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LISBOAN

Linking Interdisciplinary Integration Studies by Broadening the European Academic Network

Report on the workshop “Impact of the European External Action Service for the EU’s policies towards South East Europe”

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Workshop “Impact of the European External Action Service for the EU’s policies towards South East Europe”, 5 October 2012, Dubrovnik

Introduction:

The Institute for International Relations (IMO) has organized the workshop “Relevance of the European External Action Service for the EU’s policies towards South East Europe” within the LISBOAN Project. LISBOAN (“Linking Interdisciplinary Integration Studies by Broadening the European Academic Network”) is an Erasmus Academic Network that aims to strengthen teaching and researching of the Lisbon Treaty. The workshop was held on the 5th of October 2012 at the Inter-University Centre (IUC), Dubrovnik. It also received support from the Hanns Seidel Stiftung and from the Croatian Ministry of Science, Education and Sports. Gathering researchers, experts and decision-makers from the EU and the SEE, the workshop has raised the debate about the impacts of the Lisbon Treaty-induced changes on the EU policies towards the SEE.

Welcoming speeches were given by Dr. Višnja Samardžija from IMO and professor Wolfgang Wessels from the University of Cologne, who is also the coordinator of the LISBOAN project. Dr. Višnja Samardžija described the EEAS as a novel system that still faces functioning problems. She argued that it will take some time until it would be fully set on tracks. However, the EEAS clearly aimed to enhance coherence and consistence of the EU's actorness at the European and global level through integrating different EU's policies that should amplify the Union's political clout and enhance the EU's overall posture in international affairs. Additionally, Dr. Samardžija elaborated on the main rationale of the workshop, aiming to analyze the EEAS's impacts in the South East Europe (SEE) by inquiring into effects the EEAS has had on the interdependence between the enlargement and the EU's foreign and security policy (CFSP). More specifically, the workshop intended to unveil the potential effects of the EEAS on the processes of peace and state-building in the region, on the EU's positions regarding the most pressing issues (for example Kosovo) and on the relationship between the Union's and EU member states' diplomatic endeavours. In passing, Dr. remarked Samardžija that IMO organized the EEAS workshop in Dubrovnik given the famous diplomatic tradition of the Dubrovnik Republic, whose skilful diplomatic network played a crucial role in securing independence and prosperity of the Dubrovnik Republic for more than four centuries.

Professor Wessels provided background on the LISBOAN project that aims to spark cooperation between the academic networks and policymakers. Gathering some top-level policy makers, both at the national and the EU level, the EEAS workshop matched this intention well. Professor Wessels reminded that starting point of the European Political Cooperation (EPC) in foreign policy dated back to the Hague Conference in the 1969 that became a stepping stone for the later development of the EU's foreign policy. He argued that the EU had made a tremendous success in these 40 years and the EEAS represented a final stage in this process because it essentially represented a “new constellation, a true European-level diplomatic service”. This marked a distinction in comparison with the CFSP developments in the 1990s and 2000s because the EEAS now emanated a specific EU flavour. However, he conceded that the EEAS-related legislative provisions were still very intergovernmental, so the EEAS's real performance held the key to its credibility. One would have to wait and see how previous institutional wrangling within the structure was settled.

Keynote speech:

The Keynote speech “Perspectives of the Lisbon Treaty's EEAS in the Western Balkans” was delivered by Mr. Jonas Jonsson, Head of the Western Balkans Division at the EEAS. Mr. Jonsson noted that the EEAS should be reflected upon as a part of the EU's wider and long-term strategic objectives in order to forge common EU foreign policy and position itself within the global political landscape. Therefore, the EEAS essentially embodied a paradigm shift where the EU member states were restrained in pursuing an individual and separate foreign policy without taking into considerations values, objectives and interests at the collective EU's level. When speaking about the EU's engagement in the SEE, he saw a heightened scope of challenges the EU is dealing with, when compared with the Central and Eastern European (CEE) states. According to Mr. Jonsson, the particular challenge was the so called state-building because it formed an integral part of the overarching aim of integration. In that regard, the wording of the Stabilization and Accession Process (SAP) reflected the EU's task to stabilize and then integrate these countries. Subsequently, Mr. Jonsson assessed the current situation within some of the SEE countries. Despite some progress, the region still encountered disturbing statements from places like Banja Luka and occasional incidents in Kosovo and Macedonia. Therefore, the EU Council had formulated new conclusions towards Bosnia and Herzegovina in March 2011, seeking to further uphold local ownership and sustainability of the EU conditionality-related reforms. The EU endorsed the usage of initiated reform incentives and toolbox of the instruments, as illustrated by the launch of the EU-Bosnia Structured Dialogue on Justice.

