



The EU's Voice in Third Countries

The EU Delegations around the World

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When the Lisbon Treaty came into force in December 2009, one of the first changes to be introduced was the upgrading of Delegations of the European Commission to fully-fledged Delegations of the European Union (EU). Thanks to the fact that the EU received a legal personality (Art. 47 TEU), the Commission offices were turned into diplomatic houses representing the entire EU, and not just one of its institutions, vis-à-vis third countries. The actual upgrading process took several months to complete with some Delegations turning into the “EU’s embassies” overnight on Day 1 (India)², while others followed later (China)³ and/or were delayed due to practical concerns such as moving the buildings (USA).⁴ Nonetheless, all of the upgrades were completed before the creation of its diplomatic headquarters, the European External Action Service (EEAS), in Brussels.

In some senses the change in the EU’s diplomatic system abroad was intended only as a sort of byproduct of the key changes that were supposed to take place in Brussels. Despite – or perhaps because of – this fact EU Delegations have been out of the limelight. Indeed, this paper argues that away from the glare of publicity, EU Delegations have been much more successful in

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² Interview, senior official, EU Delegation, New Delhi, 4 April 2014.

³ Interview, senior official, EU Delegation, Beijing, 9 January 2013.

⁴ Interview, senior official, EEAS, Brussels, 10 December 2012.

promoting an EU single foreign policy both in relation to EU Member States and, primarily, to the partner non-EU countries.

From a theoretical perspective, the development of Delegations from representing mainly the economic interests of the European Communities (EC) and the Commission to bodies that should promote a single European foreign policy and represent the entire EU to some extent feeds into debates surrounding the notion of ‘spillover’ first developed in neo-functionalist accounts (Haas, 1968). Nonetheless, this paper seeks not to theorize but to contribute to theory building. Indeed, the major goal of this paper, therefore, is not to look into intricacies of theorizing about European integration, but to look at changes on the ground.

As Menon (2014) has argued recently, the choice confronting EU Member States is between ‘collective empowerment and autonomous decline’, but as Menon maintains so far Member States have largely plumped for the latter, emphasizing the ‘pursuit of narrow national interests over effective multilateral action’. Although discussion surrounding these themes has hitherto focused on national capitals and the Brussels EEAS HQ, EU Delegations deserve to be factored in here. Many of the nuts, bolts and levers of the machine of multilateral action are found in the Delegations.

Some Member States have welcomed the changes brought by Lisbon and indeed overall Member States have tended to be more welcoming of the role of the Delegations than of the EEAS Brussels HQ. Smaller states in particular do not view the Delegations as wanting to run their foreign policy⁵, but rather as a source of ‘added value’, be it through better reporting that smaller MS can incorporate into their own reports back home (Maurer & Raik, 2014), or through better access to more senior officials in third countries’ administrations which EU Delegations are able to ensure. Nonetheless, how EU Member States view the Delegations is only one side of the coin of foreign relations. On the other side, we need to ask how EU Delegations are viewed by host countries. Do they, for instance, have the same clout in Washington as in Ouagadougou?

To complement the excellent scholarship which has largely focused on the developments of the EEAS and the achievements (or otherwise) of Catherine Ashton (e.g. Helwig, 2013; Barber, 2010; Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet & Rieger, 2011), this paper contributes to an assessment of the performance of the EEAS

⁵ Informal conversation, national diplomat, Washington DC, 15 May 2012.

by shining a spotlight on the Delegations. It examines the almost “surreptitious” transition from Commission to EU Delegations and inquires how EU Delegations exert their influence and how their influence is viewed by their host states after being upgraded. Although there have been significant contributions to the literature examining EU Delegations (Dialer et al., 2014; Comelli & Matarazzo, 2011; Carta, 2013), particularly when looking at individual case studies of Delegations in one or two host countries (Maurer and Raik, 2014; Austermann, 2012), there is no systematic evaluation of how the role of Delegations shifted after the Lisbon Treaty came into force.

