



EEAS Audit in the Eastern Neighbourhood: To What Extent Have the New Treaty Provisions Delivered?

Anita Şek

Abstract

This paper aims to analyse if and to what extent provisions of the Lisbon Treaty introducing a special relationship with neighbouring countries and Common Foreign and Security Policy-related references, have delivered in strengthening EU's presence among its Eastern neighbours. The paper will also examine EU's capacities in decision- and policy-making towards them. The study, built on the author's interviews and correspondence with officials from EU institutions and literature research, shows that what characterizes the European External Action Service (EEAS) and in consequence EU's international actorness in the Eastern Neighbourhood are: (i) scarcity of staff in headquarter in Brussels, (ii) scarcity of staff in EU delegations, (iii) underrepresentation of "new Member States", (iv) lack of *esprit du corps*. All of these produce various "turf battles" of intra- and inter- institutional nature on the EU-level, which lead to an extension of the decision-making process, and in consequence undermine the possible impact on the Eastern neighbours. Nevertheless, the overall coherence of EU's external activity is improving. Challenges however remain, particularly the lack of outcomes envisaged by the EU, undermining the Union's influential transformative role as a norms entrepreneur.

Keywords: *European External Action Service (EEAS) / European Commission / EU institutions / Eastern Partnership (EaP)*

EEAS Audit in the Eastern Neighbourhood: To What Extent Have the New Treaty Provisions Delivered?

by Anita Şek*

Introduction

The objective of this paper is to analyse if and to what extent provisions of the Lisbon Treaty introducing “a special relationship with neighbouring countries” and Common Foreign and Security Policy-related references,¹ have delivered in strengthening EU’s presence among its Eastern neighbours. The paper will also examine EU’s capacities in decision- and policy-making towards them. An initial hypothesis is that the Treaty introduces a “creeping revolution”: “revolution”, because the “novelties”: instruments and concepts for managing EU’s external relations are unprecedented; “creeping”, as it will take decades to uncover their deeper potential.² The results of the study, which are built on the author’s interviews and correspondence with officials from EU institutions and literature research, show that what characterizes “the Union’s diplomatic service” - the European External Action Service (EEAS) and in consequence EU’s international actorness in the Eastern Neighbourhood are: (i) scarcity of staff in headquarter in Brussels, (ii) scarcity of staff in EU delegations, (iii) underrepresentation of “new Member States”, (iv) lack of *esprit du corps*. All of these produce various “turf battles” of intra- and inter- institutional nature on the EU-level, which lead to an extension of the decision-making process, and in consequence undermine the possible impact on the Eastern neighbours. Nevertheless, it must be noted that despite the underlined problems, the overall coherence of EU’s external activity is improving. The challenges however remain, particularly the lack of outcomes envisaged by the EU, undermining the Union’s influential transformative role as a norms entrepreneur.

1. EU and beyond

The Treaty of Lisbon finally *de jure* confirms the neighbourhood’s special role for the EU, with Art. 8 establishing what Christophe Hillion names as an explicit EU “neighbourhood competence”³:

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¹ Art. 8 of the *Treaty of Lisbon*, 13 December 2007, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=celex:12007l/txt:en:not>.

² Anita Şek, “Global actor ‘in statu nascendi’ Impact of European External Action Service on Diplomatic Actorness of the European Union”, in *Centre for International Initiatives Analysis*, No. 18 (April 2012), p.1, <http://blogcim.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/18-analysis-sek-global-actor-in-statu-nascendi.pdf>.

³ Christophe Hillion, “The EU Neighbourhood Competence under Article 8 TEU”, in Elvire Fabry and Chiara Rosselli (eds.), *Think Global - Act European IV*, Paris, Notre Europe-Jacques Delors Institute, April 2013, p. 204-214, <http://www.iai.it/content.asp?langid=2&contentid=932>.

The Union shall develop a special relationship with neighbouring countries, aiming to establish an area of prosperity and good neighbourliness, founded on the *values of the Union* [...] ⁴

Location of the article outside the CFSP chapter emphasises a more intimate character of EU internal and external policies directed at the neighbourhood. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that underlining “the Union’s values” suggests a one-way stream from Brussels, without a bargaining place for a shared joint ownership of the relation with the neighbours.

1.1. *This is not philanthropy. It is 21st century European foreign policy* ⁵

The advantages of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) include an attempt to build strong economic relations through a deep and comprehensive free trade area (DCFTA), a construction of common energy security policy, a liberalization of visa policies and the promotion of democracy, good governance and human rights, within Association Agreements (AAs). The programme is characterised by principles of differentiation and conditionality, constituted by two concepts of firstly “more for more” (extra €130 million for 2012-13 for the best reformers, this year for Armenia and Moldova, in addition to the financial package worth €1.9 billion between 2010-13) and secondly “less for less” (e.g., €22.5mln taken away from Azerbaijan last year). In comparison to other regional policies introduced either by the EU itself (e.g. Black Sea Synergy) or by other regional/global actors (e.g. Russia, Turkey, the US), they are of an unprecedented nature, even without a clear definition or a list of benchmarks (see Eastern Partnership Roadmap 2012-2013 ⁶).

