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THE BEGINNINGS OF THE EUROPEAN DIPLOMATIC SERVICE FROM THE 1950s TO THE 1980s[1]

Abstract. *This article examines the development of the European Communities (EC) diplomatic service in the pre-Lisbon period. More specifically, it maps the period from the 1950s, when the first non-diplomatic offices in foreign countries with limited powers were opened, until the end of 1980s, when a network of European missions with full diplomatic status became a reality. It is concluded that the EC diplomatic service has its roots in the establishment of two types of EC foreign representation, differing in their primary purpose, status and tasks. The development of these two EC representation types entailed quite different dynamics, as shown in the different speeds of their transformation to become 'traditional' diplomatic representations.*

Keywords: *history of European Commission delegations, history of the European Commission's diplomatic service, contrôleurs techniques, contrôleurs délégués, delegations of the European Commission, diplomatic service of the European Commission*

Introduction and theoretical background

Diplomatic service, defined as a specialised bureaucracy that promotes interests in international relations, is traditionally associated with sovereign states. The European Union (EU) is a notable exception because it is not a state, yet still has its own diplomatic service. The European External Action Service (EEAS) was officially founded by the Treaty of Lisbon that came into effect on 1 December 2009, although the European Communities (EC)[2] and the EU had a fragmentary and functionally limited diplomatic service long before this time. The diplomatic service began to take shape soon after the

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[2] *In this article, the term European Communities (EC) is used as a common designation for three international organisations: the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom).*

EC was established in the 1950s with the formation of specialised units or components of European institutions that were authorised to perform tasks in the area of external relations. In the following decades, these 'diplomatic components' of the EC dynamically developed and gradually acquired ever more attributes of 'traditional' diplomatic institutions. By the end of the 1980s, they resembled a standard diplomatic service in many respects. Since much of the contemporary EEAS has its roots in the pre-Lisbon EU/EC diplomatic service, understanding the developments during this period can shed light on how it currently functions and remains distinct from 'traditional' diplomatic services.

In academic literature, a relatively wide range of work considers the issue of the EC diplomatic service. However, most of it focuses on the period after adoption of the Treaty of Lisbon, analysing general organisational and institutional aspects of EEAS operations (e.g. Austermann, 2014; Carta, 2014; Karalus, 2009), dealing with the legal context of its existence and operation (e.g. Petersen, 2011) or analysing selected issues of its internal organisation, like the gender balance and national origins of its staff (e.g. Novotná, 2014) or staffing policy (e.g. Formuszewicz and Liszczyk, 2013). Several works examine the interactions between the EEAS and the national diplomatic services of individual EU member states (e.g. Adebahr, 2013; Raik, 2013). Out of the smaller group of scholarly works dedicated to the EC diplomatic service's pre-Lisbon development, most focus on a specific group of its units or components, such as the EC's representation in developing countries (e.g. Dimier and McGeever, 2006; Dimier, 2014). Few academic works engage in a more complex mapping of the pre-Lisbon development of the EC's diplomatic service. The book *Taking Europe to the World* by Moran and Ponz Canto (2004) merits special mention as it looks at the entire pre-Lisbon development of the EC's diplomatic service. However, this work, written for a popular more than an academic audience, does not provide a detailed map of the EC's diplomatic service's pre-Lisbon development.

In order to address this gap in the academic literature, this article examines the development of the *de facto* diplomatic service of the EC from the 1950s until the end of the 1980s. The ambition of this work is not only to map the most important historical milestones in the EC's diplomatic service's development, but to show how individual fragments of today's EU diplomatic service gradually formed and these EC 'diplomatic' structures gradually came to resemble 'traditional' diplomatic bodies and institutions.

The research for this article relies on a combination of primary and secondary sources. The former include legislative and other documents from EC/EU institutions located in the European Commission's Historical Archives in Brussels or available on official websites, and the latter mainly research articles and monographs.

As far as the research methods are concerned, analysis and synthesis of primary and secondary sources together with the critical-historical method are used in this article.

This study is divided into four sections, with each dedicated to the development of the EC's diplomatic service during a particular decade.

