

Does the European Union transform the institution of diplomacy?

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ABSTRACT Diplomacy as a framework of principles, rules and organized patterns of behaviour regulating interstate relations in the Westphalian system of states is challenged by the process of European integration. This article conceptualizes diplomacy and its change using two new institutionalist perspectives that provide us with complementary insights into the nature of diplomacy as an institution. These are then applied to the study of diplomacy in the EU. The process of European integration is shown as challenging the institution of diplomacy at three levels: (a) the intra-European bilateral relations; (b) the multilateral setting of the Council; and (c) the emerging capacity of the EU to conduct external diplomatic relations with third states. The article assesses change *in* and *of* diplomacy at these levels.

KEY WORDS Diplomacy; European Union; Europeanization; external relations; foreign service; institutional change.

INTRODUCTION¹

In its most elementary forms, diplomacy has existed ever since the first human collectives emerged and communicated with each other in more or less regularized ways (Hamilton and Langhorne 1995: 7). The form it has today as a set of rules and norms standardizing relations between sovereign states it acquired along with the emergence of the Westphalian state order – diplomacy became one of its central features (Held *et al.* 1999: 38–9). The European Union (EU) has been described by scholars as challenging basic principles upon which the Westphalian state order rests (Krasner 1995; Schmitter 1996; Keohane 2002; Cooper 2002; Fossum 2002; Kagan 2002). In the context of the EU, established modes of association of diplomacy with sovereign states have become ambiguous and hence the character of diplomacy as an institution is challenged. And yet, this *problematique* has hardly been explored so far. This article is an attempt to bridge this gap and will seek to answer the following questions:

- What kind of an institution is diplomacy?
- How does diplomacy change?

- Are there indications of European integration representing a change of diplomacy?

Focusing on diplomacy as an institution sheds light on its role as a constitutive framework of principles, rules and organized patterns of behaviour in interstate relations, which mainstream realist approaches in international relations (IR) theory, depicting the world as an atomized collection of sovereign states with no overarching authority and presenting diplomacy as a means of promoting state interests, tend to overlook. Indeed, as different and various as states around the world are in terms of cultures, political regimes and national interests, diplomacy is something that they have in common, that enables them to communicate in a predictable and organized manner, that provides a common organizational platform for their interactions and existence. Diplomats, the primary guardians and promoters of national interests of the respective states they represent in the international arena, are at the same time members of a transnational group of professionals with a shared corporate culture, professional language, behavioural codes, entry procedures, socialization patterns, norms and standards. Diplomacy has a Janus-faced character with a national side anchored in particular sovereign states and a transnational side anchored in the set of interstate diplomatic principles and rules. A closer look unveils an elementary tension within the institution of diplomacy between its role as a carrier of interests and policies of a particular state in relation to other states in an anarchic international environment with no overarching authority, and its parallel role as a system of transnational principles, norms and rules of conduct maintained and enacted by the representatives of states in mutual interaction. This tension has been accommodated through the emergence of diplomats as a specialized group of professionals recruited and socialized precisely into the dual role that the enterprise of diplomacy requires them to fulfil. This duality is challenged in the context of the EU where there is increasing ambiguity pertaining to the nature of relations between member states and their relations to third states, while the increasing involvement of the EU as a non-state entity in diplomatic activities ultimately challenges the established notion of what diplomacy is.

To address the questions outlined above, this article is anchored in new institutionalist theoretical approaches.² The first and second sections discuss respectively the character of diplomacy as an institution and modes of its change. In the third section, the institutional dynamics of diplomacy in the context of European integration is explored (a) at the level of bilateral diplomatic relations between EU member states, (b) in the multilateral setting of the Council, and finally (c) at the level of the EU's external diplomatic relations.