This paper therefore provides an analysis of EU Delegations from the perspective of interaction with host third countries. Although it is important to examine and assess the internal coordination between EU Delegations and EEAS HQ as well as with EU-28 Member States as some of the current studies do (Balfour & Raik, 2013b; Bicchi, 2014), it is in a sense more essential to see whether EU Delegations have now more impact on creation and voicing of EU foreign policy abroad and how this impact is viewed by the third countries, particularly whether there is any difference at all to the pre-Lisbon arrangements. Is the EU’s voice in third countries nowadays heard more and in unison (or at least harmony) or (still) rather as a discordant cacophony?

The paper fills this void in literature by offering some potential avenues through which we can look at the way in which the third countries see the EU Delegations. It also conceptualizes the key issues which make a difference whether or not an EU Delegation is successful and “heard” by its host and offers numerous hypotheses. As the research project upon which this study is built is still on-going, the hypotheses are offered more in the spirit of a contribution to the debate than the basis of a systematic testing. Moreover, from a practical perspective, given the upcoming EP elections and resulting new distribution of posts, including an HRVP, practitioners both from EU institutions and Member States may find it useful to look at which EU Delegations are successful and why and how their impact can be assessed five years on since their inauguration which is, in effect, a year longer than the EEAS’s existence. Moreover, a new HRVP can take guidance from the first five years of EU Delegations’ functioning for possible reforms to be proposed by the end of 2015 (European External Action Service, 2013).

The paper builds on formal and informal interviews and discussions with more than 30 EU officials from EU Delegations in Washington DC, Beijing, New Delhi and Tunisia, EU officials based at the EEAS HQ in Brussels, the

Commission (DG Devco and DG Trade) as well as a number of national diplomats posted in destinations where EU Delegations has been scrutinized. The interviews were semi-structured, conducted in English, German, French and Czech to qualify the picture and to gather truly original data. The interviews confirm data and crosscheck information, whilst also garnering inside knowledge and participants' perceptions.

The paper firstly outlines the general changes in the role of EU Delegations around the world; it then proceeds by looking at their political leverage and, thirdly, the economic power through development aid and pre-accession assistance. Throughout, primarily the case studies of EU Delegations in Washington and Beijing are referred to with a number of other shadow comparisons. The fourth section uses the case of New Delhi as a control case and examines what India can tell us about the impact of EU Delegations (and, in fact, EU foreign policy) in general. The conclusion suggests some lessons for EEAS and a new HR/VP.

Out of the Glare of Publicity

When asked about the accomplishments of EU Delegations, nearly all interviewees conducted by this author⁶ as well as the work of other scholars sees them as “crown jewels” (Balfour and Raik, 2013a) of the EU's foreign policy apparatus. The Delegations of the EU (and, previously, of the European Commission) are indeed the longest standing representation of European foreign policy abroad. Not only did they come into being before the launch of its “mother ship”, the EEAS, in Brussels, but the first delegations in fact existed in one way or another since the very beginning of the European Communities (EC) in the 1950s. The Delegation in Washington, DC was the first EC Delegation to be ever opened, while an EC Delegation to the United Kingdom which, at that time, stood outside of the European community structures, soon followed (European Commission, 2004). With the EC/EU's involvement with development aid, Delegations in the APC countries proliferated in the 1960s (Dimier and McGeever, 2006). In a sense, EC Delegations pre-dated not only the EU Delegations and EEAS, but indeed the Common Foreign and Security Policy that came about with the Maastricht Treaty in the 1990s.

⁶ Series of interviews with EU Delegation officials in Washington DC, Beijing, New Delhi, Tunis.