The 1950s

The earliest beginnings of the European diplomatic service may be linked with the first foreign representation of the ECSC, created in the 1950s. The first such representation – officially named the ECSC Information Office – was set up in 1954 in Washington, D.C. (Moran and Ponz Canto, 2004; Austermann, 2014). Establishing this representation was a symbolic response to the accrediting of the permanent representative of the USA with the ECSC in 1952 (Moran and Ponz Canto, 2004); it was also motivated by the desire of ECSC representatives – namely Jean Monnet, then President of the High Authority of the ECSC – to dispel concerns among the US public and within government circles regarding the further development of the European integration process[3] that had arisen due to the recent failure of the European Defence Community (Karalus, 2009; Moran and Ponz Canto, 2004).[4] The role of the newly created ECSC Information Office in this context was, as its name suggests, to provide information about the current development of European integration and the ECSC policies to the US public and its political representatives. In its character, this activity of the ECSC Information Office resembled public diplomatic activities carried out by states' diplomatic missions.

However, the ECSC Information Office was unlike 'traditional' diplomatic missions in other ways. Its mandate was basically limited to the abovementioned provision of information, only one of the many roles fulfilled by 'traditional' diplomatic missions. Another unique feature of the ECSC Information Office was the national origin of its staff who were not exclusively or even mostly citizens of the ECSC member states. Instead, most staff were Americans, that is, citizens of the receiving state, which is very unusual for diplomatic missions. Even the first head of the ECSC Information Office, Leonard Tennyson, did not come from an ECSC member state but was a US citizen. The first European to work in the Information Office was a West

[3] *The European integration process, embodied in the project of the ECSC, was perceived by the USA as an important tool of political stabilisation of the allied states of Western Europe, which were to act as a certain counterbalance to the Soviet bloc. Hence, the successful progress of the European integration process was in America's strategic interest.*

[4] *The Treaty Establishing the European Defence Community was signed in May 1952, but failed be ratified by the French National Assembly in 1954.*

German Euratom official who arrived in Washington in 1958 (Moran and Ponz Canto, 2004).

In an effort to build "an identity in relation to third countries" (Austermann, 2014), an idea supported especially by Jean Monnet, three similar representations were opened in the capitals of the UK, Chile and Ireland in 1956[5] (Moran and Ponz Canto, 2004; Austermann, 2014; Karalus, 2009). The representation in Santiago, Chile was authorised to interact with the Chilean government and certain other states in Latin America (Moran and Ponz Canto, 2004); it thus became the first ever foreign representation of the ECSC or EC to hold multiple accreditations. In 1958, after the founding of the European Economic Community (EEC) and Euratom, the ECSC Information Office in Washington was renamed the Information Service of the European Communities (Delegation of the European Union to the United States, 2020).

The 1960s

The foundation of the EEC was an important impulse for expanding the network of 'European' foreign representations, especially in developing countries. When development aid moved on to the EEC agenda, expert teams were sent to developing countries starting in 1960 to ensure its efficient implementation. These teams, headed by technical supervisors known as *contrôleurs techniques* (Dimier, 2014), consisted mostly of engineers and aid specialists. Their primary task was to supervise the use of development aid provided by the EEC and its member states 'on the spot' and ensure its expediency.[6] The technical supervisors were also tasked with consulting with relevant authorities in the host states and territories and giving technical assistance while preparing development projects. The mandate of the technical supervisors and their teams was thus generally limited to 'non-political' functions related to technical assistance for and monitoring of development projects; it did not include the performance of 'traditional' diplomatic roles. Likewise, these technical supervisors did not possess diplomatic status, which meant they held no diplomatic privileges or immunities. They were not even considered EEC officials, working instead as employees of private consultancy firms. The teams of technical supervisors, which in 1963 were operating in 18 developing states (Spence, 2016), were thus quite different from 'traditional' diplomatic representations in both the extent and focus of their roles and their formal legal standing.

[5] *Some sources suggest this happened in 1955 (e.g. Karalus, 2009).*

[6] *The development aid was provided by the newly created European Development Fund, also known by its French abbreviation FED (Fond Européen du Développement).*

This 'hybrid' position of the technical supervisors, who were working under an EEC Commission mandate but were private contractors, proved to be problematic in practice. When administering and inspecting development projects, they often found themselves faced with conflicts of interest as the firms which employed them were financially involved in the development projects. As a result, when carrying out their tasks, the technical supervisors chiefly focused on the economic interests of the associated private consultancy firms rather than the interests of the EEC or the particular developing state. Such practices of the technical supervisors prevented them from fulfilling their fundamental mission (to ensure the efficient use of the EEC's development aid) and even damaged the EEC's reputation the Commission had been trying to build in the recipient countries.[7] In addition, as a matter of principle, several EEC Commission representatives objected to the fact that the technical supervisors had the power to inspect the use of public resources (development funds) despite being employees of private companies. They argued that this was a prerogative of the state and should be entrusted to state institutions. A similar opinion was held by certain developing states' representatives who in this context went as far as to suggest directly that the EEC Commission create its own specialised agency within its institutional structure to administer and inspect development aid projects (Dimier, 2014).

