

The Practice of Appointing the Heads of EU Delegations in the Wake of Council Decision on the European External Action Service

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THE POLISH INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

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by Ryszarda Formuszewicz and Jakub Kumoch

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Executive Summary

The objective of this paper is to analyse the present management profile and the prevailing practice in appointing the Heads of EU Delegations (HoDs) throughout the world. This examination takes into account the guidelines on personnel selection as adopted during negotiations over the future shape of the European External Action Service (EEAS). According to Council Decision guidelines, the future staff composition should be based on merit and ensure the geographical and gender balance of the service. Hence the study focuses on the following key variables: nationality, sex and the declared language skills of the current HoDs. Based on the data collected, an attempt has been made to capture the regularities in the appointment practice of the Commission.

In light of the data collected, a clear discrepancy is visible in how individual Member States' nationals are represented within the service. Only two Heads of Delegation—out of 115 worldwide—are citizens of the new Member States. In addition, the percentage of new Member States' nationals among the combined staff of DG RELEX and RELEX DEL is significantly lower than their percentage in the European Commission.

Another phenomenon has also been observed in the practice of appointing the HoDs in regions of particular interest to old and new Member States respectively: in Africa and South America, it is a common practice to offer an HoD post to a national of the Member State that is particularly linked to the host country (e.g. a former colonial power), but in the post-Soviet and Balkan area, most EU HoDs are nationals of old Member States with no particular links to the region.

Within the category of HoDs, an important lack of gender balance can be noted as well. The low number of female HoDs reflects a general discrepancy in the employment rate of men and women within the segment of the Commission responsible for external relations. The percentage of female employees in DG RELEX, RELEX DEL and among Heads of EU Delegations is strikingly low when compared to the vast majority of diplomatic services of the EU Member States.

The survey also shows that knowledge of the host states' official languages does not play a major role in the selection of the HoDs, unless it is an official language of both the host state and the EU. As a consequence, none of the HoDs in Arab countries speaks Arabic, the HoD in Moscow does not speak Russian and the HoD in Turkey does not speak Turkish. Other examples can also be quoted to support this observation.

The question of equality among the main working languages of the Commission is also an issue. While almost all HoDs declare that they speak both English and French, only a quarter of them declare knowledge of German. This makes German the fourth most popular language among this category of employees, with Spanish (nearly 35%) being more common.

Introduction

This case study has been aimed at analysing the practice of nominating Heads of EU Delegations, which are to become an integral part of the European External Action Service (EEAS).¹ Based on data concerning the nationality and gender of the Heads of Delegation as well as a selected merit criterion (i.e. language skills), an attempt has been made to identify the appointment practice pursued by the Commission so far.

On 26 July 2010, the Council's decision establishing the organisational structure and operating principles of the EEAS was adopted.² The document translates the general dispositions of the Treaty³ into a compromise between EU institutions⁴ and the interests of the Member States. The emerging service encompasses both innovative elements and those based on the existing structure of the Commission and the General Secretariat of the Council. This institutional setting is designed not only to encourage transfer of institutional experience and knowledge, but also to sustain the existing operational patterns of EU representation abroad. This is likely to exert an impact on the process of shaping the EEAS, including the level of its acceptance by the Member States and its future ability to meet the needs and priorities of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).

The concept of a future European diplomacy has stirred up significant disputes both within the Member States and between them. The discussion shaped to some extent the negotiations over the EU's institutional reform and re-emerged during preparations of the Council Decision implementing the Treaty. Among the results of the final compromise is a specific structure of the EEAS, which embraces the staff of the Commission and General Secretariat of the Council, but also—at least one third of EEAS staff at the AD level⁵—personnel from the diplomatic services of the Member States appointed as temporary agents. The proportions adopted result in a clear domination of the "European" component within the service, and all staff members of the EEAS are to

¹ With the Lisbon Treaty in force, the delegations of the Commission became delegations of the EU. The Commission's representations in the Member States have a separate status and come under the DG Communication, so they were not analysed in this study.

² "Council Decision of 26 July 2010 establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service (2010/427/UE)," *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 201, p. 30.

³ According to Article 27 of the Treaty, the High Representative shall be assisted in fulfilling his or her mandate by the European External Action Service. This service shall work in cooperation with the diplomatic services of the Member States and comprise officials from relevant departments of the General Secretariat of the Council and of the Commission as well as staff seconded from national diplomatic services of the Member States.

⁴ The European Parliament was particularly active. See: *European Parliament legislative resolution of 8 July 2010 on the proposal for a Council decision establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service*, 08029/2010–C7-0090/2010–2010/0816(NLE), *Position of the European Parliament adopted on 8 July 2010 with a view to the adoption of Council decision establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service*, P7_TC1-NLE(2010)0816.

⁵ Officials of the EU Civil Service are divided into two categories: administrators (AD) and assistants (AST). Administrators are typically engaged in drafting policies and implementing EU law as well as analysing and advising, while assistants are generally employed in a supporting role (among others secretarial, administrative or financial). They play an important role in the internal management of EU institutions, but do not participate in the Union's legislative or budgetary processes. See: http://europa.eu/epso/discover/careers/staff_categories/index_pl.htm.

be guided only by the interests of the Union in performing their duties, so they cannot accept instructions from their governments.⁶

Another issue raised in the negotiations over the final shape of the EEAS was appropriate participation of all the Member States, with many of them reiterating the need to safeguard that the service would represent their interests adequately and reflect their specific historical, geographical and cultural sensitivities. The problem concerned in particular the Member States that had joined the EU in 2004 and 2007.⁷ Finally, the Council Decision also defined the guidelines of recruitment policy, stressing that the service should ensure adequate geographical and gender balance along with a meaningful presence of nationals from all the Member States.⁸ The implementation of these guidelines will be subject to an assessment during a review of the organisation and functioning of the EEAS in mid-2013,⁹ and corrective measures altering the recruitment policy may then be applied. The High Representative is also obliged to present an annual report to the Parliament and the Council on the process of filling posts within the EEAS.¹⁰

The changes in the EU's external relations initiated by the Lisbon Treaty will lead to a significant modification of the tasks, organisation and structure of the personnel in today's EU Delegations worldwide. According to the annex to the Council Decision, the following staff and structures are to be transferred to the EEAS automatically: all Heads of Delegation, their deputies and support staff directly attached to them, and all political, information, public diplomacy and administration sections or structures (and their staff). Only the staff responsible for the implementation of financial instruments will remain within the Commission.¹¹

The Lisbon Treaty transformed the EC Delegations all around the world into Delegations of the Union. Their aim is to represent the EU as a whole. They were placed under the authority of the High Representative and tasked to represent the entire Union¹² and to cooperate with the diplomatic and consular missions of the Member States in third countries¹³, taking over the tasks performed earlier by the rotating Presidency. In most cases this requires more intensive Delegation activity encompassing political affairs as well and resulting in the emergence of a new, more important role of the HoDs.

In line with the regulations adopted, every HoD shall have authority over all delegation staff, be accountable to the High Representative for overall management of

⁶ See Article 6 (4) of "Council Decision of 26 July 2010...", *op. cit.*

⁷ As such it was raised by the V4 countries and later became one of the subjects of the debate in the EP.

⁸ Article 6 (6) of "Council Decision of 26 July 2010...", *op. cit.*

⁹ Article 13 (3) of "Council Decision of 26 July 2010...", *op. cit.*

¹⁰ Article 6 (9) of "Council Decision of 26 July 2010...", *op. cit.*

¹¹ "Departments and functions to be transferred to the EEAS," annex to "Council Decision of 26 July 2010...", *op. cit.*

¹² Article 221 of the TFEU. See "Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union," *Official Journal of the European Union*, 30.3.2010, C 83/47.

¹³ Article 35 of the TEU. See "Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union," *Official Journal of the European Union*, 30.3.2010, C 83/13.

work and ensure the coordination of all EU actions.¹⁴ The HoD shall receive instructions from the High Representative and the EEAS and be responsible for their enforcement.¹⁵

The reinforced position of the Heads of Delegations also explains—at least to some extent—why many Member States are interested in staff recruitment procedures. As the negotiations on the final shape of the EEAS were still in progress, the media reported on the attempts of some Member States to secure particular HoD posts for their nationals. At the same time, Commission representatives reiterated that the Union intended to safeguard geographical and gender balance in line with the final Council Decision. Future attempts by the Member States to secure a significant number of HoD posts (and other EEAS top positions) for their nationals can be expected,¹⁶ particularly in the regions of special interest to a given state. In view of the above factors, the staff and recruitment policy might turn out to be one of the more difficult items on Catherine Ashton's current agenda.