When the Lisbon Treaty was negotiated, the main emphasis was on the changes in Brussels: the Treaty created the new triple-hatted post of HRVP with the EEAS assisting her in daily tasks (Art 27 TEU). Art 17 and 18 TEU refer to external representation. The goal was to bring coherence and coordination into the external aspects of internal EU policies (Lequesne, 2013). The role of EU Delegations, however, is mentioned only in passing in Art 212 TEU. Despite their earlier creation, EU Delegations were upgraded only as a result of the necessary legal and institutional changes in Brussels rather than as part of the goal of transformation of the foreign-policy apparatus itself. Yet, it can be argued that Delegations, perhaps rather because than despite their supplementary nature, proved to be more successful and their transition from Commission to EU Delegations as smoother than the transition in the Brussels headquarters.⁷ Paradoxically, at the time of the transition, EU Delegations were largely left to their own devices without much instruction from Brussels⁸, and also did not attract much public and media attention, which perhaps helped them focus on the work rather than on creating public image.

No matter how smooth or rough any transition is, the key question is what the final destination of this transition is, how the end product functions and how it is seen by the others? In case of EU Delegations, although their collaboration with EU Member States and with its “mother ship” in Brussels is of great importance, it is in fact the way in which EU Delegations project their voice and how they are as an “external face” of EU’s foreign policy viewed by their host countries that matters the most. The following sections therefore propose several explanations of when, where, how and why EU Delegations can make a difference in dealing with third countries and when, where, how and why the host countries may help or hinder the Delegations’ impact.

Although the following sections are set up as a series of potential hypotheses, they do not provide exhaustive explanations. In fact, each case represents a sort of ideal case and the real world examples are listed which match less or more the ideal case.

⁷ Interview, senior official, EU Delegation, Washington DC, 11 July 2012.

⁸ Interview, senior official, EU Delegation, Washington DC, 11 July 2012.

Keep Your Allies Close and Your Rivals Closer

In contrast to previous arrangements, under Lisbon, EU Delegations are expected to be political players. Legally, they are responsible both for the Community policies previously run by the Commission Delegation as well as for CFSP matters vis-à-vis the third countries. In practical terms, “EU ambassadors” who are political appointees chosen by HR/VP are in charge of EU Delegations, while Delegations expanded their political sections which are nowadays staffed primarily by EEAS (rather than Commission) officials (European External Action Service, 2013; European Parliament, 2013). EU Delegations also took over the role of the rotating presidencies in coordinating meetings with national embassies at all levels (with a few exceptions, such as consular and defense issues) that are present in the host country. They also represent the EU abroad by bringing demarches and other official statements on behalf of the EU.⁹ Last but not least, thanks to the recruitment of national diplomats into EEAS, nowadays about 60% heads of delegations come from national diplomatic services (Novotna, 2014) which adds to the political flavour of the work of EU Delegations.

However, from our perspective, rather than the nitty-gritty daily functioning of EU Delegations, the broader conclusion that EU Delegations’ political role has been substantially enhanced is more significant. Since EU Delegations have received a boost primarily in the area of politics, the first two hypotheses where EU Delegations have made/can make a difference relate to the political arena. Nonetheless, political perception by third countries may be both positive and negative. Host countries may welcome an increased political role of EU Delegations as well as try to use it to their benefit. The Hypothesis 1 therefore looks at a positive political perception, while Hypothesis 2 considers a negative one.

Doing Politics with Allies

H1: EU Delegations will have most impact in those third countries where the EU and the host country share a democratic system encouraging cooperation and mutual differences are only about fine-tuning.

The first explanation of EU Delegation’s impact might be in relation to those countries that share with the EU and its Member States basic democratic

⁹ Interview, senior official, EEAS, Brussels, 10 December 2012.

norms and values. In a sense, there is no major political difference between the host country and the EU as well as its EU Member States. In a way, politics is a dull daily business without any major political storms. The upgrade of the EU Delegation we might predict leads to the simplification of communication between the host country and the EU and is thus welcomed by the third country. The host country does not need to play the Member States against one another as it gets more benefits from talking to EU-28 through the EU Delegation than to all 28 EU Member States individually. In some cases, the host country even encourages cooperation among EU-28 and the Delegation and dissuades defection when individual Member States try to bypass the EU Delegation¹⁰ and pursue individual bilateral interests.