Turning to Serbia-Kosovo relations, he noted that the EU had played a positive role in normalization of their ties because both countries share the EU accession objectives and that the EEAS was bringing added value in this process. Firstly, the EEAS participates in the policy-making and agenda-setting role, which is shared between the EEAS, the European Commission (EC) and the EU member states, especially the country holding the EU rotating presidency. Secondly, the EEAS has an important presence through the EU delegations and two EU special representatives (EUSR) in the region that are financed under the CFSP/Council budget. Mr. Jonsson summarized that regarding the EU's engagement in the SEE, there was no clear-cut differentiation between the EU enlargement policy and the CFSP because the EU had developed specific measures for specific set of problems in the region. He argued that this tailor-made EU approach in the SEE required careful analysis because the EU was presented in the region through different levels, encompassing the EEAS, EC and the EU member states. This state of affairs was mirrored in the EU's depiction as an overlapping power. Accordingly, the essential goal of the EEAS was to secure coherence and consistency between these different EU's voices and streamline EU's endeavours into a sustainable and efficient framework. He believed that the EEAS could serve as a driving force behind this process provided that the EC and the EU member states were willing to integrate efforts and resources through appropriate inter-institutional coordination.

In the subsequent discussion numerous important questions emerged. These referred to Serbia-Kosovo relations and the important steps that had to be done by political leaderships in Belgrade and Pristina. For instance, the discussion highlighted that there were a number of legal opportunities Serbia could utilize in order to improve ties with Kosovo which did not include formal recognition of Kosovo's independence, one of possibilities being visa liberalization. Additionally, the debate shed light on the necessity for further reform efforts in the SEE region and the usage of positive momentum created by the upcoming Croatian EU accession in 2013.

Panel 1:

Panel one, devoted to the EEAS and visibility of the EU foreign policy in the Western Balkans, was chaired by professor Wolfgang Wessels. Mr. Wolfgang Koeth from the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA), Maastricht, delivered a presentation about institutional aspects of the EEAS on the EU – Western Balkans relations. His primary question was whether the EEAS streamlined the EU policies or represented an additional level of complexity. He analyzed the inter-institutional relations between the EEAS's and the European Commission's staff in the EU Delegations stressing that the EEAS had indeed advanced the EU's external visibility and horizontal coherence between the EU's institutions. However, this had brought little change to the balance of power between the EC and the EU member states that hold the key for the EU's foreign policy making. Namely, the relation between the EC and the EU capitals was the most important variable that determined the outcome of the EU's foreign and enlargement policy because political decisions are (still) made in the EU member states and not in Brussels. In that



regard, he concluded that the EEAS had not been able to prevent a “creeping nationalization of the EU enlargement policy”.

The second presentation by Dr. Tanja Tamminen from the Finnish Institute of International Affairs (FIIA), Helsinki, assessed the EU crisis management efforts in the Western Balkans, which she described as a “laboratory” for the development of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions. Mrs. Tamminen indicated that the EU had adopted a comprehensive crisis management approach,

involving a variety of the EU toolbox instruments and firmly building on the concept of human security doctrine. Through this involvement, the EU had acquired specific “know-how” about the Western Balkans region, transformed ethnic conflicts and promoted reconciliation among involved parties, representing the legacy for the future EEAS's endeavours. Mrs. Tamminen also elaborated on lessons learned from these missions and their importance for the future EU's crisis management planning. She claimed that the EU needed to improve its current CSDP evaluation framework and set clear benchmarks that would better assess performance and impact of its missions. More generally, the EU needed to upgrade its early warning system, improve conflict and stakeholder analysis, enshrine regionally-led focus of its engagement and support processes of inclusive country-led and country-owned transitions of conflicts, where including the local stakeholders ensures long-term sustainability of the solutions. According to Mrs. Tamminen, the EEAS represented a valuable contribution in this sense because it could better integrate the EU's crisis management component with the political one, given the EU's political responsibility for particular countries in the missions' aftermath.