1.2. *EEAS and EC structure on EaP*

With the Council decision of 26 July 2010 on the organisation and functioning of the EEAS, ⁷ all European Commission’s (EC) civil workers from Directorate General (DG) RELEX dealing with the political dimension of the EaP (EaP task force, departments responsible for bilateral relations and ENP-horizontal coordination), except for Commissioner for Enlargement and ENP and his Cabinet, were transferred to the Service’s headquarter in Brussels. Besides the new nominations to the highest EEAS positions, there were not any significant changes in the content and number of the staff. Currently, two units situated in the directorate “Europe and Central Asia” (ECA)

⁴ Art. 8 of the *Treaty of Lisbon*, cit. [emphasis added].

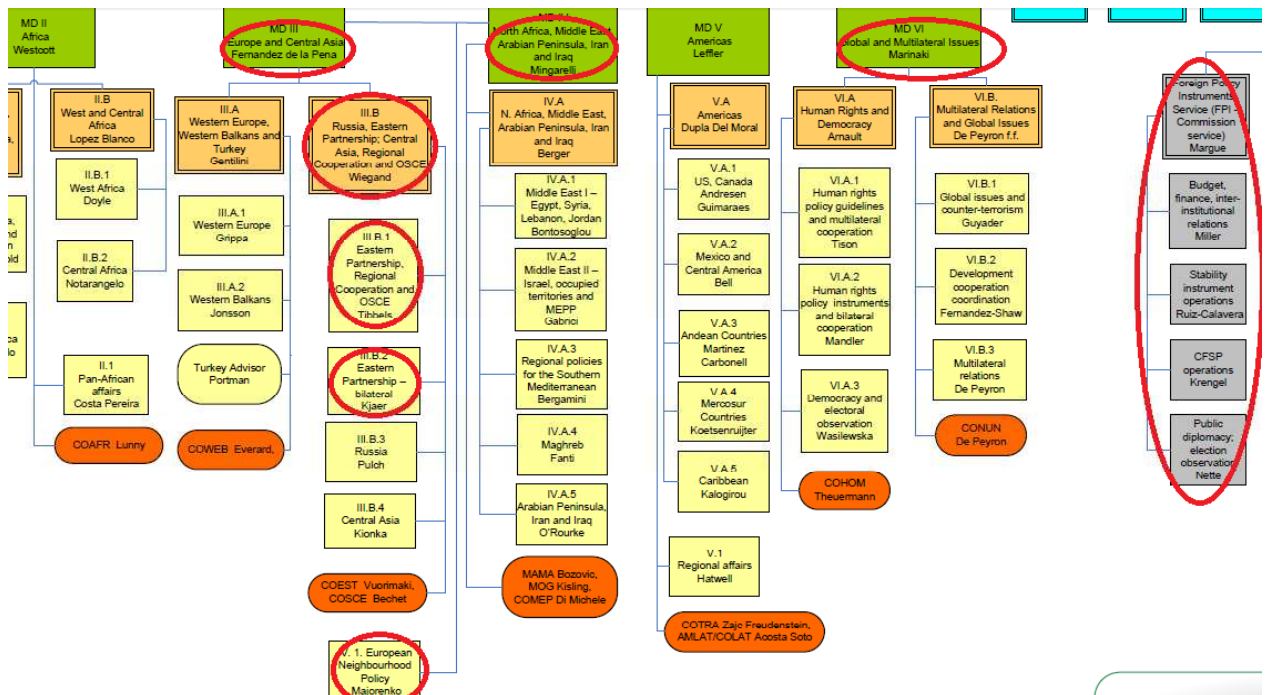
⁵ Speech by Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Commissioner for External Relations and ENP, *Eastern Partnership - an ambitious project for 21st century European foreign policy*, 20 February 2009, http://eeas.europa.eu/eastern/docs/eastern_partnership_article_bfw_en.pdf.

⁶ “By the autumn of 2013, negotiations on Association Agreements [...] and DCFTA] should be *well advanced, if not finalised*, and *substantial progress* should have been made in the area of regulatory approximation [...]. Azerbaijan should have made *progress* towards WTO accession [...]” [emphasis added]. Cfr. European Commission and HR, *Eastern Partnership: A Roadmap to the autumn 2013 Summit* (JOIN(2012) 13), 15 May 2012, p. 5, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=celex:52012jc0013:en:not>.