¹⁴ Article 5 (2) of "Council Decision of 26 July 2010...", *op. cit.*

¹⁵ Article 5 (3) of "Council Decision of 26 July 2010...", *op. cit.*

¹⁶ France, for example, announced that it would present one candidate for every EEAS post to "avoid a situation when Member States agree with the Commission that its officials meet their quota". See: *Rapport d'information déposé par la Commission des affaires européennes sur la réforme de la gouvernance de la politique extérieure de l'Union européenne*, p. 47, www.assemblee-nationale.fr, 16 June 2010.

Outline of the Study

As has been mentioned, the objective of this study is to characterise a chosen category of management posts within the present EU external relations administration according to the guidelines set in the Council Decision (merit, adequate geographical and gender balance). The specified group includes Heads of Delegation and equal diplomatic EU field offices in third host countries, territories or international organizations, as listed on 14 June 2010 on the DG RELEX's website (see Appendix 1, list of HoDs),¹⁷ in anticipation of the 2010 rotation.¹⁸

The survey revealed that as of 14 June, a total of 115 people occupied posts of HoDs or equivalent,¹⁹ while two posts (Argentina and UN/WTO in Geneva) remained vacant. Some HoDs were accredited to more than one country or international organisation (as in the case of Vienna and Paris). For the purpose of this study, all external representations mentioned above were treated equally, without sub-classifying them according to their different formal status.

Three variables were examined in characterising the category of HoDs. Nationality and gender were chosen because both are listed in Article 6 (4) of the Council Decision as important parameters for consideration. Language skills were chosen as the third variable because of their role in testing employees' professional skills and familiarity with their host countries.²⁰ For the purpose of this survey the procedure was limited to quantitative research only, without distinguishing between native and acquired languages or between the levels of language skills.

The decision not to broaden the scope of research was intended to avoid lowering the response rate, which would render the study incomplete.

At the beginning of the project an e-mail questionnaire was sent out to all EU Delegations and other diplomatic missions as listed on the DG RELEX website. Thirty seven of them answered, with ten HoDs responding personally. In the second phase, all other Delegations were contacted by phone,²¹ and 65 responded, while data concerning the remaining HoDs were obtained from other publicly available sources.

¹⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/repdel/edelhrm/index.cfm.

¹⁸ It encompasses delegations to: Albania, Angola, Argentina, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Burundi, Chad, China, Philippines, Gabon, the UN and WTO in Geneva, Georgia, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Republic of Korea, Lebanon, Macedonia, Mozambique, Namibia, Pakistan, South Africa, Senegal, Singapore, Uganda, the U.S. and Zambia. See www.msz.gov.pl/Europejska,Sluzba,Dzialan,Zewnetrznych,35319.html.

¹⁹ For the purpose of this paper all diplomatic offices of the EU are treated equally, although a few of them have a different official status. For example, the EU's office in Kosovo, territory not officially recognised by all the Member States, is officially called Liaison Office; in Taiwan, it is called European Economic and Trade Office and in the West Bank and Gaza Strip its official name is Technical Assistance Office. See *The Role of the Technical Assistance Office*, http://ec.europa.eu/delegations/westbank/about_us/delegation_role/index_en.htm.

²⁰ Cf. G. L. Argyros, M. Grossman, F. G. Rohatyn (project co-chairs), *The Embassy of the future*, A. Witkowski (project director), Center for Strategic & International Studies, Washington, D.C., 2007, pp. 10–11.

²¹ The following PISM researchers took part in gathering the information required: Marcin Terlikowski, Tomasz Sikorski, Marcin Koczor, Rafał Morawiec, Lidia Puka, Justyna Szczudlik-Tatar, Bartosz Wiśniewski, Bartłomiej Znojek and Tomasz Żornaczuk.

During the project, a total of 115 Heads of EU Delegations were either acting or nominated worldwide (all *chargés d'affaires* or acting HoDs were left out). Data on the nationality and gender of the persons under review was collected (100%) in addition to 104 responses about their language skills (90.4%). Although asked for information, DG RELEX did not supply the exact data on the HoDs.

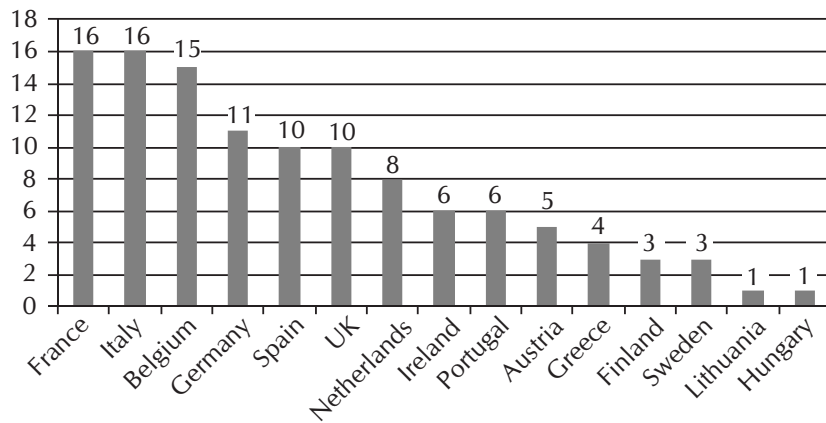
The population criterion was used to compare the representation of the Member States within a given category of officials. It has been assumed that this quantitative criterion is more adequate for further analysis than other weighing methods, such as voting weights in the Council of the European Union as defined in the Treaty of Nice or regressive proportionality used to determine the number of every Member State's seats in the European Parliament. The simple population criterion seems to be better harmonised with the logic and spirit of the Lisbon Treaty.

The final phase of this research embraced an attempt to reconstruct the appointment practice applied so far to this segment of the Commission's senior staff.

Nationality of HoDs

The Heads of Delegation were recruited from among nationals of 15 Member States. None of the heads came from Denmark, Luxembourg, Malta, Cyprus, Estonia, Slovenia, Latvia, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Poland, Bulgaria or Romania. The second set is almost identical with the countries of the last enlargements of 2004 and 2007. The only Member States from the “old” Fifteen whose citizens did not work as HoD were Denmark and Luxembourg, while the only two Member States from the “new” Twelve having their own HoDs were Lithuania and Hungary.²² If we focus on absolute numbers, most of the EU’s HoDs come from Italy (16), France (16) and Belgium (15). There are also relatively many German (11), Spanish (10) and British (10) HoDs. The research did not reveal dual citizenship of any HoD.

Graph 1. Nationality of HoDs (as of 14 June 2010)



Source: Own elaboration.

New Member States’ weak representation appears to be largely a direct consequence of their lower employment rate in DG RELEX and the current external service (RELEX DEL)²³ as compared to the citizens of the old Fifteen.²⁴

In the given segment, the Commission employs a total of 1,699 officials and temporary agents.²⁵ The largest national groups consist of Belgians (294 employees), French (230), Spaniards (197), Italians (168), Germans (154) and British (125). On the other hand, the new Member States have a much more modest representation. In DG RELEX and RELEX DEL combined there are 36 Poles, 22 Czechs, 12 Romanians, nine

²² Hungarian diplomat Mr. János Herman was nominated Head of Delegation in Norway in spring 2009 and Lithuania’s former Minister of Foreign Affairs Vygaudas Ušackas became Head of Delegation in Afghanistan in 2010.