In 1964, "in the effort to ensure independence of technical supervisors from private consultancy firms" (Dimier, 2014), the EEC Commission finally created a specialised agency for managing development aid, founding the European Association for Cooperation (EAC). This new entity, which from that time onwards officially 'covered' all the technical supervisors, was formally created as a non-governmental non-profit organisation with its seat in Belgium. It was thus not part of the EEC institutional structure, as was originally requested by some representatives of the developing countries.[8] However, the EEC Commission ensured that it would retain a direct influence; the EAC's board of directors would be led by the head of the Commission's Directorate-General for Development (DG VIII) and all board members would be appointed by the Commission (Commission, 1977). The technical supervisors, who became employees of the EAC as a result of this organisational reform, thus gained a more direct link to the EEC Commission. Yet, the EAC was still not an integral part of its bureaucratic

[7] For example, Heinrich Hendus, DG VIII Director-General, complained to his co-workers at a meeting in 1963 that the behaviour of the technical supervisors could create the impression in recipient countries that the EEC Commission was a corrupt institution (Dimier, 2014).

[8] One main reason the idea of an independent EC institution to manage the development aid did not enjoy greater support at the time was the prevailing belief that the provision of development aid was merely a temporary issue, lasting a few years at the most.

structure (Carta, 2014) and thus the technical supervisors did not hold the status of EC officials.[9]

Likewise, the *contrôleurs délégués* (delegated supervisors), who soon replaced the technical supervisors in the developing states, were formally considered EAC employees and held a purely non-political mandate. This new type of EEC representative in the developing states, created by an EEC Commission decree in 1965, appeared 'in the field' in 1966 when the first such representative was sent to Chad (Moran and Ponz Canto, 2004).

While the EEC representations in the developing states were being founded in the 1960s, initiatives to transform the existing ECSC information centres in Washington and London into joint representations of all three European communities were advanced. As early as February 1960, the EEC Commission submitted a proposal to the Council of Ministers on the basis of which "Representations of the European Communities" were to be established in the capitals of the USA and UK, simultaneously representing the ECSC, EEC and Euratom. Each joint representation of the European Communities was to be directed by a "head of mission", who was to be nominated withe the agreement of the EEC Commission, Euratom Commission, and High Authority of the ECSC. Each of the three entities was to have the power to send instructions to the head of the joint mission within the scope of its mandate. Part of the proposal consisted of provisions defining the protocol guidelines for appointing the head of the mission. Several of them were inspired by the rules applied in the diplomatic practices of sovereign states. According to the proposal, the head of the mission of the European Communities was to be granted an "agrément"[10] by the government of the receiving state and, likewise, the receiving state was to be notified of the appointment through "letters of credence".[11] However, unlike standard diplomatic practice, these were to be addressed to the minister of foreign affairs, not the head of state. The letters of credence of the head of the mission were to be signed by the highest representatives of all three sending European institutions: the President of the High Authority of the ECSC, the President of the EEC Commission, and the President of the Euratom Commission (Europäische Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft, 1960). Again, this is analogous with

[9] *The technical supervisors formally held the status of delegated employees of the Belgian non-governmental organisation and their employment contracts adhered to Belgian national law (European Commission, 1978).*

[10] *Agrément is an official approval of the appointment of a particular person to the position of a diplomatic representative, which is granted by the government of the respective receiving state and must be requested in advance by the respective sending state.*

[11] *Letters of credence (or, simply, credentials) are a diplomatic document by which the head of a diplomatic mission in the rank of ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary or envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary is officially appointed. Letters of credence are sent by the head of the sending state to the head of the receiving state.*

the diplomatic practice of sovereign states where letters of credence of the heads of diplomatic missions are signed by the highest representative of the sending state. Yet, the proposal to create joint representations of the European Communities did not gain sufficient support in the EEC Council in 1960 or in 1962 when it was considered again. The chief reason was a concern among the member states, especially France, that establishing these joint representations would grant the EC the *de facto* right of active legation[12] and they would thereby acquire too many powers in areas which are the domain of sovereign states (Karalus, 2009; Dimier and McGeever, 2006).

