

Jost Henrik Morgenstern Pomorski (2018). *The Contested Diplomacy of the European External Action Service*. London: Routledge, ISBN 978-113-803946-9, 246 pp., US\$ 37.80.

Since the Lisbon Treaty has come into force, it has significantly developed the European Union's external action from a material and institutional standpoint. In particular, the creation of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (Article 18 Treaty on European Union (TEU)) and *a latere* the European External Action Service (EEAS) (Article 27.3 TEU) can be considered two interesting institutional novelties, as they — the former assisted by the latter — can give more coherence, continuity and incisiveness to the EU's external action. The High Representative has several strategic tasks (for example, see Articles 18.2, 22.2, 27.1, 42.4 TEU and Article 215 Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)), which also allow a comprehensive view of the Union's external action (see Articles 18.4 and 21.3 TEU), and the main task of the EEAS is providing assistance. In fact, Article 27.3 TEU states that 'In fulfilling his mandate, the High Representative shall be assisted by a European External Action Service', pointing out that 'this service shall work in cooperation with the diplomatic services of the Member States and shall comprise officials from relevant departments of the General Secretariat of the Council and of the Commission as well as staff seconded from national diplomatic services of the Member States'. Accordingly, with the remaining part of the above-mentioned Article 27.3 TEU, the organization and functioning of the EEAS were established by the Council with Decision 2010/427/EU, and adopted following a *sui generis* procedure — that is, on a High Representative proposal together with the participation of the European Parliament (consultation) and the Commission (consent).

The EEAS has been object of consideration by *inter alia* the legal, politological and sociological literature since the entry into force of Decision 2010/427/EU. Scholars analysed its legal discipline (that is, adoption of Decision 2010/427/EU, coordination with other EU institutions and bodies, etc.), its nature (what the EEAS is) and its role in EU policy-making, as well as its duty to guarantee EU action coherence (see also Article 3 of Decision 2010/427/EU). Some authors focused their attention on more specific issues (such as EU delegations, their inclusion in the EEAS and the EU's international representation or the relationship with the European Parliament), while other literature analysed the EEAS's effectiveness and its cooperation modality with the Commission services, the Council's General Secretariat and the member states' diplomatic services. This multidisciplinary interest is to be encouraged, as it enables the

creation of a rich heritage of studies for an overall and thorough understanding of the EEAS.

*The Contested Diplomacy of the European External Action Service* can be considered part of this heritage, offering — as its author affirms — an alternative view of the EEAS and its creation. It answers three core questions: why the EEAS was created; what the EEAS is; and what forces drive its operation. To this end, Jost-Henrik Morgenstern-Pomorski adopts a bureaucratic — institutionalist approach in order to explain the EEAS's inception, establishment and consolidation, which are considered the three main phases of the 'birth and life' of this EU body. Furthermore, he analyses the difficulties of finding a correct operational position in the EU's external action institutional framework.

Morgenstern-Pomorski develops his analysis of the EEAS over eight chapters. The first chapter, 'Introduction: Constructing the EU Diplomatic Service', begins with an explanatory introduction to the research background and the methodology used. It follows with an *excursus* on the EEC/EU external relations, foreign policy and pertinent bureaucratic framework 'before the EEAS' in the second and third chapters. The core analysis focuses on the aforementioned three phases of the EEAS. Therefore, in the fourth chapter, 'The Shape of Things to Come: The Inception of the European External Action Service', the author analyses the inception phase of the European Convention's workings as the political context of the EEAS's origins. The fifth chapter, 'Navigating the Politics of Eurocratic Structure', illustrates EEAS negotiations towards Council Decision 2010/427/EU — thus its establishment — showing the balance and counterbalance dynamic among the three actors, often in opposing positions, participating in the procedure required by Article 27.3 TEU — that is, the member states, European Parliament and the Commission. In the following chapters, the book deals with EEAS consolidation, which used to be more difficult under the first High Representative (Chapter 6) and then became easier under the current High Representative (Chapter 7), which brought change to the EEAS organization so that it now functions much closer to how the Commission operates.

The eighth and final chapter, 'Conclusion: Towards a European Foreign Ministry?', draws out the author's conclusions and summarizes his research results, including from a methodological standpoint ('How well does a bureaucratic approach capture the evolution of the EEAS?', p. 188 ff.), taking a peek into the future of the EEAS. In particular, Morgenstern-Pomorski affirms that 'A High Representative with political capital, clear preferences and persistence may take this opportunity to shape the EEAS from a Brussels bureau into a modern diplomatic actor. The EEAS may still become, as per its founders'

original intent, a European Foreign Ministry, led by a European Foreign Minister under the tutelage of a joint President of the European Commission and the European Council' (p. 196). Such a greatly desired development, which would indeed make the EU's external action more effective and coordinated, is perhaps something not easily achievable. Whether the EEAS will ever become the EU's 'foreign policy service' (as the first High Representative named it in the foreword of the 2013 *EEAS Review*) certainly depends on the forthcoming High Representative and on his/her ability to reach broad consensus on incisive EEAS reform. However, such reform may merely propose a functional improvement through punctual modification to EU secondary law, which may nonetheless leave this EU body with tied hands. If this is the case, the EEAS will remain only a prelude of a 'foreign policy service'. Whatever the outcome, there would be a further issue to consider with regard to the evolution of the EEAS into a 'modern diplomatic actor': would it be useful (or not) to reflect also on the High Representative and the appointment procedure provided by Article 18.1 TEU? In that case, this new approach could represent — citing the very last sentence of the book — 'another part of the institutional road' that lies ahead (p. 196).

In conclusion, this book offers a refined analysis of the EEAS and its evolution (including the political debate and dynamics surrounding it), with a careful examination of the existing doctrine, documental and bibliographic material, and primary data collection, such as interviews with officials. It represents a pertinent contribution to the literature on European studies, and thus deserves appropriate attention from both academics and the European and national institutions that, even in different roles, deal with EU external action.

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