⁷ See Art. 1(4) of the *Council Decision establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service* (2010/427/EU), 26 July 2010, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=celex:32010d0427:en:not>.

cope with the EaP bi- and multilaterally. One separate unit (there were initially two) is accountable for the ENP and is located between ECA and “Northern Africa” departments, thus encompassing Eastern and Southern dimensions in one cell. Additionally, significant for the EaP is the directorate “Global and Multilateral Issues”, dealing with human rights, democracy, and conflict management (see Figure 1 below).

Figure 1. EEAS organisational chart, EaP/ENP cells



Source: EEAS website (<http://www.eeas.europa.eu>), author's emphasis.

Though the EEAS has been created as “the brain” of EU foreign policy, its indispensable “clusters of nerves” also dealing with the EaP are located in other EU institutions. After the Lisbon Treaty, according to the Art. 26 and 31 TEU, it is still the European Council and Foreign Affairs Council that are responsible for unanimous decisions on political directions and actions regarding the external political affairs.⁸ Also the European Parliament, which besides the indirect budgetary one does not have any power with regards to foreign policy of the Union, does not miss any opportunity to speak up, commenting particularly on democracy and human rights issues.⁹ Nonetheless, the biggest technical bodies with reference to the EaP are the European Commission’s DG Development and Cooperation (DEVCO - EuropeAid) and DG TRADE; but almost all other EC’s Directorate Generals, dealing with humanitarian aid,

⁸ Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union, OJ C 326, 26 October 2012, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=celex:12012m/txt:en:not>.

⁹ See e.g. European Parliament, *Resolution on the review of the European Neighbourhood Policy - Eastern Dimension* (P7_TA(2011)0153), Strasbourg, 7 April 2011, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P7-TA-2011-0153&language=EN>.

environment, energy, climate change, and justice and home affairs, are/shall be consulted when it comes to their respective fields. For example, in the DG DEVCO the EaP is followed by different units under the Directorate F - Neighbourhood:¹⁰

- Unit F1 - (consists of 16 people) Geographical Coordination Neighbourhood East includes geo-coordinators that are responsible for the six partner countries (one geo-coordinator per country) as well as persons who coordinate the EaP horizontally;
- Unit F3 - (currently 21 persons) is in charge of regional programmes in the East, most of them dealing with EaP;
- Unit F5 - (approximately one half of 37 people) deals with Contract and Finance, provides support to units F1, F3 and EU delegations.

In addition, the Operational sections and Finance and Contract Units in the Neighbourhood East delegations abroad are filled with personnel coming from DG DEVCO. The EU delegations in EaP countries have in consequence the following DEVCO staff: Armenia 18, Azerbaijan 16, Belarus 16, Georgia 27, Moldova 17, Ukraine 53, constituting an overwhelming majority of each delegation's employees. Altogether, more than 200 employees of the DG DEVCO work upon the issues of the Eastern Partnership (see below comparison with the EEAS).

2. Struggling with limited resources

As constantly reiterated by EEAS higher officials, the Service suffers from the lack of all kinds of resources: financial, technical, human etc.¹¹ In the following paragraphs, negative tendencies and troublesome issues regarding the presence of the EU in Eastern Europe and Caucasus region will be presented: scarcity of staff in headquarter, scarcity of staff in EU delegations, underrepresentation of "new Member States", lack of *esprit du corps*, and turf battles of various natures.

2.1. Scarcity of stuff in HQ

The unit responsible for bilateral relations with the EaP countries coordinates bilateral meetings of cooperation councils and thematic subcommittees, as well as bargaining on the Association Agreements (AAs) and other diplomatic tasks. After the Treaty amendment, there are additional new activities from the CFSP field, such as involvement in peaceful resolution of regional conflicts. Moreover, the workload has increased in last two years due to development of the EaP initiative: e.g. AAs are now advancing in negotiations with all EaP countries but Belarus. In these circumstances surprising is a fact that the initial number of 25 people working in the cell (including the

¹⁰ Correspondence with Andrea Matteo Fontana, Head of Unit F1: Geographical Coordination Neighbourhood East, DG DEVCO, 25 February 2013.

¹¹ Pierre Vimont, Executive Secretary General of the EEAS on a European Parliament's workshop "The role of the EEAS in consular protection and services to EU citizens", Brussels, 9 January 2013; also Luis Felipe Fernández de la Peña, Managing Director for ECA, EEAS, on the presentation of the *Freedom in the World 2013 Report: A Closer Look at Wider Europe*, Brussels, 21 February 2013.

secretarial posts) was decreased to 23,¹² what requires asking a question on effectiveness of the EU in its relations with the Eastern partners.