Dr. Michele Comelli from the Istituto di Affari Internazionali (IAI), Rome, concluded the first panel by analyzing the horizontal and vertical coherence of the EU's foreign policy and its impact in the Western Balkans. In his view, vertical coherence between the EU and the EU member states is in this regard was much more important and decisive than the horizontal coherence between the various EU institutions because the former relations decisively shaped the EU's policy towards the region. He argued that this had been clearly visible, for instance, in EU policy towards Kosovo, where five EU member states have not recognized Kosovo, confirming that the EU's foreign and enlargement policy are predominantly shaped by the EU member states' preferences. However, he considered that regardless of the sometimes lacking unity of the EU's

policy, the Lisbon Treaty and the EEAS in particular had increased the EU's horizontal coherence. Namely, the EU's inter-institutional dialogue had been strengthened on the issues such as the EU's enlargement and the European Neighbourhood Policy, which upgraded the trust into the EU's role in international affairs.

Panel 2:

Panel two, chaired by Mrs. Višnja Samardžija, dealt with the EEAS and its linkages with the Western Balkans' enlargement process. The panel was opened by Mrs. Ines Troha Brdar from the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia. Who focused on the real impact of the EEAS in the region. She emphasized that the inter-linkage between the EEAS and the EC in the Western Balkans as regional countries were not only part of the EU's enlargement policy but also subject to the CFSP and CSDP, given the ongoing missions in the region. Mrs. Troha Brdar underlined her impression that the Western Balkans were not discussed often enough within the framework of political debates generated in the EU's Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) or informal meetings of the Foreign Affairs Ministers (Gymnich), despite the fact that there were some worrying political developments in certain countries. She argued that the EEAS should be more open for initiatives of those Member States who wished for more political dialogue instead of reducing the EC's presence in the Western Balkans to technical "carrot & stick" exercises. She noted that apart of the high level Belgrade –Pristina dialogue under the auspices of EEAS, the last important high level event had been the Western Balkans Sarajevo conference in June 2010. She believed that the EU should reinvigorate its clear political message towards the region and keep the "enlargement spirit", despite the current economic crisis. Croatia, as the future EU member state, was determined to keep the region at the very top of its foreign policy agenda. As for the benefits that the EEAS would bring to Croatia and other countries in the region once they join the EU, she argued that these were primarily related to better access to information, especially when it came to the areas outside of Europe where most of the Western Balkan countries were poorly represented. She highlighted that Croatian diplomats would get the opportunity to work for the EEAS either in the Brussels headquarters or in the EU Delegations scattered all over the world, which would enable them to acquire valuable experiences.



Professor Attila Eralp and Dr. Zerrin Torun from the METU (Middle East Technical University), Ankara, focused on the Turkey-EU relations in the light of the Lisbon Treaty. Professor Eralp opined that the Turkey-EU relations are in a stalemate, given that no new negotiations chapters had been opened in the previous several EU presidencies and most of the opening chapters were blocked due to the Cyprus dispute. They believed that there was lack of political will at both sides to move process from the deadlock, which had lowered the level of public trust among the Turkish citizens into the EU, causing the EU enlargement process to lose its attractiveness in Turkey. However, they also saw positive signals of the Turkey-EU cooperation. For examples, the described that eight working groups had been formed in order to work on the EU chapters that are politically blocked. Positive steps had been made in the realm of energy issues and visa liberalization where the readmission agreement was negotiated and waited to be signed. Professor Eralp emphasized that the visa issue was critical for the Turkish society and a positive outcome of the visa liberalization could result in the dramatic turn in the Turkey-EU relations. Finally, he underlined that Turkey and the EU had started to cooperate on the foreign policy issues through

launching of the foreign policy dialogue. Although this dialogue had not been a regular one and had not led to any concretization in the sense of common projects or actions, he believed that it showed raising awareness on both sides about the necessity to intensify foreign policy cooperation, especially given the challenges brought about by the Arab Spring. Mrs. Torun in her observation emphasized the lack of the EU's strategic vision when dealing with Turkey because both the EU member states and the EU institutions were competing between themselves about the policy course towards Turkey. She claimed that Turkey-EU relations should also be analyzed through the perspective of differential integration where Turkey can get partially integrated into the EU's policy realms.

