaning staff, gardeners, etc.)
Local Agents	Local Agents	

All these colleagues work under one roof and face the same problems in their daily work and life. The EEAS is responsible for many issues which are common to staff of both the EEAS and the Commission, for example application of Annex X. However, all career related aspects remain under responsibility of the home institution.

The only exception is Local Agents: the EEAS is also responsible for the career of LAs, irrespective of the institution to which they belong.

This is an extremely complex structure and both institutions (the EEAS and the Commission) will face the challenge of managing personnel in a sound and proper manner. However, we regret to state that the EEAS does not treat all staff categories equally.

LOCAL AGENTS

"Local staff" is the category of personnel hired by the institutions locally in third countries. They belong to a particular statutory staff category, (Title V, articles

120-122) of the Staff Regulations of the Officials and Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Communities. Each institution identifies Conditions of Employment for its local agents which should be in line with the local legislation of the respective country. Today in over 130 EU delegations around the world, 3500 of local agents are working, carrying out different jobs ranging from administrative, advisory and supervisory to manual duties. These days nearly all LAs have indefinite duration contracts. Despite the fact that this staff category represents the majority of personnel working in delegations the EEAS is not in a hurry to discuss their problems. For the time being it prefers to ignore their existence.

CONTRACT AGENTS

Currently, the second largest category of staff working in Delegations, is Contract Agents. Contract Agents in Delegations have CA3a contracts which can become

indefinite over time if certain conditions are met; in this sense they differ greatly from Contract Agents working in EU Institutions in Brussels where the maximum duration of contracts is limited to 3 years. In Delegations today there is an ever-growing number of Contract Agents on indefinite contracts who are mainly employed at Function Group IV and thus perform advisory tasks. Since November 2010, Contract Agents are now eligible to participate in institutional mobility and will therefore in the future be able to structurally move between Delegations and between Delegations and Headquarters in Brussels.

Contract Agents are employed by the Commission/EEAS under EU law (Belgian) and are statutorily expected to undertake non-core tasks as

they occupy non-permanent posts; this restriction is extremely frustrating as thousands of highly qualified Contract Agents have no possibility to become managers and suffer from limited career-progression despite their expertise and years of service in Delegations.

OFFICIALS

Rotation this year was delayed which created a lot of uncertainty among colleagues. We requested EEAS to better co-ordinate its work on rotation with the Commission. Staff representatives must be duly involved. It has been always the case at the Commission and we believe the same practice should be followed by the EEAS.

Some fresh ideas for discussion

Working methods: Counterbalance "heavy hierarchy" with horizontal flexible structures and creative methods of management. Creative thinking and innovation should be promoted. Internal debate is the essence of a healthy institution.

Recruitment: Recruitment competitions specifically tailored for the EEAS. The diplomatic schools in the Member States should focus their curricula on European diplomacy.

Working culture: Promote coordination, coherence and solidarity between colleagues, instead of permanent competition.

This requires:

- well-defined career structure
- transparent promotion criteria
- 360° evaluation at all hierarchical levels
- valorisation of past experience and seniority
- precise job descriptions with specific requirements
- job vacancies with a narrow range of grade levels
- transparency of the selection criteria: publication of the specific selection criteria before the panel meets; a representative of the personnel must be member of the selection panel; the list of the selected officials should be published by the panel; the positions should be filled in the order indicated by that list

Obligation to serve abroad: EEAS officials shall have a specific vocation for international service. The requirement to serve abroad is sine qua non. This kind of mobility brings renewal of experience, international exposure and fresh vision. The service abroad should be a mandatory requirement before gaining access to

management positions. Current managers who have not served abroad should do it.

Mobility:

EEAS officials must have the vocation for international diplomacy and political work. The service must assure return to the original institution. Mobility between the EEAS and the diplomatic services of the Member States – reciprocity: if 10 people move from a given Ministry of a Member State to the EEAS (both headquarters and Delegations), just as many should then move from EEAS to that ministry or an embassy of that Member State.