On the other hand, EU Member States, particularly the smaller ones, gain better access to the host country's government officials through the EU Delegation and regular meetings (heads of missions, deputy heads of missions, political, economic, and other counsellors meetings, etc.) which are no longer chaired and prepared by the rotating presidency, but by the Delegation officials on the premises of EU Delegation. The Delegation ensures that the host country's message gets across to as many Member States in as short time as possible which is the major benefit for the host country: it does not need to convene meetings with all EU-28+1, but it may show up and speak to all EU representatives at once.

In this case, the EU Delegation gets leverage through the host country rather than against it and, once all the Member States realize the benefits of speaking through the Delegation, its position can only improve. The situation is also different to what the Commission Delegations could have done in the past: because the Commission Delegations represented more or less narrowly defined economic and trade interests, they could not have played the same political role.

Although this description represents more or less an ideal situation, the closest approximation of this hypothesized relationship is represented by the EU Delegation to Washington, DC. Even though EU Member States do maintain and support their "special relations" with the United States, it is in some sense the US which supports cooperation among the EU-28 with the EU Delegation. Given the fact that time is money, and this saying is true in the US multiple times, the US administration is not keen on losing its precious time by

¹⁰ Interview, senior official, EEAS, Brussels, 10 December 2012.

arranging various bilateral meetings with EU national diplomats, but prefers sending its top officials to the coordination meetings at the EU Delegation where it can project its message in one go.¹¹ Even though the “Big Three” (Lehne, 2012) in particular will keep their special links for some time to come, it may in the end be the American host which will push for a more united voice coming from the EU and through the EU Delegation.

Given the US’s frustration with the slowness of the Europeans’ decision-making in Brussels, particularly within the various Council formations and through the capitals, the Americans may push for a clearer “telephone number” and the phone line at the Washington’s EU Delegations might come handy.

A similar situation could be observed with other “friendly” large host countries that have a strategic partner status, such as Japan¹² and, perhaps, Canada.¹³ In these cases, the cooperation is augmented by ongoing negotiations on free trade deals which is, in fact, becoming also true in the United States through the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) negotiations (Hamilton, 2014). Although these negotiations are conducted by the Commission, since the EU Delegation represents both the trade and political side of Europe, its clout is even enhanced. In a way, the ideal for the US is for the EU to be united enough to strike a deal, but disunited to the extent that they are not too powerful or forceful on the other side of the table.

Doing Politics with Rivals

H2: EU Delegations will have most impact in those third countries where the EU and its Member States are encircled by an unfriendly atmosphere, the EU can provide an umbrella on political issues such as human rights and EU Member States stick together while pursuing their own bilateral agenda.

In contrast to the first case, EU Delegations as well as its Member States face an unwelcoming environment in host countries that do not share the same democratic values. On the one hand, facing an adversary is not an easy task and that contributes to the perception that such destinations might be among the most difficult postings (Maurer and Raik, 2014). On the other hand, when

¹¹ Interview, senior official, EU Delegation, Washington DC, 11 July 2012.

¹² Interview, EEAS high-ranking official, Brussels, 24 April 2014 and EEAS senior official, Brussels, 18 April 2013.

¹³ Interview, EEAS senior official, Brussels, 23 October 2013.

confronted with a political challenge, it is easier to unite and find a common position on issues of a shared political interest. EU Delegations become an umbrella under which such a position in a form of a demarche or other joint undertaking can be produced and put forward before the host country. Although the EU Delegation may suffer from real or perceived security deficiencies (e.g. weaker protection against intelligence collection or “leaks”), it serves as a common point where EU Member States can join forces and find common ground on sensitive political issues, such as human rights, rule of law, etc.