Panel 3:

Panel three focused on the views from the region regarding the EEAS. Professor Jovan Teokarević from the Faculty of Political Science in Belgrade analyzed the EEAS's involvement in Kosovo. He claimed that the EU's Kosovo policy was an example of both EU's weakness and strengths. Weakness due to the fact that five EU member states had not recognized Kosovo, derailing the EU's coherence, and strength because the EU was still expanding its Kosovo policy and had been active, ambitious and successful in implementing it. Professor Teokarević stressed that the EU had successfully engaged in the Belgrade-Pristina negotiations, proving that the EU can be an influential mediator under specific conditions. He indicated that the EEAS had through these negotiations achieved functional autonomy towards the EU and European Council, despite being affected with the problems of inter-institutional coordination given the complexity of the EU's engagement in Kosovo.

Dr. Senada Šelo Šabić from the IMO in her speech focused on the power-sharing between the EUSR and OHR in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Namely, the Office of the High Representative (OHR) had been the main driving force behind the implementation of the Dayton Peace Accord (DPA) and building a democratic state. However, she noted that the OHR was accused of seeding dependency among the locals and of being a poor coordinator among various international actors. This led her to conclude that the OHR should be closed and the EU special representative (EUSR) should take over. However, as the OHR was still operational, she argued that there had been a permanent institutional wrangling between these two institutions that had complicated an already difficult situation. Furthermore, failed attempts of constitutional reforms since 2006 had put entire peace process in the stalemate as the country struggled how to shape its EU accession-related future within the institutional Dayton framework.

The last speaker Mr. Momčilo Radulović president of the European Movement Montenegro, Podgorica, concluded the third panel with a presentation about the role of civil society organizations (CSOs) in the Western Balkans and their relations to the governments and EU institutions in the region. He underlined that civil society actors were increasingly being considered as valuable partners by the governments but that the level of their involvement in the policy-making processes was uneven, depending on the individual country. Therefore, there was a need to secure more structured and systemic cooperation between the CSOs and governments in the region in order to secure their greater involvement in the domestic policy-making. Mr. Radulović suggested some new forms of cooperation such as consultations on the level of experts between the EU institutions and local CSOs that would upgrade their capacities. Additionally, the CSOs should be better integrated into the IPA programmes that would also represent valuable contribution in their capacity upgrading.

Conclusions

In the concluding panel, professors Wolfgang Wessels, Dr. Višnja Samardžija and Dr. Hrvoje Butković stressed that launching of the EEAS entailed positive ramifications for the EU's policies towards the Western Balkans and had positively influenced the EU's inter-institutional cooperation. However, true effects of the EEAS would be fully discernible only in the upcoming future because the EEAS needed time to fully build and develop its capabilities and foster successful cooperation with other EU actors. The ultimate goal was to create the EU's common diplomatic culture and forge true cooperation between the EEAS, EU



institutions and the EU member states in order to fully utilize the EU's normative, political and economic clout in dealing with foreign policy issues. The Western Balkans, representing the EU's backyard, were a good laboratory for building this EU's common stance and even the EU's engagement in the Kosovo, despite its shortcomings and inconsistencies, had made progress on the ground and represented good basis for the future EEAS's endeavours.

All workshop sessions fostered stimulative debates where different standpoints have been evaluated and re-examined. At the end of the workshop participants concluded that the current economic crisis negatively affected the course of the EU's enlargement policy in the region, although full integration of the Western Balkans in the EU was the only viable and long-term sustainable option for permanent political and economic stabilization of the region.

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