DIPLOMACY AS AN INSTITUTION

Definitions of diplomacy vary.³ For the purpose of the current discussion it is central to note the difference between the terms *diplomacy* and *foreign policy*. As pointed out by Watson (1982: 10), while foreign policy is the substance

of a state's relations with other states and agencies and the goals it strives to achieve by those relations, diplomacy is 'the process of dialogue and negotiation by which states in a system conduct their relations and pursue their purposes by means short of war'. Modern diplomacy and territorial (later nation-) states co-evolved in a mutually constitutive set of processes, which makes diplomacy both carrier and product of the interstate system. Most social structures exhibit this dual role in that they are 'both the medium and the outcome of the practices they recursively organize' (Giddens 1984: 25, cf. Scott 2001: 75). As pointed out by Der Derian (1987: 106–7), it is no coincidence that modern diplomacy and the Westphalian state system evolved as mutually reinforcing concepts, because

what uniquely characterizes the paradigm of diplomacy is its utility for states in balancing the forces of hegemony and anarchy. In other words, diplomacy emerges as the collective and reflexive embodiment of the states'² ultimate task – self-preservation in an alien environment.

(Der Derian 1987: 111)

In other words, diplomacy is both a function and a determinant of the international order (Hamilton and Langhorne 1995: 238). A central precondition for the functioning of diplomacy as a system of norms and rules regulating interstate relations is the existence of a common institutional basis shared by all states. What could explain the emergence, diffusion and maintenance of such a social structure in the absence of a superior authority in the interstate environment? On the one hand, diplomacy could be conceptualized as an *organizational field* in the sense of DiMaggio and Powell (1991) distributing shared structures to all states. On the other hand, we could also see diplomacy as being the expression of a transnationally shared *logic of appropriateness* in the sense of March and Olsen (1989, 1995) informing actions of and identities of states. As the former approach primarily focuses on the emergence of homogeneity in structures and the latter approach conceptualizes the emergence of shared meanings, identities and expectations, it is most fruitful to view these two perspectives as complementary in an attempt to conceptualize the emergence of diplomacy as an institution.

The organizational field of diplomacy was *structured* through an increased interaction between foreign ministries of various European countries as the primary actors in nineteenth-century IR. Stable patterns of coalition-building and domination were clearly present in the European diplomatic system in particular after its standardization in 1815.⁴ The fact that foreign ministries were constituted primarily to administer the diplomatic archives growing in volume as more and more diplomatic dispatches began to flow into governmental offices from embassies and foreign governments is clear evidence of an increase in information flow between the participating organizations within the field. And finally, a fundamental principle embedded within the diplomatic system is that of mutual recognition of diplomatic agents and their rights (such as immunity), which shows the growing awareness of actors within the field as

being involved in a common enterprise. These conditions created a favourable situation for institutionalization of diplomacy. As Watson points out:

in the European society of states, diplomacy has emerged as an organizing institution, bearing its distinctive styles and manners and its own networks of procedures, rules, treaties and other commitments. The European system, so organized, was able to exercise assertiveness and restraint over their members because they were bound from the beginning by much more than mere political arrangement. . . . And it is generally recognized that the sophisticated techniques and heightened awareness of how the states system operated, which European diplomacy required from its independent member states, contributed not a little to the remarkable phenomenon, contrary to the experience of other states systems [e.g. Hellenistic, early Chinese and Indian], that no single state proved to be so powerful that it could for any length of time absorb or even dominate all the others.

(Watson 1982: 17)

Isomorphic pressures within the organizational field have contributed to the diffusion of diplomatic practices, structures and norms around the world and with them Western cognitive frameworks and meaning systems in the realm of interstate relations have been distributed on a global scale. Over time and through mutual interactions, the conduct of diplomacy, as Anderson (1993: ix) points out, 'came increasingly to be seen in terms of ideas and ideals which gave unity and some underlying intellectual structure . . . to the growing volume of diplomatic activity', so that diplomats from various countries have gradually developed a shared professional identity. As Nicolson points out:

[b]y 1815 therefore the Diplomatic Services of the nations had been recognized as a distinct branch of the public service in each country. A definite profession had been established, possessing its own hierarchy and rules, and destined . . . to evolve its own freemasonry and conventions.