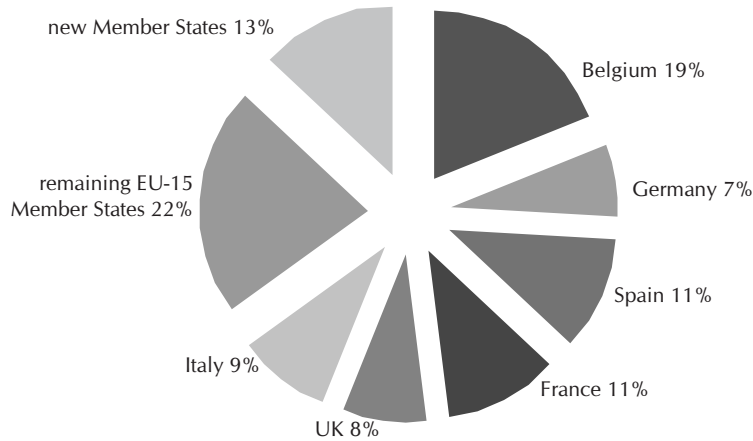
²³ DG RELEX in its present form conducts the external relations policy of the EU with regard to third countries in Asia, Latin America, Eastern Europe and industrialised partner countries. It is also responsible for relations between the EU and international organisations. DG Development is responsible for relations with Africa, the Pacific and Caribbean (ACP) countries. Also other DGs (DG Commerce, DG Enlargement, DG Humanitarian Help as well as EuropeAid Co-Operation Office) may be partly responsible for external relations of the EU. They work closely with other DGs as the EU’s “external relations family.”

²⁴ DG RELEX is responsible for financial, logistic and personal management of the Delegations.

²⁵ See *Distribution of officials and temporary agents by Directorate General and nationality (all budgets)* http://ec.europa.eu/civil_service/docs/europa_sp2_bs_nat_x_dg_en.pdf (accessed on 3 August 2010).

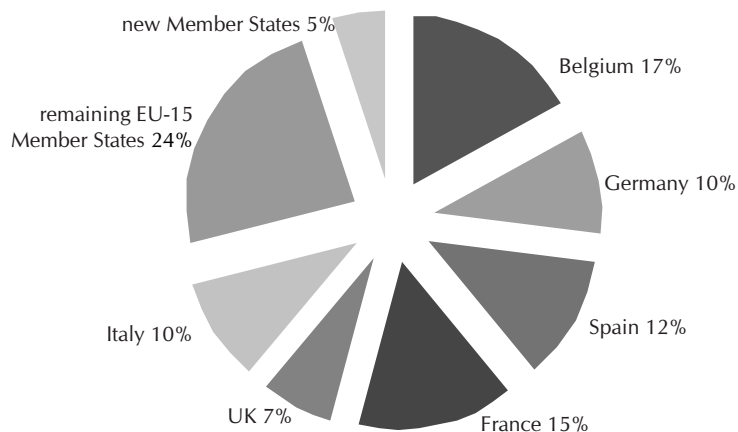
Bulgarians, eight Lithuanians, seven Slovaks, six employees from Estonia, four from Slovenia, three from Latvia and Luxembourg, two from Cyprus and one from Malta.²⁶

Graph 2: Distribution of DG RELEX officials and temporary agents by nationality (percentage)



Source: Own elaboration based on *Distribution of officials and temporary agents by Directorate General and nationality (all budgets)*, http://ec.europa.eu/civil_service/docs/europa_sp2_bs_nat_x_dg_en.pdf (as of 3 August 2010).

Graph 3: Distribution of RELEX DEL officials and temporary agents by nationality (percentage)



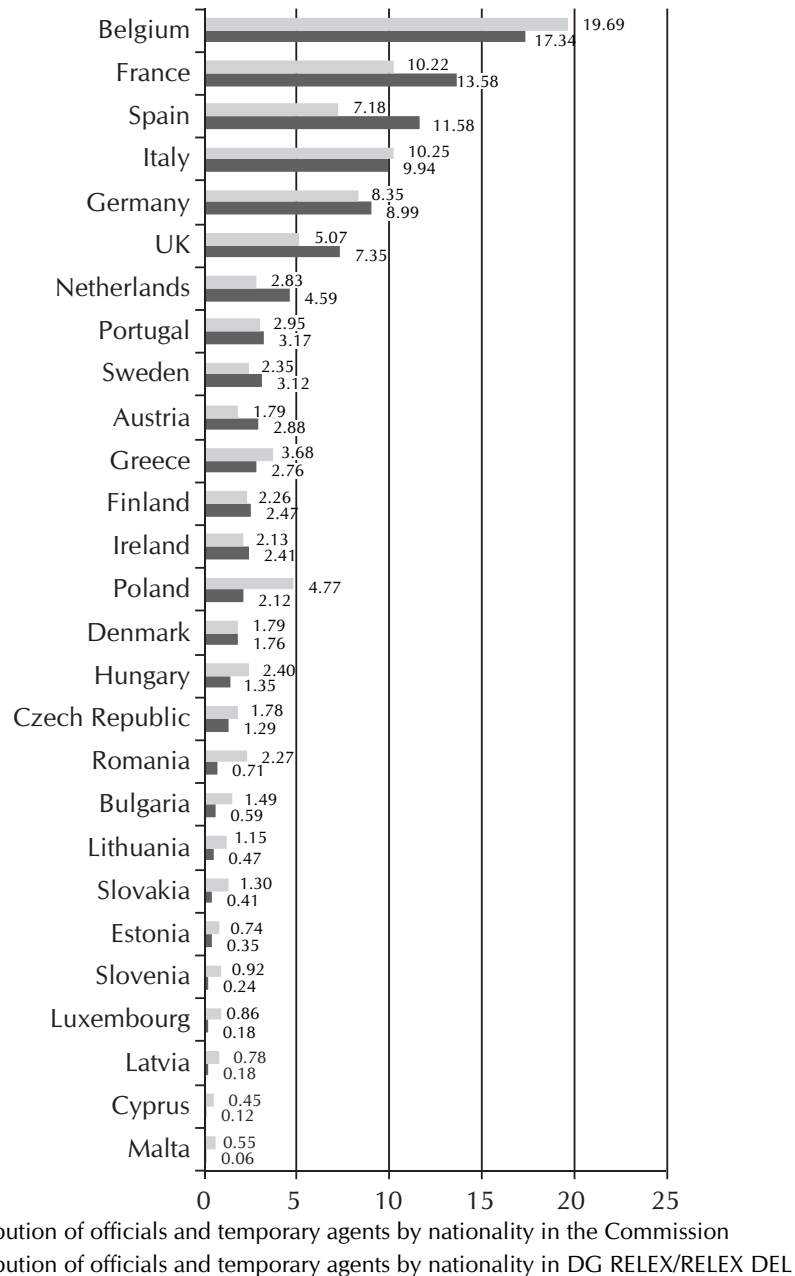
Source: Own elaboration based on *Distribution of officials and temporary agents by Directorate General and nationality (all budgets)*...

There is a strong link between the participation of a given state's nationals in the EU-led external service and its number of HoDs. For a few countries this link seems to be weaker, however. For example, the number of German, Spanish and British HoDs is similar despite the visible differences in the employment rate of their citizens in DG RELEX/RELEX DEL. Meanwhile, not a single Polish national is Head of Delegation, although the number

²⁶ It should be noted, however, that with Barroso Commission's second term, some units were moved from DG RELEX.

of Poles employed by DG RELEX/RELEX DEL accounts for over 23% of the total number of Germans and nearly 29% of the number of the British working there.²⁷

Graph 4. Distribution of officials and temporary agents by nationality in the Commission and DG RELEX/RELEX DEL (percentage)



Source: Own elaboration based on *Distribution of officials and temporary agents by Directorate General and nationality (all budgets)...*

Another phenomenon that has been noted is a clear disproportion between the level of representation of new Member States' nationals in the Commission as a whole

²⁷ Overall, the Commission employs 4,926 Belgians, 2,565 Italians, 2,556 French, 2,089 Germans, 1,797 Spaniards and 1,268 British. All figures (Heads of Delegation, DG RELEX/RELEX DEL staff and Commission employees) indicate an over-representation of Belgian nationals, who seem to be privileged due to the location of the Commission.

and in DG RELEX/RELEX DEL structures.²⁸ For example, Romanians account for 2.27% of all Commission employees and temporary agents, while in DG RELEX/RELEX DEL their percentage drops to 0.71%. Similar discrepancies can be observed for the Bulgarians (1.49% and 0.53% respectively) and Poles (4.77% and 2.12%). In all, employees from all 12 new Member States account for 18.59% of the entire staff of the Commission and only 7.83% of DG RELEX/RELEX DEL personnel (within RELEX DEL alone, the percentage drops to a mere 4.8%).²⁹

Table 1. Rate of new Member States' nationals in the EC and DG RELEX/RELEX DEL

Member State	European Commission	DG RELEX and RELEX DEL
Poland	4.77%	2.12%
Hungary	2.40%	1.35%
Romania	2.27%	0.71%
Czech Republic	1.78%	1.29%
Bulgaria	1.49%	0.53%
Slovakia	1.30%	0.41%
Lithuania	1.15%	0.47%
Slovenia	0.92%	0.24%
Latvia	0.78%	0.18%
Estonia	0.74%	0.35%
Malta	0.55%	0.06%
Cyprus	0.45%	0.12%

Source: Own elaboration based on *Distribution of officials and temporary agents by Directorate General and nationality (all budgets)...*

If population statistics are taken into account, an over-representation of 11 Member States can be noted, with the example of Belgium especially striking. Sixteen Member States are under-represented in turn, in particular Poland and Germany.