Even though the reaction of the host country might be to try to play the Member States off one against the other while encouraging them to pursue bilateral trade and economic interests with the host, and thus the EU Delegation may become an effective tool of coordination only in specific domains¹⁴, the political impact of the EU Delegations has certainly increased since the Lisbon changes. Given the fact that any economic relationship may in the end be impacted by any deterioration in political ties, as we can observe in EU-Russia relations, the EU Delegation's political influence will remain high and will be taken into account by the host country even if EU Member States nearly cynically leave up to the Delegation the “unpleasant” issues¹⁵ so that they can more easily pursue its economic interests.

Out of the large host countries, certainly China and, to some extent, Russia fit this description. Although the Chinese officials may warn that the EU through its Delegation might be being “misused” by its Member States¹⁶ for such intentions, nonetheless, they do pay attention to what the Delegation is saying. Moreover, by putting pressure on Member States not to unite, the reaction may in fact be the opposite. In some sense, China therefore induces more cooperation among the EU28+1 and, ironically, strengthens the EU Delegation's role through its actions of “divide and rule”, i.e. dividing the Member States but leading to the “rule” through the EU. Similar to HI, albeit from a rather “negative” perspective, by making the Member States “hide” behind the EU Delegation's “skirt”, the host country, in this case China, increases the clout and importance of the EU Delegation. By keeping its enemies closer, China encourages the European single voice, at least on political issues.

¹⁴ Interview, senior official at China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Beijing, 16 January 2013 and senior official, EU Delegation, Beijing, 15 January 2013.

¹⁵ Interviews, senior official at China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Beijing, 16 January 2013.

¹⁶ Interviews, senior official at China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Beijing, 16 January 2013.

It's the Economy, Stupid!

The second group of explanations when, where, how and why the EU Delegations have an impact relates to the EU's economic might. Even though the EU's reputation as an economic powerhouse has substantially declined in the last several years thanks to the economic and financial crisis (Menon, 2014), the EU is still the largest single market and development aid donor in the world. Moreover, through EU enlargement and, to a lesser extent, neighbourhood policies, the EU not only provides large pre-accession assistance both in terms of its funding and administrative capacity, training, etc., but it also projects its political "transformative power" (Grabbe, 2006). Although some would say that power is on the wane, the Ukrainian turmoil shows that the power of EU's attraction remains strong, at least to some of the actors.

The Development Delegations

H3: EU Delegations will have most impact in those third countries where the EU is the largest provider of aid and trade.

Money matters, particularly when it is distributed in large sums. Even though the EU faces competition in its traditional areas of development aid delivery (see, e.g. activities by China on the African Sub-Saharan continent¹⁷), it still remains the biggest donor, particularly in countries that were former colonies of a current EU Member State. Such host countries tend to be rather smaller states and the power balance between the EU and the host country tends to be different than in the two other previous cases: the EU and its Member States act rather as an "older brother" than as an equal or a competitor.

Moreover, the EU Delegation is usually one of handful European representations, perhaps with the exception of national embassies of the former colonial powers and Member States with special interests in the region. Given the fact the EU Delegation in such states tends to be among the largest embassies as well as one of the key donor players, it did not face any strong opposition among its European national colleagues while upgrading its status. Adding a political role to its previously strong development and financing portfolio only amplifies its strong position among the local actors.¹⁸ In a way, much less has changed since the transition to EU rather than Commission Delegations since

¹⁷ Interview, EEAS high-ranking official, Brussels, 24 April 2014.

¹⁸ Interview, European Commission, DG DEVCO, Brussels, 20 March 2013.

politics through funding was in place already before the Lisbon.¹⁹ Nonetheless, the possibility to leverage political and economic power only adds to the already significant status of the Delegations.

Clear examples are most of the Delegations in smaller states in Africa, Latin America and Asia. These Delegations were also left with the smallest proportion of staff coming from the EEAS (European External Action Service, 2014) and largest number of heads of Delegations who are still recruited from the former Commission pool of personnel (Novotna, 2014). The role of the EU Delegations are generally welcomed in these states, although the strings attached to the aid and the expectations of certain political and economic reforms do stand in stark contrast to other international actors such as China. The EU's push for transparency and liberalism is not always welcomed by states who prefer the 'don't ask, don't tell, but let me extend my influence' approach of the Chinese in many African states.