The second unit coping with multilateral issues is responsible for cooperation within EaP four platforms (Democracy, good governance and stability, Economic integration and convergence with EU policies, Energy security, Contacts between people), organisation of meetings of the Civil Society Forum, EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly and of local-regional governments CORLEAP. Taking into consideration that the responsibilities were widened onto other regional initiatives, such as Black Sea Synergy, Northern Dimension and the OSCE, an increase in the number of civil workers was a necessity, as with the initial number of three people the overload was significant; nowadays there are 12 people in the unit.¹³

In sum, at Brussels' HQ there are almost 50% less EEAS civil workers dealing with the EaP (28) in comparison to 55 officials of DG DEVCO. According to some Service officials, current conditions are not transparent and it is said "that more decisions are taken behind closed doors."¹⁴

2.2. Scarcity of staff in delegations

On January 1, 2011 all EC representations became Union's delegations, thus they do not deal with purely Commission tasks of economics, trade or developmental nature anymore, but they represent the EU as an almost usual (under nameplate of "late-sovereign"¹⁵ identity) embassy. In the EaP region the delegations' differentiated resources (Kiev as the biggest one, Minsk still under construction, see Table 1) has not been significantly enlarged, although they must handle now new political obligations.

Table 1. EU delegations in EaP countries

City, country, year of delegation's opening	Number of staff	Head of EU Delegation (nationality, year of appointment)
Yerevan, Armenia (2008)	ca. 20*	Traian Hristea (Romanian, 2011)
Baku, Azerbaijan (2013)	33	Roland Kobia (Belgian, 2008-2013)
Minsk, Belarus (2008, 2011)	24 (inc. 14 locals)	Maira Mora (Latvian, 2011)
Georgia (1995)	ca. 30*	Philip Dimitrov (Bulgarian, 2010)
Moldova (2005)	29	Dirk Schuebel (German, 2009)
Ukraine (1993)	ca. 100	Jan Tombinski (Polish, 2012)

Note: * information not updated since 2011.

Source: Own research supplemented by Elżbieta Kaca, Monika Sus, "Trudne początki", cit., p. 8.

¹² Status on 2 September 2012. Own research supplemented by Elżbieta Kaca, Monika Sus, "Trudne początki. Nowa unijna dyplomacja a Partnerstwo Wschodnie", in *Institute of Public Affairs Analyses & Opinions*, No. 120 (May 2011), p. 6, <http://www.isp.org.pl/uploads/analyses/405838682.pdf>.

¹³ Idem.

¹⁴ Author's interview.

¹⁵ Rebecca Adler-Nissen, "Late Sovereign Diplomacy", in *Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (September 2009), p. 121-141.

Particularly a number of analysts is insufficient and only a part of their work is devoted to analysis of the political situation in Ukraine there are five experts, including one local, compared to 53 from DG DEVCO), the rest being EC staff and administration.¹⁶ A modification of the structure is therefore necessary, next to delegation's adjustment to a technical role of an embassy through means of creating e.g. account management and culture of secret information sharing.

Paraphrasing one of the interviewees, "European diplomacy after the Lisbon Treaty is like a luxury car with a very poor engine".¹⁷

2.3. Underrepresentation of "new Member States"

An equal representation of all EU Member States is crucial for recognition and sense of ownership of the European diplomatic service. This issue represents a positive development. In senior management rotations 2010-2011 there were three changes among heads of delegations: in Georgia, Belarus, Armenia, and recently (2012) in Ukraine. After previous criticism of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission (HR/VP), Catherine Ashton, about the underrepresentation of Central and Eastern Europe, today, half of all heads of EaP delegations come from new Member States. This proves not only their strong connection to and huge interest in the region, but also their exceptional knowledge and experience in that sphere.

2.4. Lack of *esprit du corps*

Another troublesome question regards a multi-national composition of a delegation which requires a common diplomatic training, as current delegations represent an environment of three loyalties and two "epistemic communities" (nationals from Member States and "supra-nationals" from the EC and Council¹⁸), far from a united *esprit du corps* and *acquis diplomatique*, leading to dysfunctions.¹⁹

2.5. Turf battles - *bellum omnium contra omnes*

"Turf battles" between the EC, the Council and the *sui-generis* EEAS, as well as inside the bodies and between the Member States, are a natural consequence of clashes of interests, the more that there is not any official document in force on an inter-institutional division of labour. For instance, the EEAS seeks a general visa liberalization for the Neighbours, while DG Home Affairs stands on a position closer to the Member States' interior ministries, which are rather skeptical towards further opening of borders to immigrants. Such struggles result in a prolonged decision-making process. Also collaboration on financial issues needs improving. It is the EC that manages the EaP funds, while the programme's priorities are prepared by HR/VP and

¹⁶ Correspondence with Hannes Schreiber, Head of Political Section, EU Delegation Kiev, 2 September 2013.