²⁸ See *Répartition des fonctionnaires et agents temporaires par Direction Générale et Nationalité (tous budgets)/ Distribution of officials and temporary agents by Directorate General and nationality (all budgets)*, http://ec.europa.eu/civil_service/docs/europa_sp2_bs_nat_x_dg_en.pdf.

²⁹ At the same time, the data used in this research requires a certain level of relativity in the context of the hierarchical structure of the Commission's administration. For example, the post of HoD at the UN in Geneva is to be published at one of the highest grades within the Commission (AD 14/15). Only 226 employees have grade AD15—31 French, 27 Germans, Spaniards and British, 21 Belgians and Italians, 12 Dutch and 11 Greeks. The low proportion of new Member States' citizens within this group is more than visible: only three Poles are AD15 employees and not a single Romanian, Bulgarian, Lithuanian, Latvian or Maltese. The citizens of the new Member States also account for no more than 10% of AD14 employees (44 out of 442). See *Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. Establishment of an EU Delegation to the UN in Geneva*, COM(2010) 287 final, Brussels 26.5.2010, pp. 5–6.

Table 2. Nationality of HoDs—Representation indicator

Member State	Representation indicator (percentage of HoDs minus percentage of EU's population)*	Heads of Delegation % of the EU	Population % of the EU
Belgium	10.88	13.04	2.16
Ireland	4.33	5.22	0.89
Netherlands	3.65	6.96	3.31
Portugal	3.09	5.22	2.12
Austria	2.68	4.35	1.67
Italy	1.87	13.91	12.04
Finland	1.54	2.61	1.07
Greece	1.22	3.48	2.25
France	1.00	13.91	12.92
Sweden	0.74	2.61	1.86
Lithuania	0.21	0.87	0.66
Malta	-0.08	0.00	0.08
Luxembourg	-0.10	0.00	0.10
Cyprus	-0.16	0.00	0.16
Estonia	-0.27	0.00	0.27
Slovenia	-0.41	0.00	0.41
Latvia	-0.45	0.00	0.45
Spain	-0.48	8.70	9.18
Slovakia	-1.08	0.00	1.08
Denmark	-1.10	0.00	1.10
Hungary	-1.13	0.87	2.00
Bulgaria	-1.51	0.00	1.51
Czech Republic	-2.10	0.00	2.10
UK	-3.68	8.70	12.38
Romania	-4.28	0.00	4.28
Germany	-6.76	9.57	16.33
Poland	-7.62	0.00	7.62

* If the figure is positive, the country is over-represented; if the figure is negative, the country can be deemed under-represented, with zero indicating a perfectly balanced participation.

Source: Own elaboration based on Eurostat data on EU population as of 1.1.2010. See "EU27 population 501 million at 1 January 2010," *Eurostat Newsrelease* 110/2010, 27.7.2010.

Data on HoDs' nationality also provides an interesting insight into the geographical dimension of the issue. In some parts of the world HoDs are often nationals of those Member States that are historically, linguistically or culturally linked to the host country. Such a phenomenon is particularly strong in Africa and South

America and—to a much lesser extent—in Asia, but it is almost completely non-existent in the non-EU countries of the former Soviet Union.

Forty-one out of 44 HoDs in Africa (93.2%) come from those Member States which in the past two centuries have been politically involved on the continent. A frequent practice consists of an HoD being a citizen of the former colonial power. This is the case in almost one third of the African countries.³⁰ A very similar situation occurs in the Americas, where Spaniards, Portuguese and the British—nationals of the three biggest former colonial powers in the region—hold HoD posts in 50% of the countries. In South America there is only one country where the HoD comes from a Member State that has never had a colony on the continent.³¹ In five out of 12 countries (41.7%), the country of the HoD's origin is identical with the former colonial power. This situation can be observed in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Suriname.

Another interesting phenomenon (noted mostly in Africa) is the common practice of HoDs coming from Member States linguistically close to the former colonial power. In African countries that had been colonies, protectorates or mandate territories of France or Portugal, 87.5% of Heads of EU Delegations come from Member States where at least one official language belongs to the Romance branch of the Indo-European language family.³² [see Map 1]. Moreover, in those African countries that happened to be under British, German or Dutch control, 84.6% of Heads of EU Delegations come from Member States where at least one official language belongs to the Germanic branch.³³

A different picture can be observed in Asia and Oceania, where only three HoDs are citizens of former colonial powers (a Frenchman in Lebanon, two British in Israel and Sri Lanka).

We can also observe several clusters of neighbouring countries worldwide where the EU is represented by citizens of the same Member State. For example as of 14 June 2010, a Dutch diplomat headed the Delegation to South Africa, while his compatriot was the HoD to Lesotho. Italians headed EU Delegations to Sudan, Eritrea and Djibouti, Belgians were accredited to the Congo (Brazzaville) and the Central African Republic as well as to Uganda and Rwanda. In Asia, a group of neighbouring countries where the EU was represented by French diplomats included: China, India, Taiwan, Mongolia and Bhutan. Another cluster of host countries with the Delegations headed in turn by British HoDs included Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, Burma, Cambodia and Laos.

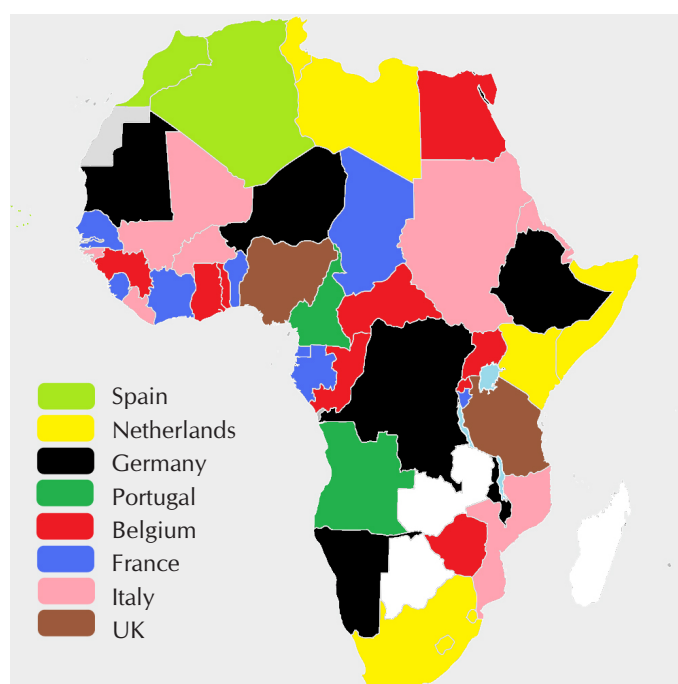
³⁰ Morocco, Ivory Coast, Tanzania, Namibia, Eritrea, Senegal, Rwanda, South Africa, Nigeria, Chad, Gabon, Benin and Angola.

³¹ The case of a Swedish HoD in Peru, with all other HoDs being Spanish, Portuguese, British or Dutch.

³² Togo, Cameroon, Guinea, Congo, Central African Republic, Chad, Benin, Gabon, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Algeria, Morocco, Cape Verde, Tunisia, Angola, Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Guinea-Bissau, Comoros, Mali and Mozambique.