(Nicolson [1939] 1988: 14)

The Congress of Vienna in 1815, as Neumann (2002b) observed, was a turning point because specific diplomatic practices were codified and formalized, and because this was a form of diplomatic interaction that went beyond discussing particular treaties and situations. In other words, the Congress has set up the practices and routines for future relations between states. The common set of professional norms, rules and values have since been transmitted through standardized socialization procedures at foreign ministries so that professional diplomats around the globe form a group of professionals with

the corporate feeling, which the diplomatic service creates. Even as scientists, philatelists and other experts find, when they meet together, that the interests of their calling transcend all differences of nationality or language, so also do

the diplomatic services of the several countries evolve a form of solidarity and establish certain tacit standards which they all respect.

(Nicolson [1939] 1988: 40)

As such it is plausible to think that they structure their actions according to a particular logic of appropriateness anchored in diplomatic rules, norms and principles. The latter designates who are legitimate actors and participants in the interstate system, what are legitimate actions and situations. States as actors in the international arena do not act randomly but fulfil particular roles determined by the established set of diplomatic rules and principles. Indeed, states' actions in the international arena only make sense within the established institutional framework of diplomacy. Diplomacy as an institution hence decreases complexity in interstate relations and thereby increases the capability of states as actors in the international environment. In this way, diplomacy makes actions of states understandable and to some extent predictable owing to the limited number of available (or legitimate) options. Despite differences in cultures, political regimes and interests, states share a common institutional identity to a large extent defined and determined by the institutional framework of diplomacy, so that, as Wendt points out:

[t]he vast majority of states today see themselves as part of a 'society of states' whose norms they adhere to not because of on-going self-interested calculations that it is good for them as individual states, but because they have internalised and identify with them.

(Wendt 1999: 242)

Hence, to rephrase the original definition of institutions by March and Olsen (1989: 160), *diplomacy as an institution is a set of rules and routines that define appropriate actions of states in the international environment in terms of relations between their roles as states and situations*. This set of rules and routines is embedded in organizational practices, structures and cultures at foreign ministries, which in their aggregate form the organizational basis of diplomacy. The common logic of appropriateness enables diplomats from various countries to categorize events in the same way, which in turn facilitates communication and in fact enables interstate negotiation.

As observed by Berridge (1995: 1), diplomacy as a professional activity is regulated by custom and by law. These two conditions are central to the emergence and maintenance of the transnationally distributed diplomatic logic of appropriateness: general respect for the common set of legal rules and routines delineating diplomacy as a practice anchored in the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Conduct (1961) and the recruitment and socialization processes at foreign ministries socializing diplomats into the dual role of promoting national interests in ways conforming to the transnationally accepted diplomatic norms and procedures. Diplomacy as an institution is hence characterized by the following features:

- transnationally accepted legal set of rules (the 1961 Vienna Convention) defining who are legitimate participants, what is legitimate conduct, what are the rights and obligations of the participants;
- transnationally shared professional values and identity perpetuated by similar recruitment methods and socialization procedures at foreign ministries;
- transnationally shared professional language;
- transnationally shared norms and principles (such as mutual recognition of diplomatic agents, extraterritoriality, immunity);
- transnationally distributed working methods and standard operating procedures (such as standard formats of negotiation and written communication).

These five elements are mutually constitutive and contribute to the maintenance of a common logic of appropriateness informing diplomacy. At the same time, these features standardize interstate negotiation and communication, as well as the promotion of national interests. Diplomats in every country are socialized into the set of transnational diplomatic norms and values in addition to being socialized into national communities and organizational cultures in their respective foreign ministries. The professional actions of a diplomat are hence informed by at least three sources of appropriateness: the transnational set of diplomatic rules and norms; national identity; and the organizational culture and values at the foreign ministry. These three logics of appropriateness need to be in balance so that a diplomat can accommodate his/her specific role as a rule-based mediator between home and abroad. The transnationally distributed practice of diplomats rotating in three- to four-year periods between assignments abroad and in the home country at the home ministry is an institutional mechanism re-establishing the balance between these logics of appropriateness. Yet, national interests and organizational cultures vary across states and over time, and hence it is the five elements described above that form the backbone of diplomacy. Their stability and persistence ensures the survival of diplomacy as an institution.