¹⁷ Author's interview.

¹⁸ David Spence, "Taking Stock: 50 Years of European Diplomacy", in *Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (September 2009), p. 245-251.

¹⁹ Author's interviews with civil workers.

EEAS working with the Commission. The situation is complicated by the fact that competences differ depending on the instrument, e.g., proposals for the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (to be replaced by the European Neighbourhood Instrument, ENI), most relevant for the EaP, are set up by the EEAS and EC altogether, but the main person responsible is the Commissioner for Enlargement and ENP. The main documents regulating bilateral cooperation, the Action Plans, are prepared by the Commission. Moreover, only one out of four EaP multilateral platforms is prepared by the EEAS (Democracy, good governance and stability), while the rest (energy, negotiations upon visa liberalisation, SME, education, culture, etc.) fall under the competence of different DGs of the EC. Similarly, for negotiating AAs, it is the EEAS who is responsible, but for DCFTAs it is DG Trade. It is believed that finding a common ground in this complicated structure takes nowadays even more time than it used to, before the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, though it is reported that the situation has been slowly improving.

Some Member States, led by Germany and Poland, would like to strengthen the power of the EEAS by granting it control over the financial mechanisms (the Instrument for Stability IfS, the ENI, the Development Co-operation Instrument and the European Development Fund). Increasing the EEAS budget from €489 million up to €9.3 billion a year would inevitably boost Services' impact, however at the expense of the Commission's powers.²⁰

3. EEAS-EaP policy-input

Chairing over the Foreign Affairs Council and working parties (COEST - Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia), HR/VP has an influence on formulating EU policy towards the EaP. Nevertheless, as it was mentioned above, it is the European Council that possesses a decisive voice, as it was for instance shown recently during negotiations over the December 2012 Council Conclusions on Ukraine (the EEAS prepares this kind of documents, but the Member States change them according to their national interests). When it comes to beginnings of the EEAS, its main activities were concentrated on Belarus after its presidential elections. Nonetheless, since the break-out of the "Arab Spring" in 2011, Baroness Ashton has been mainly occupied with the events in the Southern dimension, and in consequence the "face" of the EU in Eastern Neighbourhood has become Commissioner for Enlargement and ENP Štefan Füle. His role is all the more crucial that - as it was mentioned - it is still the Commission that manages the EU's budget, also regarding external actions. Another important figure is President of the Council Herman van Rompuy, who has been highly engaged in close relations with the heads of EaP states, particularly Ukraine and Moldova, but who at the same time has been overwhelmed by the internal bargaining regarding the financial crisis. The last element constitutes the rotating presidency in the Council of the EU, which although does not possess a role in the Foreign Affairs Council, can still collaborate in two situations: when asked to replace HR/VP, or when the EU does not have a delegation in the third country - e.g. Poland was representing the Union in Minsk. The role of Warsaw was even more crucial in that - being the co-

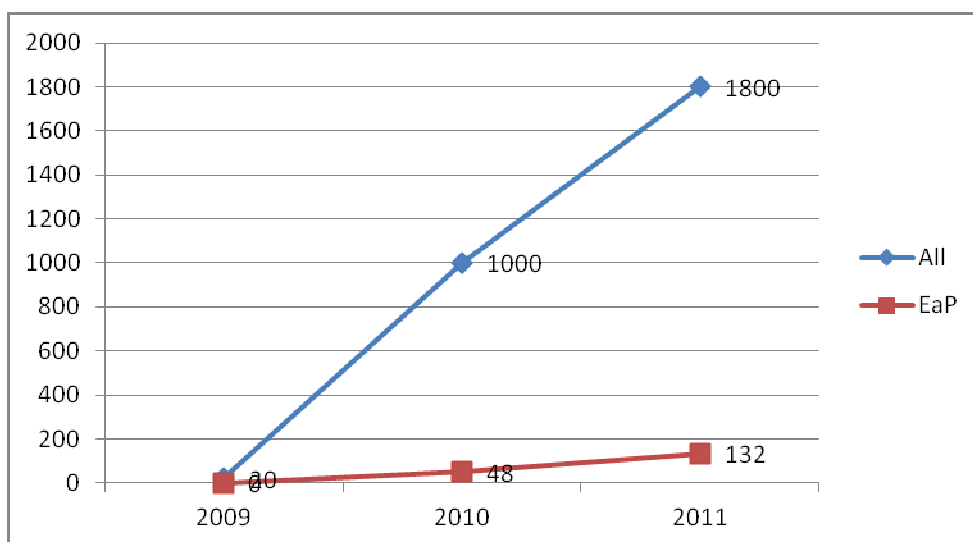
²⁰ Andrew Rettman, "Germany calls for more powerful EU diplomatic service", in *EUobserver*, 18 March 2013, <http://euobserver.com/institutional/119459>.

founder of the EaP - the initiative was one of its presidency's main priorities. This resulted in accelerating the cooperation through numerous meetings on different levels, including civil society.²¹

3.1. EEAS interest in the EaP

Figure 2 below²² presents the amount of all statements and press releases issued within the field of CFSP and ENP by all parties involved in comparison to the ones focused on the EaP and individual countries in years 2009-2011. It shows that the EaP, occupying in the busiest period yet before the broke out of the "Arab Spring" only 7.3% of the communications, is not a priority area for EEAS actions.