³³ Egypt, Ghana, Togo, Kenya, Lesotho, South Africa, Botswana, Zambia, Malawi, Namibia, Cameroon, Nigeria, Tanzania and Sudan.

Map 1 and 2. Nationality of HoDs in African and South American host countries



Countries where the Head of EU Delegation is a citizen of a former colonial power active in the region are marked by colours. If the HoD represents a Member State which has never had colonies in the area, the host country is left blank. In Argentina the post is vacant, while French Guyana as an overseas region of France is a part of the EU.

A completely different trend than the one noted in Africa and South America can be observed in post-Soviet area, where not a single HoD comes from a Central or Eastern European EU Member States in spite of frequently strong historical, economic

and political links to the region, comparable to France's ties to Francophonic countries or Spain's to Latin America. Meanwhile, the EU Delegation to Russia is headed by a Spaniard, and the Delegation to the Ukraine by a Portuguese; the HoD in Armenia is Italian and in Azerbaijan—Belgian.

The appointment practice of the EU does not rule out a situation when an HoD comes from a Member State neighbouring on the host country. This is the case in Switzerland and Liechtenstein, where the EU Delegation is headed by an Austrian, and in Morocco and Algeria, where both HoDs are Spaniards.

Language Skills of HoDs

This survey is based on data concerning the language skills of 104 out of 115 HoDs. The remaining ten persons declined or did not provide relevant data and one HoD was unavailable. The figure obtained represents 90.4% of all HoDs—a percentage sufficient to formulate preliminary conclusions in this respect.

The survey does not distinguish between the mother tongue and acquired languages, nor does it embrace knowledge of European regional languages (like Catalan or Basque) or those national languages that are less commonly used in the administration of the Member States (like Irish), and as such does not need to be seen by respondents as relevant to the performed function.³⁴

When a respondent answered in the affirmative but with a reservation such as “good understanding” or “learning”, the answer was treated as a negative response. Other reservations indicating an ability to use the language sufficiently to communicate (“fair” or “intermediate”) were treated as a positive declaration. Both kinds of reservations were in fact rare (under 1%) and hence could not distort the data in any significant way.

The study showed—as expected—that knowledge of English and French is common among the given group of employees. Only two cases were found where an HoD did not speak either of those languages. At the same time, German—the third main language of the Commission—was spoken by only 28 HoDs, becoming the fourth most popular language in this group, with Spanish ranking in third place (41 HoDs), Italian in fifth (28 HoDs) and Dutch in sixth (20 HoDs).

Knowledge of host country languages varies and largely depends on whether or not the language is one of the European Union’s 23 official ones. If the host country language happens to be at the same time an EU language, all Heads of EU Delegations can speak it.³⁵ Otherwise, knowledge of host country languages can be qualified as very poor.

The survey showed that none of the Heads of EU Delegations in the Arab countries spoke Arabic and only four out of 115 HoDs spoke Russian (with only two of them deployed in post-Soviet territory). In Asia, nobody claims good knowledge of Chinese³⁶ or any knowledge of Hindi/Urdu, Indonesian/Malay, Korean, Persian or Vietnamese. In Africa, none of the HoDs can speak Kiswahili, Amharic or any other local language. In Europe, none of the HoDs in the countries of the former Yugoslavia declares any knowledge of Serbian/Croatian³⁷ despite its being an official language of three countries that have applied for EU accession.

³⁴ Only about one third of Irish HoDs declared they spoke Irish (Gaelic), which may indicate that others considered this information to be irrelevant.

³⁵ In the Americas, this is the case in 100% of the Delegations, as the set is limited to Spanish, English, Portuguese, French and Dutch.

³⁶ One HoD declared that he was learning and another was able to use it in informal situations only.

³⁷ There were a few exceptions, however: in Japan, both the HoD and his deputy declared that they spoke Japanese, and in Moldova the HoD spoke—among other languages—Romanian, Russian and Ukrainian.

Even in Western Europe, only one HoD (out of three) speaks the language of the host country, but this is an exceptional case of the HoD to Switzerland and Liechtenstein. The HoD is Austrian and his mother tongue coincides with the official language of both host countries.

The survey revealed that only two Heads of Delegation (out of 20) in the non-EU countries of the Union for the Mediterranean and Eastern Partnership speak the language of their host country.

Table 3. Languages spoken by the Heads of Delegation

Language	Number of HoDs	% of HoDs	Africa	The Americas	Asia and Oceania	Europe
English	103	99.04%	38	15	28	16
French	103	99.04%	39	15	27	16
Spanish	41	39.42%	16	13	6	6
German	28	26.92%	10	5	5	7
Italian	27	25.96%	10	6	2	6
Dutch	20	19.23%	9	2	3	5
Portuguese	14	13.46%	5	5	2	2
Greek	7	6.73%	1	0	3	3
Swedish	6	5.77%	0	2	2	1
Russian	4	3.85%	1	0	1	2
Finnish	3	2.88%	0	0	2	1
Romanian	2	1.92%	1	0	0	1
Bulgarian	1	0.96%	0	0	0	1
Croatian	1	0.96%	0	0	0	1
Hungarian	1	0.96%	0	0	0	1
Japanese	1	0.96%	0	0	1	0
Lithuanian	1	0.96%	0	0	1	0
Macedonian	1	0.96%	0	0	0	1
Norwegian	1	0.96%	0	0	0	1
Serbian	1	0.96%	0	0	0	1
Ukrainian	1	0.96%	0	0	0	1
Arabic	1	0.96%	0	0	1	0
HoDs (total)	104		39	15	28	16

Source: Own elaboration.

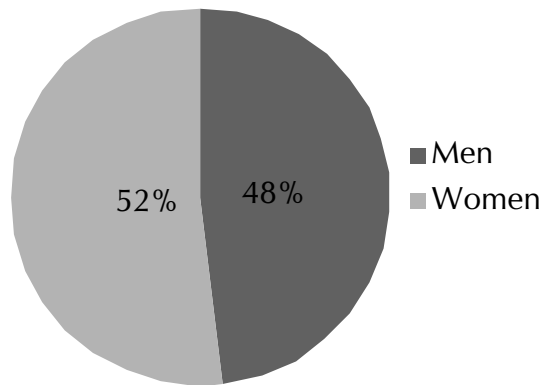
Under-representation of Women

The survey revealed that a total of 11 women were appointed HoDs, including four from France and the others were from Spain, Germany, Belgium and Italy. The proportion of female ambassadors (9.57%) is one of the lowest when compared against the national foreign services of the Member States (see Graph 12).

The under-representation of women can be perceived as a part of a wider problem. Among the Commission's employees women account for 51.6% of the staff, but they predominate in the lowest grades.³⁸ Meanwhile, HoDs are usually attributed either one of the two out of three highest grades (AD14 or AD15). If we examine only the Commission's staff holding AD15 grade, there are 48 women (21.23%) and 178 men, with the figures for the AD14 grade standing at 69 women (15.51%) and 373 men.³⁹

Another factor is that both DG RELEX and RELEX DEL are strongly male-dominated. According to data as of 3 August 2010, the Directorate-General and the Delegations themselves employed a total of 1,701 people, including 632 women, who account for 37.15% of the staff. At the same time, women constitute over 65% of the staff of the Finnish MFA, against 52% in the French MFA and over 40% in the British Foreign Office (see Graph 11). It seems the Commission has not been sufficiently thorough in safeguarding gender equality of its external service.⁴⁰

Graph 5. Commission's officials and temporary agents by gender (percentage)



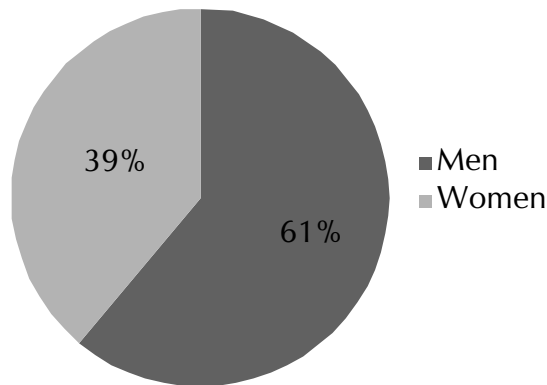
Source: Own elaboration based on *Distribution of officials and temporary agents by gender, nationality, function...*

³⁸ *Distribution of officials and temporary agents by gender and age (all budgets)*, http://ec.europa.eu/civil_service/docs/europa_sp2_bs_sexe_x_age_en.pdf (5 July 2010).