The Accession (and Neighbourhood) Delegations

H4: EU Delegations will have most impact in those third countries where it has political leverage e.g. through accession instruments (all candidate states) and to a lesser extent in the EU's neighbourhood.

Apart from conditionality, EU Delegations can exert their influence through accession procedures and neighbourhood policies. In many respects EU Delegations in enlargement and neighbourhood countries are mixed Delegations: a part of their goal is to promote EU's foreign policy and a part of their task is to bring the host countries closer or even in the EU.

In a similar vein to EU "Development Delegations", the "Accession Delegations" experienced a significant impact on candidate and neighborhood states even before Lisbon beefed up their political roles. For instance, the Commission Delegations in the 2004/7 enlargement countries were an integral (and sometimes very influential) part of writing process of progress reports on candidate states from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) as well as administration of Phare and other assistance programmes. On the political level, thanks to the frequent and regular contact between its staff and local ministries and politicians, they were one of the main sources for assessment of the country's institutional and political reforms. (Novotna, forthcoming 2015; Novotna, 2012).

¹⁹ Interview, European Commission, DG DEVCO, Brussels, 20 March 2013.

Although there is some disagreement among the Commission officials as to where the balance of writing lay (e.g. a desk officer at the Delegation in Prague or the officers – and cabinet members – in Brussels)²⁰, it is clear that the Commission Delegations did indeed played a political role. Although there has been more increase in EEAS staff in EU Delegations in enlargement and neighbourhood countries than in those dealing with development issues (European External Action Service, 2014), the staff remains mixed – perhaps to the same extent as the tasks of such Delegations remain mixed. Moreover, with the exception of Turkey, all the current candidate and potential candidate states are small countries. Therefore, despite the Accession Delegations continue to combine the power of money and politics, the change in their character has been perhaps less striking than in EU Delegations to strategic and other large countries.

Was It All Wrong? The Devil Is in...

The two previous sections summarized cases where after receiving an enhanced political status EU Delegations can increase their impact and project the EU's voice in their host countries. Although EU Delegations providing development aid and accession assistance added their political clout into their portfolio, they had in a sense similar power already in the past and only extended them into the political sphere. The most significant change, therefore, happened in those places where the political role of EU Delegations has been most promoted by host countries either by design (the US) or rather as a consequence (China). In these host states, the EU Delegation either suddenly became the most significant one-stop shop for both politics and economics, or place where all political disputes are aimed at while business relations are kept apart on a bilateral basis (China).

From that perspective, India, another large strategic partner country with strong individual trade links to particularly the Big Three Member States, historical ties and a democratic regime should fit the same picture. The EU Delegation, therefore, should have enhanced its standing in the eyes of the Indian government significantly after the Lisbon Treaty was introduced. If nothing else, the Indian officials should be happy that they can use the EU

²⁰ Interview with Petra Erler, Potsdam, 6 June 2011 and David Ringrose, Brussels, 16 March 2011.

Delegation as the single interlocutor when it comes to political relations with the EU and its Member States.

Yet, as research shows, the reality is quite different. The Indian Ministry of Foreign Affairs not only did not come to terms with the Lisbon changes yet, but it failed to overcome the Cold War division: although the Ministry has a European department, that department is not split along the EU and non-EU lines, but along the “West” and “East”. Even though 11 countries²¹ out of the “Eastern Unit” are EU Member States, they are still dealt by the “East European” Indian officials.²² Moreover, when officials at the EU Delegation in Dehli want to arrange a meeting with the Indian government, they often have to go to two different people in the separate Western and Eastern units.²³ The explanation for India’s failure to adapt to these post-Cold War geopolitical realities and its – what we can dub – non-response to post-Lisbon Treaty realities is the result of a simple finding: India does not care enough about Europe and whether and how it is represented or not. Therefore, perhaps the simplest hypothesis about the impact of EU Delegations (and, indeed, the EU as such) can read as follows:

H5: EU Delegations will have most impact in those third countries where the EU is perceived to matter and EU Delegations will have least impact in those third countries where the EU does not matter at all.