Figure 2. All EEAS statements and press releases regarding the CFSP, ENP and EaP, 2009-2011

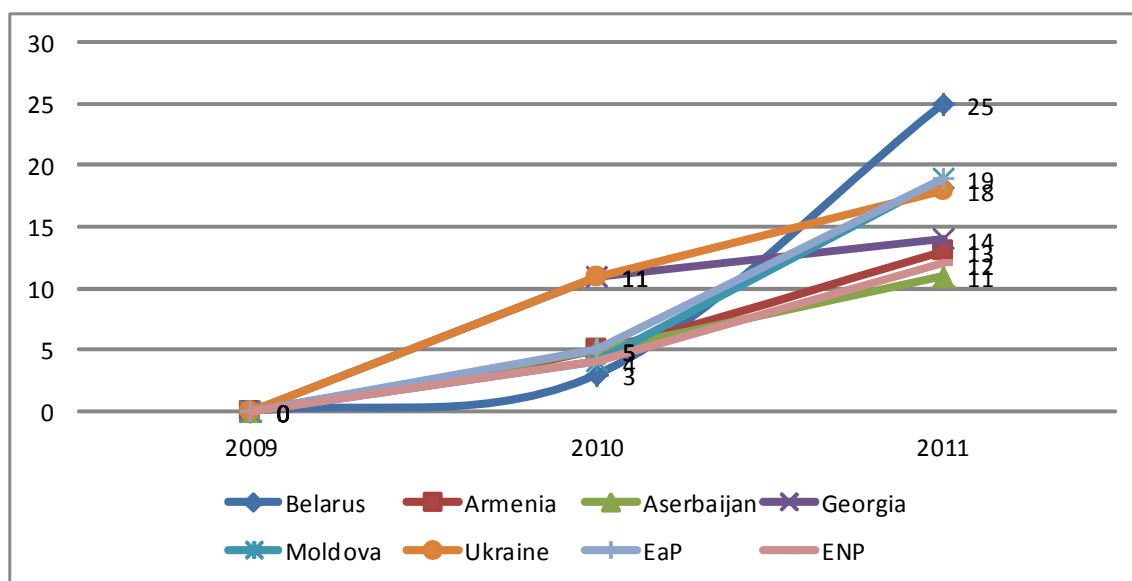


Source: Own calculations based on EEAS website (<http://www.eeas.europa.eu>).

As noticeable from figure 3, out of the 132 EaP statements between 2009 and 2011, the most popular ones concerned - on the one hand - Belarus (due to worrying anti-democratisation movements of president Aleksandr Lukashenko's regime), and - on the other hand - Moldova, a frontrunner in reforms in the region.

²¹ More on Polish presidency EaP activities in Anita Şek, "The Great Popular Movement", in *Centre for International Initiatives Blog*, 19 May 2011, <http://blogcim.wordpress.com/2011/05/19/the-great-popular-movement-2>.

²² The figures 2-3 do not pretend to present exact number of issued files, their purpose is rather indicative, showing the tendencies.

Figure 3. EEAS statements and press releases on EaP countries

Source: Own calculations based on EEAS website (<http://www.eeas.europa.eu>).

4. EEAS-EaP policy-output

The EU's/EEAS influence in Eastern Europe and Caucasus can be assessed by answering the question: has the EU (at least partially) attained its goals, i.e. "have others changed behaviour, preferences or beliefs in the direction of the EU"?²³ The recent events in the region: neither free nor fair parliamentary elections in Belarus (2012), far away from democratic standards the Armenian parliamentary (2012) and presidential (2013) elections, even the aftermaths of the first peaceful transfer of power after the Georgian parliamentary elections (2012), do not bring a positive answer. Ukraine's dialogue with Brussels is described as "feigned": on the day when the Ukrainian government issued a programme for EU integration, the prosecutor's office laid out murder charges against former Prime Minister Yulya Tymoshenko, and when a few days after President Viktor Yanukovych was faced with a "red line" by the EU's conditions for further cooperation, Tymoshenko's lawyer Serhiy Vlasenko was deprived of his parliamentary mandate.²⁴ "The overall deterioration of the situation in the Eastern neighbourhood speaks to the difficulty for the EU to be effective by using its traditional enlargement-lite policy", assumes Michele Comelli.²⁵ Might it be however that the lack

²³ Simon Schunz, "How to Assess the European Union's Influence in International Affairs: Addressing a Major Conceptual Challenge for EU Foreign Policy Analysis", in *Journal of Contemporary European Research*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Spring 2010), p. 37, <http://www.jcer.net/index.php/jcer/article/view/223>.