³⁹ *Distribution of officials and temporary agents by gender, nationality, function groups and grades (all budgets)*, http://ec.europa.eu/civil_service/docs/europa_sp2_bs_nat_x_grade_en.pdf.

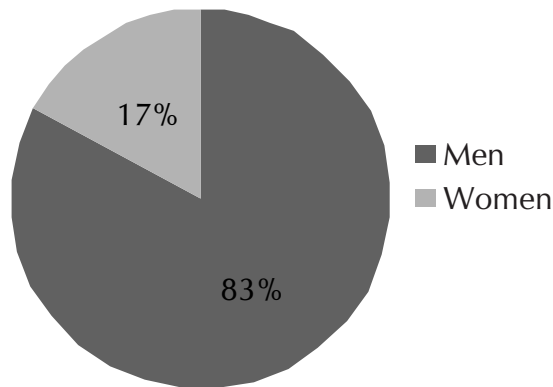
⁴⁰ The total staff in Member States' MFAs is compared to the total number of employees in DG RELEX and RELEX DEL, as those two EU structures correspond to a classic structure of a foreign service.

Graph 6. Commission's officials and temporary agents in the AD function group by gender



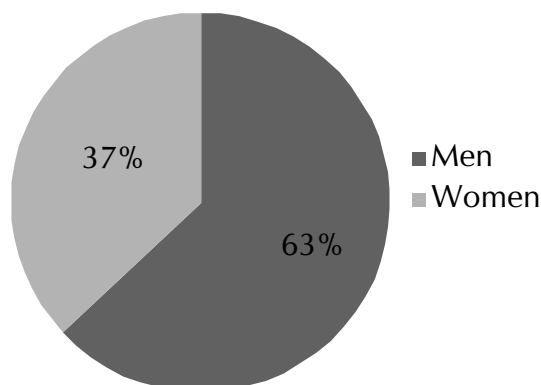
Source: Own elaboration based on *Distribution of officials and temporary agents by gender, nationality, function...*

Graph 7. Commission's officials and temporary agents: AD14–16 grades by gender



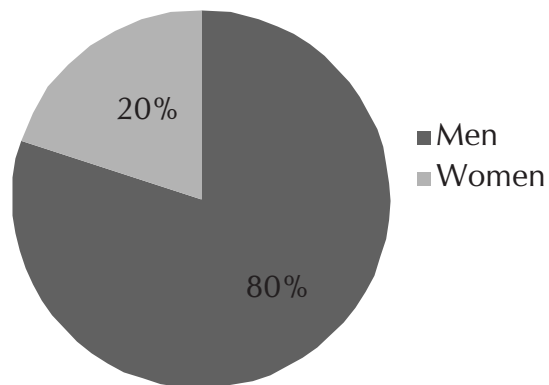
Source: Own elaboration based on *Distribution of officials and temporary agents by gender, nationality, function...*

Graph 8. DG RELEX/RELEX DEL officials and temporary agents by gender



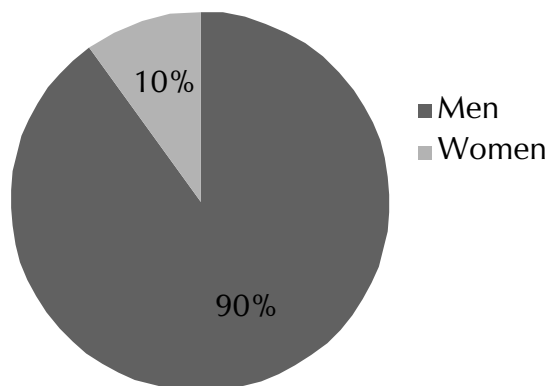
Source: Own elaboration based on *Distribution of officials and temporary agents by Directorates General and function groups*, http://ec.europa.eu/civil_service/docs/europa_sp2_bs_cat-sexe_x_dg_en.pdf.

Graph 9. DG RELEX/RELEX DEL officials and temporary agents in the function group AD by gender



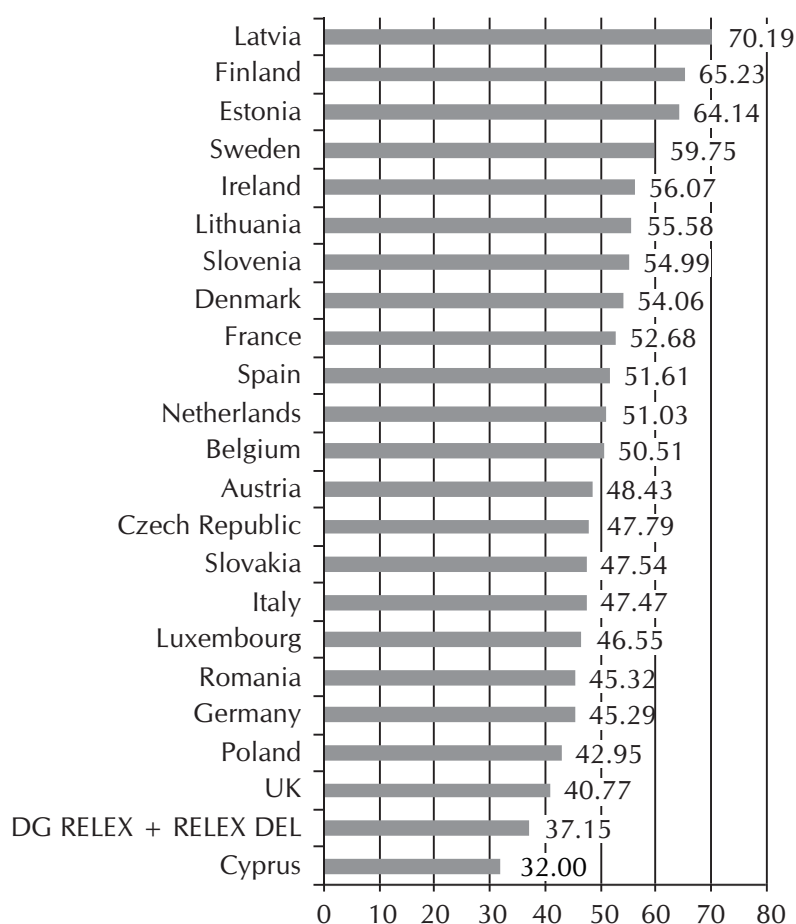
Source: Own elaboration based on *Distribution of officials and temporary agents by Directorates General and function groups...*

Graph 10. HoDs by gender (percentage)



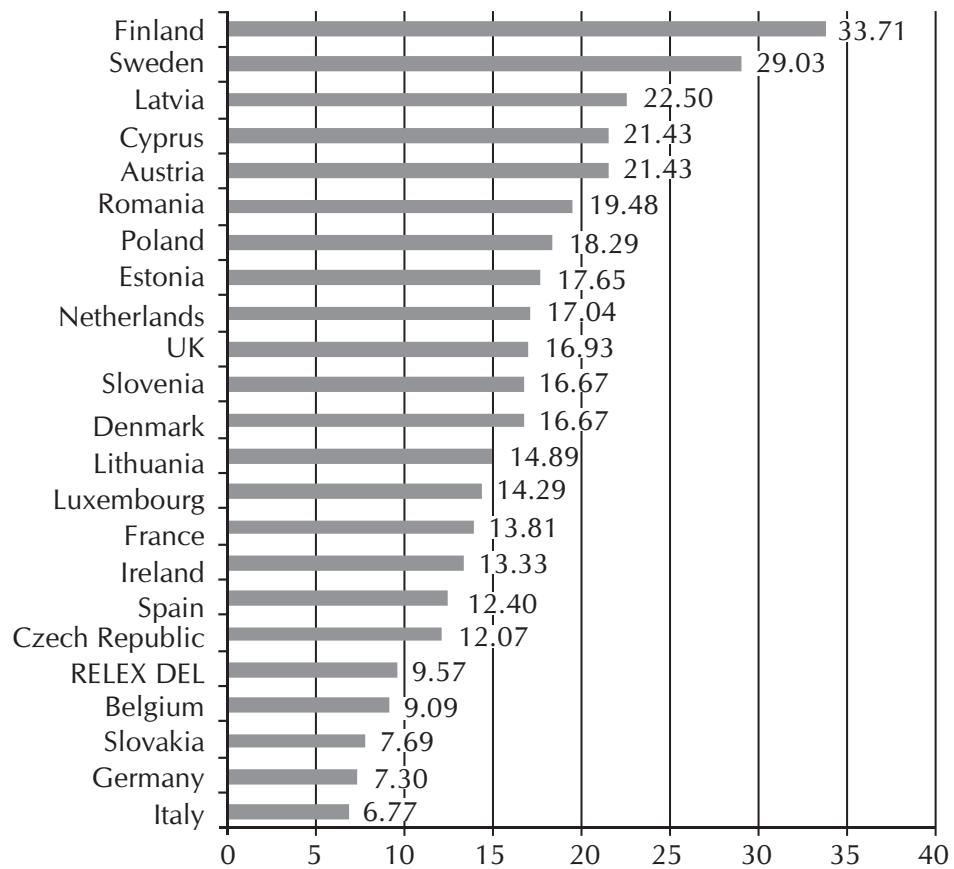
Source: Own elaboration.