An important 1960s' milestone in the development of European representations was the establishment of the EEC's first permanent missions at international organisations. In 1964, the EEC established delegations at the OECD in Paris (Delegation of the European Union to the OECD, 2020) and at the UN and General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) offices (predecessor to today's World Trade Organization) in Geneva (Bruter, 1999). It also established a representation at UN Headquarters in New York, initially referred to as an "information office" (Kuijper et al., 2013).

Therefore, starting in the mid-1960s, the European Commission had two different types of permanent representation in the world. The first type were representations at international organisations and in economically developed countries (e.g. the USA). These predominantly performed tasks of a diplomatic character. Within the European Commission, they were managed by the Directorate-General I: External Relations (DG I). The second type were representations in developing countries that mostly carried out technical tasks in the field of development aid. Within the European Commission, these fell under the authority of the Directorate-General VIII: Development (DG VIII) (Carta, 2014). Both types of representations were managed virtually autonomously by the respective directorates-general of the European Commission; the Commission had, so to speak, two parallel 'diplomatic services' that largely worked according to their own rules.

The 1970s

The 1970s also several changes to the system of the Commission's foreign representations. In 1971, the Information Service of the European Communities in Washington was transformed into the Delegation of the Commission of the European Communities. In 1972, this office, the first representation of the EC in a non-member state, acquired diplomatic status (Delegation of the European Union to the United States, 2020) and thereby

[12] *The right of active legation is the right of a certain entity to accredit its own diplomatic representatives in foreign countries.*

also diplomatic privileges and immunities.[13] The extent of these privileges and immunities was identical to those awarded to the diplomatic missions of states under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. In the second half of the 1970s, diplomatic status and corresponding privileges and immunities were gradually extended to all other delegations which were subordinated to DG I.

In the first half of the 1970s, the first systematic forms of cooperation between European Commission delegations and the diplomatic representations of member states concerning the state of their accreditation were introduced. In particular, starting in 1972, based on a resolution of the Council of Ministers, the heads of the press and information departments of the delegations regularly took part in meetings of their counterparts in member states' diplomatic missions; they shared in the processing of reports that were sent to EC institutions (Commission, 1978).

From 1976 onwards, on the basis of the Commission's resolution, all European Commission delegations with diplomatic status started to use a single system of diplomatic ranks. This consisted of six ranks altogether, with the following hierarchy:

1. Head of delegation
2. Minister-counsellor
3. Counsellor
4. First secretary
5. Second secretary
6. Attaché

Together with introducing this system of diplomatic ranks, the title "Head of Delegation" (Chef de Délégation) came to be used as an official title of the head of the Commission's delegation (Commission des Communautes Europeennes, 1976).

At approximately the same time, European Commission delegations in the developing countries under DG VIII also underwent certain reforms. According to the Lomé Convention,[14] which entered into force in 1976, the delegated supervisors were replaced in these countries by Delegates of the

[13] With the aim of awarding diplomatic status to the EC delegation in Washington, the US Congress passed the Act to extend diplomatic privileges and immunities to the Mission to the United States of America of the Commission of the European Communities and the members thereof on 18 October 1972. The Act granted the US President the power to extend the privileges and immunities provided to the diplomatic missions accredited in the USA to the EC representation. Under this law, President Nixon issued a decree on 5 December 1972 awarding the EC delegation in Washington and the members of its staff the same privileges and immunities enjoyed in the USA by the diplomatic missions of foreign states and members of their staff accredited there (Petersen, 2011).

[14] The Lomé Convention, concluded on 28 February 1975, defined the conditions of the development and trade cooperation between the EEC and 46 developing states in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific.

European Commission. Their tasks, explicitly defined in the Lomé Convention itself, included the provision of technical assistance and expert advice to local governmental institutions in preparing development projects and inspecting their financial and technical implementation; they also were tasked with informing recipient governments about the policies and activities of the EEC that might impact their cooperation (ACP-EEC Convention, 1975). Hence the Delegates of the European Commission differed little from their predecessors, the delegated supervisors, in the nature and extent of their duties.