²⁴ Taras Kuzio, "Time to end EU-Ukraine pseudo-relations", in *EUobserver*, 13 March 2013, <http://euobserver.com/opinion/119390>.

²⁵ Michele Comelli, "Potential and Limits of EU Policies in the Neighbourhood", in Elvire Fabry and Chiara Rosselli (eds.), *Think Global-Act European IV*, Paris, Notre Europe-Jacques Delors Institute, April 2013, p. 200, <http://www.iai.it/content.asp?langid=2&contentid=932>.

of the enlargement promise is behind the reason of EaP countries' disillusionment with the EU?

The tendencies in the ECA region have been assessed as antidemocratic by *inter alia* the Freedom House in its 2013 report²⁶ and the experts of International Renaissance Foundation and the Open Society Foundation in their common *Eastern Partnership Index 2013*.²⁷ Additionally, the *European Foreign Policy Scorecard* produced by the European Council on Foreign Relations estimates that the EU's endeavours in its Neighbourhood are only "satisfactory" third year in a row.²⁸ The worst mark was applied to the Union's main values of democracy, human rights and good governance promotion. Despite this, the EEAS high officials blame the lack of outcomes not on the ineffectiveness of the EU strategy towards the region, but on the process of transition in which the six partners currently find themselves.

On every occasion President van Rompuy, President of the European Commission José Barroso, HR/VP Ashton and Commissioner Füle have been repeating the importance of fundamental European values in EU relations with its partners; moreover, a cooperation based on "common values" constitutes basis for the EaP programme. Nonetheless, according to an official in EU Delegation in Azerbaijan, this value-based agenda is limited to a statement "we share the objective of sharing them,"²⁹ what is a prerequisite for any cooperation with this not seeking EU-membership but stronger economic ties country promoting itself with so called "caviar diplomacy".³⁰

4.1. EEAS and the "frozen conflicts"

The strengthening of EU's involvement into peaceful resolution of the "frozen conflicts" in the Eastern Neighbourhood has been envisaged in the revised 2011 ENP strategy. The Union is involved the most in the Georgian crisis (the "breakaway regions" or "*de facto* republics" of South Ossetia and Abkhazia). It takes part in the Geneva international peace talks and coordinates an EU Monitoring Mission, with albeit limited reach and in consequence results. In Transnistria it possesses an observer status in the "5+2 talks"; it has also organized and coordinated a mission on the Ukraine-

²⁶ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2013*, <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2013>.

²⁷ International Renaissance Foundation and Open Society Foundation, *European Integration Index 2013 for Eastern Partnership Countries*, <http://www.eap-index.eu/index2>. See more: Anita Şek, "Wakeup call on the Eastern front", in *Centre for International Initiatives Blog*, 12 October 2012, <http://blogcim.wordpress.com/2012/10/11/wake-up-call-on-the-eastern-front>.

²⁸ Justin Vaïsse and Susi Dennison (eds.) *European Foreign Policy Scorecard 2013*, London, European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR), 2013, <http://www.ecfr.eu/scorecard/2013/extras/pdf>.

²⁹ Interview with an official, EU Delegation in Azerbaijan, Baku, 24 May 2013.

³⁰ See: European Stability Initiative, "Caviar Diplomacy. How Azerbaijan silenced the Council of Europe", in *ESI Reports*, 24 May 2012, http://www.esiweb.org/index.php?lang=en&id=156&document_ID=131. Also: Jacqueline Hale, "Europe's caviar diplomacy with Azerbaijan must end", in *EUobserver*, 26 November 2012, <http://euobserver.com/opinion/118320>.

Moldova border (EUBAM).³¹ With regards to Nagorno-Karabakh, the EU does not play any role in peace talks facilitated by the OSCE Minsk Group.