Graph 11. Women in national foreign services and in DG RELEX/RELEX DEL (percentage)



Source: Own elaboration based on data obtained from the foreign ministries of EU Member States. Bulgaria, Greece, Malta, Portugal and Hungary failed to present any data. Italy and Austria presented data for 2009 and Ireland as of February 2010. For combined data concerning DG RELEX and RELEX DEL see *Distribution of officials and temporary agents by Directorate General and nationality (all budgets)*...

Graph 12. Female ambassadors of the Member States and as HoDs
(percentage)



Source: Own elaboration based on data obtained from the foreign ministries of EU Member States and data available on the EC website (see graph 11).

Conclusions

Given the limited nature of the quantitative analysis, only partial conclusions can be drawn from the review, although the data seems sufficient to outline the crucial elements of the prevailing practice of nominating HoDs.

A strong under-representation of the new Member States among the Heads of EU Delegations can be observed, as their nationals account for less than 2% of the group under examination. This can partly be a result of a relatively low proportion of officials from the new Twelve in DG RELEX and RELEX DEL, especially at higher posts in the service. It may also reflect earlier practice of appointing HoDs with a longer experience within Commission structures. Those were clearly favoured over diplomats from the national foreign services. As a result, the HoDs are now predominantly highly qualified Commission employees with noticeable knowledge of procedures and organisational culture of EU institutions, but less familiar with the host countries and regions.

The Commission seems to have failed in capitalising on the valuable human resources of the EU, such as Member States' former ministers and deputy ministers of foreign affairs, or former heads of government, as high-profile nominations have been an exception so far.⁴¹

The observed gap between the Member States in this respect is clearly visible and can be attributed to many minor factors as well.⁴² An analysis of the group's structure in terms of nationality reveals that it would be an oversimplification to point solely to the link between the representation of a given country and the length of its EU membership.

The language question plays a role in nominations. It is only natural that diplomats from France, Belgium, Ireland and the United Kingdom have a certain advantage, as their mother tongues coincide with the Commission's two working languages. Nearly 41% of HoDs come from Member States with English or French enjoying an official status despite the fact that the combined population of these countries does not exceed 28% of the entire EU.

Another factor contributing to maintaining the *status quo* is the Commission's attempts to avoid creating new posts through a redeployment of resources already allocated to the External Service.⁴³

The post-colonial factor in appointing HoDs should be a subject of further research. Its role was definitely not limited to past practices, i.e. to recruiting former colonial administration staff in the first years of EC external representation,⁴⁴ but it also clearly worked to the advantage of some countries' nationals within the service.⁴⁵

⁴¹ They were most frequent in Washington, D.C., definitely the most important "political" delegation of the EC so far.

⁴² One of the factors influencing the level of representation of a state may be the relation between the potential salary in the country's public service and in EU structures

⁴³ See *Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. Development and Consolidation of the External Service: 2007–2008*, 10.5.2007, COM(2007) 206 final.

⁴⁴ *Taking Europe to the World: 50 Years of the European Commission's External Service*, http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/delegations/docs/50_years_brochure_en.pdf, p. 16.

⁴⁵ See V. Dimier, M. McGeever, *Diplomats without a Flag: The Institutionalisation of the Delegations of the Commission in African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries*, JCMS 2006 vol. 44, no. 3, pp. 483–505.

Citizens of former colonial powers and the population of former colonies usually have a language in common and the role of political, cultural and inter-human ties should not be under-estimated either. A similar effect may result from geographical proximity or neighbourhood, accounting to some extent for the appointment of an Austrian HoD in Switzerland or a Spanish HoD in Morocco.

This practice varies from region to region, however, revealing a lack of consistency in the earlier approach to choosing HoDs. The pattern applied to South America or Africa has not been applied to Eastern Europe. There seems to be general agreement that many French experts and diplomats are familiar with African affairs, but general agreement is also needed that countries such as Lithuania, Romania, Poland or Latvia have a similar staff of experts and diplomats specialised in Eastern Europe, while a number of Bulgarians or Slovenes are familiar with the Balkan area. The frequently repeated arguments that appointing Eastern and Central European HoDs to posts in post-Soviet territory bears a risk of involving them in a conflict of interest, contradicts the well established practice of, for instance, sending French or Portuguese citizens as HoDs to Francophonic or Lusophonic countries.

A similar discrepancy can be found when comparing the practice of appointing HoDs to countries of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). It is only natural that Mediterranean Member States are much more interested in the UfM area, while most of the new Member States from Central Europe are focused on cooperation with the Eastern Partnership countries. But it is significant that while seven out of 15 Heads of EU delegations (46.7%) to the UfM countries come from EU Mediterranean Member States, not a single HoD to the Eastern Partnership countries comes from the EU's Central European Member States. It is only to be hoped that future nominations of HoDs will be more consistent and that equality of the Member States will be respected more profoundly.

The analysis of the nominations indicates that—in light of the findings—some factors did not play a major role in staff decisions, e.g. the Commission demonstrated little interest in the familiarity of the candidate with the host country, as is reflected in the low level of knowledge of non-EU languages.

In trying to change this situation, the future European External Action Service should be less reluctant to capitalise on the unique human resources of all 27 EU Member States and increase the number of high-profile nominations, including former top officials of the EU countries. Knowledge of local conditions along with the ability to speak host country languages should also be taken into account in deciding on future nominations. As a 500-million strong community of 27 countries with different historical experiences, the EU is definitely able to find a well-trained professional team to represent it in external relations.⁴⁶

The European Union has one of the lowest rates of female ambassadors in comparison to the diplomatic services of its Member States. An argument that the female staff is not numerous enough to respond to the needs of the EU's external relations segment is not applicable given the higher employment ratios of women at lower ranks. The European Parliament Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality has suggested that within the EEAS a gender balance should be "ensured at all

⁴⁶ The Council Decision limits future nominations (until 1 July 2013) to the employees of the General Secretariat and Commission and to the staff seconded by the Member States' MFAs.

levels,” and particularly that “a 50/50 distribution between men and women at the level of Head of Delegation” should be sought.⁴⁷

It seems that any actions within the external service aimed at increasing the recruitment of women have so far resulted only in improving their overall rate of employment.⁴⁸ If the EEAS is to promote gender equality at the managerial level as well, it should strive for an equilibrium among HoDs by nominating more female diplomats experienced in their national foreign services.

The future EEAS language regime is worth mentioning as another aspect of the problem. Both France⁴⁹ and Germany⁵⁰ have announced that they would strive to maintain or enhance the role of their languages within the EU external service, with German politicians in particular calling to include knowledge of German among co-deciding factors in the recruitment procedure.⁵¹ The process of appointing new HoDs may become one of the battlegrounds in the dispute over the EU working languages regime in the near future.

And, last but not least, the emerging European External Action Service (EEAS) should definitely be more transparent, also with respect to information about current nominations and staff profile. The present situation, when no information about some HoDs is available on the relevant Delegation’s websites and DG RELEX has so far failed to present a full list of all HoDs stands in clear contradiction with the idea of transparency of the public service.

