



## **TEPSA Summer Newsletter editorial 'The establishment of the EEAS'**

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With only two months delay from the original schedule, the European External Action Service (EEAS) has just been established. This delay is due essentially to the negotiations with the European Parliament (EP). The latter linked its consultative opinion on the service to the proposals on the needed adjustments of the Financial Regulation and the staff status, for which it possessed codecision power. This allowed the EP to check all the texts.

Actually the intervention of the EP has not led to major amendments on the status of the service. Its status remains independent from the Commission and the Council. The High Representative keeps complete authority over it and possesses authority over all agents i.e. central structures or delegations. Delegations could also be subject to instructions of the Commission in areas where the Commission exercises the powers conferred upon it by the Treaties, but under the condition that the High Representative ensures the consistency of the Union's external action.

The structure of the central services was at the heart of long debates. The EP refused that the High Representative could be represented by officials as part of her political responsibilities. For this particular reason, the Secretary-General wears an 'executive' hat. The Executive is assisted by two Deputy Secretaries-General. Regarding the structure of the EEAS, it relies on the transfer of Council's and Commission's services which carried out responsibilities in CFSP and on the appointment of national officials. Eventually, the proportion of seconded national experts (SNEs) should account for at least 30 % of all EEAS staff and the proportion of the EU officials at least 60% of all EEAS staff.

One of the questions focused on the responsibility of the High Representative regarding the EU's instruments for external action. The compromise is close to the initial proposition (see article 9). The Commission is still in charge of the management of these instruments, but the High Representative takes part in the programming and notably prepares the Commission's decisions on, in this regard, multi-annual strategic measures.

During the EP vote at the Assembly, the High Representative put forward two declarations which are the main findings obtained by the EP: the first one covers the political accountability and sets up the relations between the High Representative and the Parliament, while the second one covers the organisation of the service.

The decision will be reviewed in 2013, almost two years after the implementation of the decision. Obviously TEPSA members will follow the first steps of the service carefully.