Mobility must have a clear rationale behind it: excellence and enhancement of the career path. Mobility must be imbued with a practical meaning for all the actors involved.

Rotation:

All posts should be published. Recruitment procedures should be shortened.

Rotation from Headquarters to postings abroad must be transparent and logically structured. Using weighted criteria such as experience, seniority, hardship level of the posting, a list of officials can be drawn according to the number of points obtained. The principles from that point on is "first listed, first appointed". Return to Headquarters should be prepared and well-managed, eliminating today's stressful situation of people having on their own to look for an adequate position.

The EEAS should be organised in such a way that accumulate experience from staff coming from a Delegation is put at the service of the institutions.

Proposition du Haut Représentant sur le Comité du personnel: on est loin du compte!

La mise en place d'un Comité du personnel efficace et représentatif est essentielle pour les collègues du SEAE. Depuis le début, la discussion sur ce point ne s'est pas déroulée de manière optimale. La ligne directrice de la discussion a été de limiter les dépenses. Si cette préoccupation est louable, il n'en demeure pas moins qu'elle ne saurait concerner le seul Comité du personnel.

Depuis le début, des décisions ont été prises qui se sont avérées peu économes: choix de bâtiments coûteux, déménagement du Haut Représentant qui a quitté le Berlaymont, niveaux hiérarchiques pléthoriques, service externe à la Commission, Comités du personnel distincts, etc. Cette liste non exhaustive témoigne d'un faible souci d'économie. Cela est d'autant plus préoccupant que les moyens minimum pour faire fonctionner le Comité du personnel ne sont pas prévus. Ainsi, le Comité ne disposerait que de deux collègues mis à sa disposition, alors que le service est présent dans près de 140 pays.

Plus grave encore, Mme. Ashton semble pencher pour des décisions qui ne respecteraient pas les principes fondamentaux de la représentation du personnel:

1) L'égalité entre les différentes catégories de personnel: à la différence de la Commission, la décision du HR/VP sur le Comité du personnel exclut de manière expresse le détachement des agents locaux, même hors Union, pour des motifs administratifs peu convaincants. Elle entérine ainsi une inégalité de traitement entre catégories du personnel.

2) L'autonomie de gestion du Comité du personnel: l'obligation d'obtenir l'accord de l'AIPN pour détacher des collaborateurs serait de nature à porter gravement atteinte au fonctionnement de cet organe.

3) La limitation des détachements: la décision du SEAE sur le Comité du personnel exclut la proposition présentée par U4U et USHU, qui vise à limiter le nombre d'années de détachement et à éviter ainsi la bureaucratisation de la représentation du personnel. Il est à noter que cette clause existe à la Commission et dans d'autres institutions communautaires.

Si une telle orientation persistait, U4U/USHU pourraient émettre un avis négatif sur ce projet, avec le soutien des autres membres de la Majorité syndicale.

Adoption des textes d'application du statut: où en est-on?

Voici un point sur la décision de Mme Ashton adoptant des Dispositions générales d'exécution pour appliquer le Statut au personnel du SEAE.

Le Comité du personnel de la Commission et le Comité interinstitutionnel du Statut ont été saisis, pour avis, par David O'Sullivan d'une décision de Mme Ashton qui reprend 54 Dispositions générales d'exécution (DGE, ou GIP en anglais) du Statut (liste de ces dispositions sur notre site web: www.u4unity.eu).

La plupart de ces DGE (46 sur 54) sont celles de la Commission, le SEAE ayant conclu des "Service Level Agreements" avec elle pour la gestion de son personnel.

Le Comité du personnel de la Commission (CCP) a émis un avis positif sur ce projet de décision, moyennant quelques adaptations techniques (avis du CCP à l'adresse: www.u4unity.eu).

Le SEAE doit encore adopter des dispositions particulières concernant:

- l'exercice de promotion de 2011, sur base des évaluations de la Commission et du Conseil; l'évaluation et la promotion, de manière générale;
- l'attestation et la certification;
- le flexi-time et le job sharing;
- les enquêtes internes;
- la sécurité au travail.

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