Yet with respect to several formal details the Delegates of the European Commission more closely resembled the 'traditional' diplomats. They were similar to diplomats in that, unlike the delegated supervisors, they could be appointed to their position only with the prior approval of the respective receiving state.[15] The procedure for appointing the Commission's Delegates, whereby the receiving state had the right to express its binding approval or disapproval of the proposed Delegate, was thus from the formal viewpoint very similar to that applied while appointing the heads of the diplomatic missions of sovereign states.[16] Another similarity with diplomatic practice was that the European Commission Delegates – unlike their predecessors – were awarded the position of member of the diplomatic corps by the receiving states[17] and, as a consequence, the names of the Delegates were included on the diplomatic lists of the receiving states[18] (Moran and Ponz Canto, 2004).

In roughly the same period, some 'multilateral' representations of the EC at international organisations underwent changes too. One of the most important changes was undoubtedly the 'promotion' in 1974 of the EEC Information Office at the UN in New York to a delegation. This step was a direct reaction to the adoption of the UN General Assembly's resolution[19]

[15] Article 31 of Protocol No. 2 to the Lomé Convention expressly states that "the Commission shall be ... represented ... by a European Commission Delegate approved by the ... [receiving] State concerned" (ACP-EEC Convention of Lomé, 1975).

[16] A standard part of the procedure for appointing the head of a state's diplomatic mission also included the granting of agrément, that is, the approval of the appointment of the designated diplomatic representative by the receiving state.

[17] In its traditional understanding, diplomatic corps consists (narrowly) of all of the heads of diplomatic missions or (more broadly) of all diplomats accredited in a certain receiving state. Currently, membership in the diplomatic corps also tends to be 'awarded' by host states to the permanent representatives of international (intergovernmental) organisations who are accredited there. The inclusion of the European Commission Delegates in the diplomatic corps may be understood in this context as their symbolic approval as de facto representatives of the EC by their host states.

[18] A diplomatic list is an official list of members of the diplomatic corps of a particular state and is issued by the department of diplomatic protocol of the ministry of foreign affairs in that state.

[19] The resolution of the UN General Assembly No. 3208 (XXIX) on the question of the status of the European Economic Community at the UN General Assembly was adopted on 11 October 1974 at its 2266th plenary session. In this resolution, the UN General Assembly requested the UN Secretary General to

granting the EEC observer status in this important international body (Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, 2020).

In 1977, the European Commission had a total of 50 representations across the world: 41 were delegations in the developing states; 2 were information offices (in Ankara and in Athens), and 7 were delegations of the 'diplomatic type' (out of these, 4 were 'bilateral' and 3 were accredited at international organisations). An analysis compiled by the European Commission in that year indicated that several these representations were in practice fulfilling tasks other than those of a strictly 'technical' character, such as providing assistance in the implementation of development aid projects, or the role of an 'information office', including giving information about EC policies to entities in the receiving state. They were also engaging in a number of typically 'diplomatic' tasks, such as informing the European Commission about the development of the situation in the receiving state and the positions and opinions of its inhabitants regarding the EC or the provision of logistical support to EC officials visiting the receiving state. In addition, the Commission's delegations played certain support roles in relation to the diplomatic missions of the EC member states cooperating with them in the receiving state. In particular, this included the regular provision of information to EC member states' diplomatic missions about recently adopted resolutions, initiatives and policies of the EC concerning the receiving state; the goal was to ensure strong mutual coordination of the steps and positions between EC member states in relation to the authorities of the receiving state. A similar role was fulfilled by the European Commission's delegations at international organisations with respect to permanent missions of the EC member states accredited there (Commission, 1977). However, significant differences in practice still existed in the composition and scope of the tasks the Commission's individual delegations performed, especially among delegations in the developing states, whose competence was mainly of a 'technical' character, and the delegations in other (economically developed) states and at international organisations, which fulfilled more 'traditional' diplomatic tasks.