So were the previous explanations (No. 1 through 4) totally wrong? Does it mean that there is no connection between political importance and the role EU Delegations can play? Is there no linkage between aid and trade? In economic terms, even though the trade between the EU and India amounts “only” to about 73 billion euro for 2013, India ranks still as the EU’s 10th trading partner.²⁴ In terms of aid, the EU changed its stance on India from one of donor assistance to mutual partnership, focusing on the issues of health and education²⁵ which better corresponds to India’s status as an emerging economy and its wish to be considered an equal (Menon, 2014). Yet, the economic leverage does not translate into the EU’s (nor its Member State’s) power

²¹ Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia.

²² Interview, senior official, EU Delegation, New Delhi, 4 April 2014.

²³ Interview, senior official, EU Delegation, New Delhi, 4 April 2014.

²⁴ See http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/september/tradoc_113390.pdf.

²⁵ See http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/asia/country-cooperation/india/india_en.htm.

despite the fact that European entrepreneurs are as interested in business with India as they are with China.

As shown above, in political terms, there is not much interest in seeing the EU as a united actor, not at the EU level and not even at the Member State level. India's disinterest is absolutely striking. Nevertheless, there is a hope, at least for EU Delegation officials. As one of them explained to this author in Delhi, once the HR/VP started to lead negotiations with Iran on behalf of E3+3, the EU Delegation immediately became of great interest to the Indian officials and there was no problem to organize meetings with senior high-ranking officials of the Indian Foreign Ministry even at 6pm on Friday afternoon who were previously unreachable.²⁶ As this example shows, perhaps the key way to convince the host country to take the EU Delegation into account is through creating a special issue of interest for the third country and showing that the Delegation has 'captured' control – or at least exerts significant influence – over that issue.

Conclusion: The Resonance of the EU's Voice

Although the role of EU Delegations has been changed by the Lisbon Treaty as a sort of afterthought rather than the main goal, they have been quite prominent in their altered roles. In contrast to the sweeping transformation of the EU foreign policy machinery in Brussels, EU Delegations went through a more gradual process of adjustment and adaptation to their political role, in some cases even before the Lisbon. Now with the EU Delegations in place for nearly five years, they are becoming "secret weapons" of EU diplomacy. Largely out of the glare of publicity, their impact has increased considerably, especially in those countries where they had not been much influential in the political sphere in the past. In a way, the upgraded EU Delegations can be the most successful heritage of the Lisbon changes, particularly in the area of EU foreign policy.

Through use of stylized hypothesis and case studies approximating to those examples, this paper examined different ways in which EU Delegations are welcomed (or not) by their host countries and how their upgraded status helped increase their impact vis-à-vis the host countries. It is after all the impact on the third country that should be most important in evaluating the efficiency and efficacy of the Lisbon changing the EU Delegations. In addition, paradoxically,

²⁶ Interview, senior official, EU Delegation, New Delhi, 4 April 2014.

it may be in the end the host countries which will push for more united voice through EU Delegations, either because they find it beneficial speaking to all EU-28 through one Delegation, or, unintentionally, because it is through the EU Delegation where EU Member State can achieve a unified stance.

Yet the key challenge remains. It can be for positive or negative reasons, but the EU (including its Member States) through its EU Delegation must matter to the host country. If the host state does not care much, no matter how much effort EEAS and Commission officials put into the working of the Delegation, it cannot have any clout. The advice to the EU Delegations (and, in fact, to their masters in Brussels), therefore, is as follows: EU Delegations (and EU foreign policy) must find a niche where it makes a difference to the host country to work with it. It may be through political means or economic reasons, be they positive or negative, but they must be present. In short, the lesson for the EU to draw is that it needs to be seen by host countries as an indispensable interlocutor, otherwise it does not matter whether it speaks with one or many voices: nobody will listen to it.

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