Constrained by the Member States, HR/VP has been so far modest in her endeavours directed at “frozen conflicts”, limiting herself to some general statements. A positive element is the support given to the civil society of South Caucasian nations under the Instrument for Stability’s €6mln “Support for the Peaceful Settlement of the Conflict”. In this context it is worth remembering that beside the IfS the EEAS has also other instruments directed at crisis handling: election observation missions, as well as coordination of civil and military missions with a newly set up department. The roles of the delegations (future military *attaché* posts?) and EU Special Representatives must not be omitted. However, disregarding their successes, Ashton, without justification, had decided to dismiss two EUSRs responsible for Moldova and Southern Caucasus,³² aiming at transferring their tasks to Brussels HQ and the delegations. Moldovan tasks were taken over by ECA Managing Director in EEAS HQ, but taking into consideration his other responsibilities, such a solution cannot guarantee sufficient attention to the Transnistria problem in the longer term. Southern Caucasus matters were to be taken over by the delegations in Yerevan and Baku, but they appeared to be too small for these additional functions. Finally a new EUSR to the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia was nominated in August 2011.³³

Conclusions

The aim of the novelties introduced in the Lisbon Treaty was to create coherence and effectiveness within EU’s external activity. Nonetheless, as it was proved with the example of the Eastern Neighbourhood, the more and complex institutions involved in foreign policy making and representation there are, the fewer results are seen among external partners. However, according to the interviewed EEAS officials, despite some initial and still remaining challenges, particularly that of the understaffed and underfinanced EEAS, coordination and communication problems, as well as distrust among the EU institutions and the disapproving Member States, the situation has been improving. As Catherine Ashton commented in a foreword to the *EEAS Review 2013*: “I have likened it to trying to fly a plane while still bolting the wings on.”³⁴

As it has been reiterated, the results have not yet been seen among the recipient countries; firstly due to the fact that the External Service is still learning to comprehend

³¹ Rosa Balfour, Alyson Bailes and Megan Kenna, “The European External Action Service at work. How to improve EU foreign policy”, in *EPC Issue Papers*, No. 67 (January 2012), p. 5-12, http://www.epc.eu/pub_details.php?pub_id=1399.

³² More on EUSR role: Cornelius Adebahr and Giovanni Grevi, “The EU Special Representatives: what lessons for the EEAS?”, in Graham Avery et al., “The EU Foreign Service: how to build a more effective common policy”, in *EPC Working Papers*, No. 28 (November 2007), p. 59-60, http://www.epc.eu/pub_details.php?pub_id=424.

³³ Council of the European Union, *New EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia* (13561/11 Presse 284), 26 August 2011, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/124436.pdf.

³⁴ European External Action Service (EEAS), *EEAS Review 2013*, Brussels, July 2013, http://www.eeas.europa.eu/library/publications/2013/3/2013_eeas_review_en.pdf.

its new role, that is, to combine multi-level/multi-layer/multi-location structures³⁵ of a multi-stakeholder³⁶ diffused and decentralized “post-globalist”³⁷ diplomacy. Secondly, not all of the EaP countries “want to do their homework”, as diplomats in Brussels and other capitals complain. Perhaps a turning point to the Eastern Partners’ disillusionment with the Union would be the prospect of membership.

Nonetheless, as explained by Christopher Hill, the EU’s international actorness is constituted by a “capabilities-expectations gap” - it should not be forgotten that the (supra-) national Union of states has in fact a limited ability to deliver in external resentment.³⁸ In other words, either more resources shall be found or less expectations shall there be. Instead of bringing new changes to the EU Treaty, emphasis shall be put on boosting the current given structures and mechanisms, and on coordination and cooperation between all the actors involved. That is another answer to above-mentioned challenges: to catalyze Member States interested in getting involved in the region (Sweden, Germany, Baltic States, and Visegrad Group with Poland in the lead) to act on a larger scale and take more responsibility than only during the rotating presidency. They could form a liaison group³⁹ and delegate more national officials to work in the EEAS, neutral to EU’s budget, an issue that is particular in the sensitive times of financial and institutional crises.

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³⁵ Álvaro de Vasconcelos (ed.), “A strategy for EU foreign policy”, in *ISS-EU Reports*, No. 7 (June 2010), p. 3-4, <http://www.iss.europa.eu/publications/detail/article/a-strategy-for-eu-foreign-policy>.

³⁶ Brian Hocking, “Multistakeholder Diplomacy: Forms, Functions and Frustrations”, in Jovan Kurbalija and Valentin Katrandjiev (eds.), *Multistakeholder Diplomacy: Challenges and Opportunities*, Malta/Geneva, DiploFoundation, 2006, p. 13-29, <http://www.diplomacy.edu/resources/books/multistakeholder-diplomacy-challenges-and-opportunities>.

³⁷ Christer Jönsson and Martin Hall, *Essence of Diplomacy*, chapter 7, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

³⁸ Christopher Hill, “The Capability-Expectations Gap, or Conceptualizing Europe’s International Role”, in *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (September 1993), p. 305-328.

³⁹ Simon Duke and Stephan Keukeleire, “Liaison Groups and EU foreign Policy”, in Graham Avery et al., “The EU Foreign Service: how to build a more effective common policy”, in *EPC Working Papers*, No. 28 (November 2007), p. 48-55, http://www.epc.eu/pub_details.php?pub_id=424.

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