The reform of the Commission's foreign representations realised in 1977 also led to reforms of the organisation. One of these was the introduction of a system in 1978 of staff rotation between the delegations and the European Commission's headquarters in Brussels. As part of this system, a rule was adopted whereby European Commission Delegates were sent to their posts in the delegations for a period of 3 years. This standard mission length could be extended by another 3 years at most, namely, the Delegates could work

"invite the European Economic Community to participate in the sessions and work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer" (UN General Assembly, 1974).

in their position for a maximum of 6 years altogether (Commission, 1978). However, the rotation system – which mirrored the diplomatic practice of sovereign states – only applied to Delegates with the status of Commission officials working in delegations belonging under DG I. The Commission's Delegates in the developing states who were subordinated to DG VIII were still formally EAC employees and so the new rules did not apply to them.

Another novel practice by DG I introduced after the system of foreign representations was revised was a rule requiring the opening of every new European Commission delegation to be preceded by the signing of a bilateral agreement with the future receiving state. This agreement, called *accord du siege* (establishment agreement), defined the position of the Commission's delegation in the receiving state, including its privileges and immunities (Karalus, 2009; Moran and Ponz Canto, 2004), which had a standardised scope, ensuring the undisturbed performance of the delegation's tasks.

Following a decision of the Council of Ministers adopted in 1979, representatives of the Commission delegations began to take part in the coordination meetings of the EC member states' commercial attachés held in their receiving state. At these meetings, representatives of the Commission delegations had to inform their colleagues from EC member states' diplomatic missions about recent initiatives and decisions of the EC in the field of trade and economic policies, and participate in the elaboration of reports sent to the Commission and the EC member states (Commission, 1979).

The 1980s

In the 1980s, the EC's diplomatic service's gained even greater momentum than in the preceding decades, starting with a report of the Council of Ministers adoption in 1981 at the assembly in London. Based on this report, the European Commission became involved in the mechanism for coordinating the foreign political activities of the EC member states, known as the European Political Cooperation (EPC). This had the practical consequence that European Commission delegations in receiving states and at international organisations began to cooperate more intensively with the EC member states' diplomatic representations. European Commission delegations provided the member states' diplomatic representations with, among other things, their specialist capacities in the area of the joint EC policies; they also helped the diplomatic mission of the state holding the presidency of the EPC with various administrative matters. These new supporting 'services' of the Commission's delegations were much appreciated in practice, especially by the diplomatic representations of small member states that only had limited diplomatic capacities of their own (Merket, 2016). Moreover, the heads of European Commission delegations were invited to the regular coordination meetings of the heads of diplomatic missions of EC member states in receiving states. At these meetings, however, the heads of European Commission delegations typically still could not participate in discussions concerning political issues (Austermann, 2014), which were held only among member states' diplomats[20].

Together with expansion of the portfolio of European Commission delegations, their number gradually grew too. In 1986, when the European Commission submitted a report to the Council of Ministers concerning the state of its foreign representations' network, 86 European Commission delegations existed in the world, of which 26 were of a 'diplomatic type'. These delegations provided the European Commission with residential representation in 82 non-member states and in 4 international organisations altogether.[21] In addition, the European Commission also had its permanent representation in Turkey in the form of an information office in Ankara (Commission, 1986).

In the mid-1980s, the European Commission delegations adopted another element from the diplomatic practice of states when they started to show a flag[22] on their service vehicles. They introduced this flag use for pragmatic protocol and security reasons. For security reasons, some states in which the delegations operated required vehicles to display an official flag in order to gain access to governmental buildings or airports. The use of a flag was also required by protocol traditions at certain types of ceremonial events organised by local governmental bodies (Dimier and McGeever, 2006). The Commission's delegations under DG I were first permitted to use the flag in 1984; this was extended to include the delegations managed by DG VIII in 1986. However, at the same time, the delegations were instructed by the Brussels headquarters to only display the flag in necessary situations so as to not needlessly 'provoke' the EC member states (Austermann, 2014), which considered flying a flag to be a symbol of state sovereignty.

The situation was analogous to the use of the title "Ambassador" by the heads of European Commission delegations that was officially introduced into practice in 1987 in the delegations managed by DG I. The same year likewise saw the introduction of a protocol rule whereby the

[20] The head of the European Commission delegation was invited to a meeting of the heads of diplomatic missions, but when it came to negotiating on a certain political question he or she was asked to leave the meeting room (Austermann, 2014).

[21] There were four delegations accredited to international organisations: a delegation in Vienna accredited to the IAAE and the UN, a delegation in Paris accredited to the OECD and the UNESCO, a delegation in Geneva accredited to the UN and the GATT, and a delegation in New York accredited to the UN.