⁴⁷ See *Opinion of the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality on the proposal for a Council decision establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service*, 08029/2010–C7-0090/2010–2010/0816(NLE), Rapporteur: Franziska Katharina Brantner, 24 July 2010, amendments 6, 7 and 8.

⁴⁸ See an opinion expressed by Danièle Smadja, then HoD to Kanada, *Taking Europe to the World...*, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

⁴⁹ “The National Assembly ... calls on the government to ensure, within the European Service for External Action, sufficient representation of France at all levels and secure the place of the French language as a working and communication language within it and with the citizens of the European Union, third countries and international organisations,” see *Rapport d’information déposé par la Commission des affaires européennes sur la réforme de la gouvernance de la politique extérieure de l’Union européenne, Proposition de la résolution européenne*, p. 98, 16 June 2010, www.assemblee-nationale.fr/13/europe/rap-info/i2631.asp.

⁵⁰ At one point Germany demanded a “proper place” for the German language within the service. See *European External Action Service well on the way*, www.auswaertiges-amt.de.

⁵¹ The idea was supported by the CDU/CSU and the FDP parliamentary factions. See *Antrag der Fraktionen der CDU/CSU Und FDP Einen effizienten und schlagkräftigen Europäischen Auswärtigen Dienst schaffen*, 9.06.2010, Drucksache 17/1981.

Appendix: Heads of EU Delegations (14 June 2010)

Afghanistan	Vygaudas Ušackas (Lithuania)
African Union (Addis Ababa)	Koen Vervoeke (Belgium)
Albania	Helmuth Lohan (Germany)
Algeria	Laura Baeza Giralt (Spain)
Angola	João Gabriel de Matos Ferreira (Portugal)
Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, Grenada	Valeriano Díaz (Spain)
Argentina	vacat
Armenia	Raul de Luzenberger (Italy)
Australia, New Zealand	David Martin Pius Daly (Ireland)
Azerbaijan	Roland Kobia (Belgium)
Bangladesh	Stefan Frowein (Germany)
Benin	Françoise Collet (France)
Bolivia	Kenneth Bell (UK)
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Dimitris Kourkoulas (Greece)
Botswana	Paul Malin (Ireland)
Brazil	João Pacheco (Portugal)
Burkina Faso	Amos Tincani (Italy)
Burundi	Alain Darthenucq (France)
Cameroon	Raul Mateus Paula (Portugal)
Canada	Bernhard Brinkmann (Germany)
Cape Verde	Josep Coll i Carbo (Spain)
Central African Republic	Guy Samzun (Belgium)
Chad	Gilles Désesquelles (France)
Chile	Jaime Pérez Vidal (Spain)
China, Mongolia	Serge Abou (France)
Colombia, Ecuador	Fernando Cardesa García (Spain)
Comoros, Mauritius, Seychelles	Alessandro Mariani (Italy)
Council of Europe (Strasbourg)	Luisella Pavan-Woolfe (Italy)
Croatia	Paul Vandoren (Belgium)
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Richard Zink (Germany)
Djibouti	Nicola Delcroix (Italy)

Dominican Republic, Cuba	Irene Horejs (Austria)
East Timor	Juan Carlos Rey Salgado (Spain)
Egypt	Marc Franco (Belgium)
Eritrea	Paola Amadei (Italy)
Ethiopia	Dino Sinigalia (Germany)
Fiji, Cook Islands, Tonga, Kiribati, Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Marshall Islands, Tuvalu and Pacific's Overseas Countries and Territories (New Caledonia, Wallis and Futuna, French Polynesia and Pitcairn)	Wiepke van der Goot (Netherlands)
Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, São Tome and Principe	Thierry Mathisse (France)
Georgia	Per Eklund (Sweden)
Ghana	Claude Maerten (Belgium)
Guinea	Philippe van Damme (Belgium)
Guinea-Bissau	Franco Nulli (Italy)
Guyana, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Netherlands Antilles and Aruba	Geert Heikens (Netherlands)
Haiti	Francesco Gosetti di Sturmeck (Italy)
Holy See, Order of Malta, FAO	Yves Gazzo (France)
Hong Kong, Macau	Maria Castillo Fernández (Spain)
Iceland	Timo Summa (Finland)
India, Bhutan	Danièle Smadja (France)
Indonesia, Brunei	Julian Wilson (UK)
Iraq	Ilkka Uusitalo (Finland)
Israel	Andrew Standley (UK)
Ivory Coast	Thierry de Saint Maurice (France)
Jamaica, Belize, Bahamas	Marco Mazzocchi Alemanni (Italy)
Japan	Hugh Richardson (UK)
Jordan, Yemen	Patrick Renauld (France)
Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan	Norbert Jousten (Belgium)
Kenya	Eric van der Linden (Netherlands)
Kosovo (Liaison Office)	Renzo Daviddi (Italy)
Kyrgyzstan	Chantal Hebberecht (Belgium)
Lebanon	Patrick Laurent (France)
Lesotho, Swaziland	Johannes Duynhouwer (Netherlands)
Liberia	Attilio Pacifici (Italy)

Macedonia	Erwan Fouéré (Ireland)
Madagascar	Leonidas Tezapsidis (Greece)
Malawi	Alexander Baum (Germany)
Malaysia	Vincent Piket (Netherlands)
Mali	Giacomo Durazzo (Italy)
Mauretania	Hans-Georg Gerstenlauer (Germany)
Mexico	Marie-Anne Coninx (Belgium)
Moldova	Dirk Schuebel (Germany)
Montenegro	Leopold Maurer (Austria)
Morocco	Eneko Landaburu (Spain)
Mozambique	Glauco Calzuola (Italy)
Namibia	Elisabeth Pape (Germany)
Nepal	Alexander Spachis (Greece)
Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica, El Salvador	Mendel Goldstein (Germany)
Niger	Hans-Peter Schadek (Germany)
Nigeria	David MacRae (UK)
Norway	János Herman (Hungary)
OECD, UNESCO (Paris)	Laurence Argimon-Pistre (France)
OSCE, UNIDO, UNODC, IAEA (Vienna)	Lars-Erik Lundin (Sweden)
Pakistan	Johannes (Jan) de Kok (Netherlands)
Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu	Aldo Dell’Aricia (Italy)
Paraguay, Uruguay	Geoffrey Barrett (UK)
Peru	Hans Alliden (Sweden)
Philippines	Alistair MacDonald (UK)
Republic of Korea	Brian McDonald (Ireland)
Republic of the Congo	Marcel van Opstal (Belgium)
Russia	Fernando Marzo Valenzuela (Spain)
Rwanda	Michel Arrion (Belgium)
Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain	Luigi Narbone (Italy)
Senegal, Gambia	Gilles Hervio (France)
Serbia	Vincent Degert (France)
Sierra Leone	Jean-Pierre Reymondet-Commy (France)
Singapore	Holger Standertskjöld (Finland)

South Africa	Lodewijk A.E. Briët (Netherlands)
Sri Lanka, Maldives	Bernard Savage (UK)
Sudan	Carlo Francesco de Filippi (Italy)
Switzerland, Liechtenstein	Michael Reiterer (Austria)
Syria	Vassilis Bontosoglou (Greece)
Taiwan (European Economic and Trade Office)	Guy Ledoux (France)
Tajikistan	Eduard Auer (Austria)
Tanzania	Timothy Clarke (UK)
Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Burma	David Lipman (UK)
Togo	Patrick Spirlet (Belgium)
Tunisia, Libya	Adrianus Koetsenruijter (Netherlands)
Turkey	Marc Pierini (France)
Uganda	Vincent De Visscher (Belgium)
Ukraine, Belarus	José Manuel Pinto Teixeira (Portugal)
United Nations (Geneva)	vacat
United Nations (New York)	Pedro Serrano (Spain)
USA	João Vale de Almeida (Portugal)
Venezuela	Antonio Cardoso Mota (Portugal)
Vietnam	Sean Doyle (Ireland)
West Bank and Gaza Strip (European Union Technical Assistance Office)	Christian Berger (Austria)
Zambia	Derek Fee (Ireland)
Zimbabwe	Xavier Marchal (Belgium)

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