

Working Group VII

Working document 55

Working group VII – "External Action"

Subject: " Towards the establishment of a common European diplomacy "
– Paper by Mr Iñigo Méndez de Vigo, member of the Convention

The Chairman of the Working Group, Vice-President Jean-Luc Dehaene, herewith circulates, for members' information, a paper received from Mr Méndez de Vigo.

Brussels, 15 November 2002

Dear Jean Luc,

Please find herewith some points regarding the establishment of a common European diplomacy. They are based upon the report drafted by Mr. Gerardo Galeote and approved by a large majority of the European Parliament. I hope you can take them into account in your final report.

Yours,

Iñigo Méndez de Vigo

Contribution to the European Convention

--Working Group VII - "External action"--

Subject: "Towards the establishment of a common european diplomacy"

1. Building a European diplomatic mentality for a more coherent and effective external action

Proposals for a more coherent and effective EU's external action and foreign policy should bear in mind that the diplomatic services of the Member States and the network of Delegations of the European Commission's (EC) External Service along with the High Representative's services are and will be the final executing actors of Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).

Some figures indicate that the U.S.A would have a network of some 300 missions all over the world, employing some 15.000 people, while the EU all together would have around 1.500 missions abroad in which 40.000 people would be employed. The European Commission's External Service is by itself composed as today of 128 Delegations in 123 third countries and 5 international organizations and of more than 800 officials and more than 2.000 people hired as local staff (some 3.000 people all together).

We could say that the process of development of the CFSP has already put into place a European diplomacy since there is a European political actor whose positions are represented at international level. But it is indeed a diplomacy without its own *diplomats*, without appropriately regulated *embassies*, and without sufficient coordination among the external services of the Member States and of the EU institutions.

There is no doubt that many steps can be done to try to come closer to what could be called a common European diplomacy, which in no case would mean the disappearance of the Member States diplomatic services. Moving towards the establishment of a common European diplomacy, as requested several times by the European Parliament, means, according to Prof. Francisco Aldecoa¹, "to progressively create a European diplomatic culture among national diplomats and officials for the external relations of the EU institutions in order to adapt to the reality to the current state of European integration in the international sphere and its relations with third countries".

The "permeability" of foreign services should be increased in order to develop a European strategic and administrative culture for a European external action based on the European interest and implemented by its own specific and specifically trained personnel. This personnel would include the diplomatic services of the Member States (whose expertise and experience has no substitute) and Commission and Council officials for external relations.

2. Changing the legal status of the European Commission Delegations: Delegations of the European Union

- The EU should be endowed with international legal personality in order to guarantee a coherent and effective role for the EU to be played in the international sphere. In this context, the current network of EC Delegations should thus become EU Delegations while remaining under the EC's staffing plan and structures. This would be the proper answer to the increasing political and diplomatic role played by the delegations and the Heads of many Delegations.
- The duty for the Delegations to assist Members of the European Parliament (EP) and the High Representative should be clarified and more adequately regulated.

¹ Paper presented in the meeting of European diplomatic schools and institutes, held in Madrid on 20, 21 May 2002

- Along these changes, links between the network of Delegations and the European Parliament should be strengthened by revising Article 21 TUE. Due consultation and information to the EP should be up-graded in order to ensure the respect of the political priorities set by the EP. Heads of Delegations should have the obligation to appear before the European Parliament, especially before taking up their duties on the spot.

3. Deepening and strengthening coordination between EC Delegations and external services of the Member States: Articles 19 and 20 TUE

- The principle of cooperation enshrined in Article 20 of the TUE should be broadened and specified. The duty of coordination as well as of common analysis and reporting should be established therein.
- In order to widen the practical conditions for that coordination, all mechanisms that would allow the pooling of assets of the Member States and of the EU institutions should be increased:
 - the pooling of diplomatic missions of the Member States and Delegations;
 - the posting of national diplomatic experts in the Delegations and in the Commission and Council Headquarters for the foreign affairs
 - the possibility of opening Union Embassies in specific countries in which only a few Member States would have diplomatic missions through the pooling of member States embassies and the EC Delegation. In this way, the national missions would be able to maintain their own, separate legal personality within the framework of the Union Embassy, while the interests of those Member States that would not consider it necessary to assign their own mission would be represented by the Union Embassy
 - joint diplomatic *démarches* and the drawing up of joint reports and analysis

It should be taken into account that the weaker diplomatic structures of candidate countries would benefit enormously from this common diplomatic facilities.

- The specific issue of consular matters should also be addressed in order to develop the provisions of Article 20 of the EC treaty. Cooperation in these matters and the possibility of pooling assets would be of most utility and clarify procedures in visa or migrations matters now that we move towards a common migration policy. For other aspects of consular missions like the notary-related ones, common training and a certain degree of harmonization of national systems should be considered.
- Article 19 should be modified in order to include the obligation of coordination with the Delegations, since it is a fact that a major coordinating role is achieved by the Heads of Delegation before international organizations and by the EC services in many international conferences. Coordination before the United Nations should be considered the cornerstone of the will of the EU to speak with a single voice and to deploy a common diplomacy.
- Provisions for a single representation of the EU before international political and financial organizations and agencies should be considered.

4. Coordinating training programmes: a common foundation for European diplomatic programmes

It is clear to many that an effective external action based on the coordination between the various European actors of foreign relations depends inevitably on personal relations, common experiences and mutual knowledge. In this sense, training appears as an extremely effective tool to build up those personal relations at an early stage of a diplomatic career. Training also allows to enhance a common knowledge of the different national backgrounds and interests and the diverse administrative cultures and therefore, to create a common European administrative culture and a "spécificité du métier diplomatique européen". Diplomats and other civil servants not belonging to the external service of the Member States, and EC and Council officials for external relations are the natural addressees of the following proposals:

- A European Diplomatic Academy should be created. As a first step, training of European diplomats should rely upon a network of European diplomatic academies, institutes, University centers and other diplomatic training related bodies should be established. The European Commission should play a coordination role in the network.
 - An inventory should be made of the existing resources in terms of training programmes offered by diplomatic schools and institutes and other diplomatic training related bodies, including those offered at the Community level, like the European Diplomatic Programme and the Association Programme.
 - A coordination of training programmes should be established. Some studies evidence that communitarian chapters represent an average of only 10% of the programmes of access to the diplomatic career, and that the differences in the situation among the Member States and the candidate countries are enormous.
 - A common foundation diplomatic programme ("programme commun de base") should be developped in order to achieve a basic level of harmonization around some minimum required European contents. This common foundation programme should include a modular approach, a lifelong learning approach, and a European approach.
 - e-learning mechanisms should be developped, building on the experience of the Canadian Foreign Service or the Mediterranean Diplomatic Academy to give an adequate response to the enhanced responsibilities and increasing political role of the Delegations personnel.
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