[22] In 1984, the European Commission emblem with a yellow letter "E" on a dark-blue background began to be used as the flag of European Commission delegations. At the start of 1986, European Commission delegations were using the EC official flag with 12 yellow stars in a circle, as officially approved in November 1985.

respective receiving state was notified of the appointment of the head of the Commission's delegation – in the same way as the appointment of the heads of states' diplomatic missions – through "letters of credence" signed by the head of the European Commission (Dimier and McGeever, 2006). In that year, the Single European Act also came into force, which – for the first time in primary EC law – legally enshrined the cooperation between the European Commission delegations[23] and the diplomatic representations of the EC member states in receiving states and within international organisations.[24]

The most important change in the Commission's foreign representations in 1987 was the approval of the 10th Amendment to the Staff Regulations of the EC. The European Commission Delegates in developing countries, who had been EAC employees, were granted the status of European Commission officials (Carta, 2014; Dimier and McGeever, 2006). This also raised the prospect of long-term careers in the European Commission 'diplomatic service' for these delegates, which hastened their professionalisation in diplomacy.

Along with their changed status and tasks, the delegations of the European Commission managed by DG VIII were granted diplomatic status by receiving states in 1989. With this new status, conferred by the fourth Treaty of Lomé, European Commission delegations acquired diplomatic privileges and immunities in the developing states that matched those of the diplomatic missions of sovereign states (Dimier and McGeever, 2006). From 1989 onward, all European Commission delegations in the world have possessed diplomatic status.

When the European Commission Delegates in the developing countries gained both 'official' and diplomatic status, almost all of the differences between the delegations of the European Commission directed by DG I and DG VIII were eliminated, unifying the foreign representations in practical terms and creating greater homogeneity across the network.

Thanks to these reforms in the late 1980s, the system of foreign representations of the European Commission began to resemble a 'traditional' diplomatic service.

Another important step in its establishment was the creation of a new Directorate for the Administration of the Delegations in 1989. This was housed within the Directorate-General of the European Commission for Administration (DG IX) and took over the management of all European Commission delegations. The replacement of the 'dualistic' system of

[23] The text of the Single European Act does not explicitly mention European Commission delegations, only "Commission representations".

[24] Under Article 30 of the Single European Act, the member states and the European Commission "through mutual assistance and information, shall intensify cooperation between their representations accredited to third countries and to international organizations" (Single European Act, 1987).

delegation management, within which the DG I and DG VIII each managed 'their' own network of representations independently, represented the first step in unifying the system of management of the Commission's foreign representations.[25]

Conclusion

The early days of the EU's diplomatic service relied on the establishment of two types of EC foreign representation that differed in their primary purpose, status and tasks. The first of these were 'diplomatic type' delegations, which emerged as so-called information centres in the 1950s. These were created to fulfil tasks of a diplomatic character, such as communicating information about the EC to the public and the government of the host state and/or supporting the development of economic relations between the EC and the host state. The second type of representation consisted of 'technical type' delegations that appeared in the form of teams of technical supervisors in the 1960s. These types of representations were primarily established to fulfil technical tasks, in particular the inspection of development aid projects and the provision of assistance to host governments participating in these projects.

The development of these two EC representation types entailed quite different dynamics, as seen in the different speeds of their transformation to 'traditional' diplomatic representations. For example, most delegations of the 'diplomatic type' received the diplomatic status and privileges and immunities that tended to be awarded to states' diplomatic missions at the end of the 1970s; however, delegations of the 'technical type' only received this status 10 years later at the end of the 1980s. Similarly, delegations of the 'diplomatic type' were awarded the right to use the flag earlier. Compared to the 'technical type' delegations, they were likewise involved substantially earlier in the system of regular staff rotation within the EC diplomatic service.

Nonetheless, the differences between individual EC representation types were gradually eliminated. EC representations of the 'technical type' gradually began to perform ever more diplomatic tasks, bringing their portfolio ever closer to that of representations of the 'diplomatic type'. The granting of diplomatic status to delegations of the 'technical type' at the end of the 1980s was also an important step in eliminating differences between the two types of EC representations, thereby unifying their formal and legal standing.

[25] *In addition to DG I and DG VIII, the Directorate-General of European Commission Information (DG X) participated in the management of some offices abroad, namely a small number of 'information offices'.*

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