In foreign ministries, these institutional characteristics are embedded in organizational structures, procedures, practices and cultures, which include:

- a hierarchically ordered standardized system of diplomatic ranks;
- a culture and practice of secrecy;
- one-way communication with the public;⁵
- specialized processes of recruitment, socialization and re-socialization (the system of rotation between assignments at home and abroad).

These are, of course, ideal type features and most real-world foreign ministries today also have flexible structures, there is a certain degree of openness and transparency, communication with the public happens in a two-way and/or a multiple-way fashion, and there is an increasing number of personnel who have not passed through the foreign service socialization processes and still occupy high positions both at headquarters and at missions abroad, and

hence have considerable influence on diplomatic efforts. But if one is to conceptualize institutional change, one needs to identify an analytical status quo, an ideal typical set of minimal common features that characterize foreign ministries around the world. In other words, one needs to create a typification (in Schütz's (1964) sense) of a set of features characterizing the organizational field, and hence also every foreign ministry. Change of one or more of the institutional elements constituting diplomacy, or change in organizational features characterizing and standardizing the organizational basis of diplomacy would potentially cause diplomacy as such to change in various ways. The next section addresses such processes.

DIPLOMACY AND INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

Diplomacy has a long history of adaptation and change (Hocking 1999; Melissen 1999). As any other robust institution, it provides 'institutional lenses' for interpretations of events in its environment, facilitates the creation of shared accounts of history, and hence produces a protective belt of ideas and meanings around its own existence. Thus, changes in the environment, such as the rise of non-state foreign policy actors, the information revolution or the process of European integration, are perceived and accommodated in accordance with the established logic of appropriateness informing diplomacy (i.e. in accordance with basic notions of what a state is and how it interacts with other states) and they are reflected in a path-dependent adaptation of the organizational basis of diplomacy. This implies the gradual development of new structures, procedures and agenda at foreign ministries, while the established notions of what diplomacy is and what role foreign ministries play remain unchallenged. Such a path-dependent adaptation congruent with the institutional identity could be referred to as **change *in* diplomacy**.

Yet, as will be discussed in more detail below, the process of European integration features a set of tendencies and developments that may challenge the logic of appropriateness upon which diplomacy as an institution is based. Metaphorically, answers to the fundamental questions of what a state in the EU is, what kind of a situation this or that is, and what a state of this or that kind does in this or that situation, are becoming increasingly problematic as the integration process moves forward. In general, any situation that cannot be met with established practices, rules and behavioural patterns by an organization or a society presents a crisis (Schütz 1964: 231). When the conditions under which an institution has functioned change dramatically in a fashion inconsistent with the institutional identity, the institution perceives a performance crisis according to its own criteria of success and radical institutional change is imminent (Olsen 1996: 253). In the context of the current analysis such a process would represent **change *of* diplomacy**. Based on the new institutionalist approaches presented above, there are theoretically at least four tentative paths which the latter kind of change could take: isomorphism, fragmentation, metamorphosis and breakdown.

Isomorphism would involve a general enhancement in acceptance of the institution of diplomacy, i.e. an enhancement of the existing logic of appropriateness. This would involve increased transnational standardization in terms of organizational forms, practices and socialization procedures at foreign ministries (for instance, by establishing a small number of diplomatic schools that would educate foreign service officers for all states), perhaps the reintroduction of one main diplomatic language (such as French used to be in the nineteenth century), and increased acceptance of common norms and routines. In other words, there would be a development from a multitude of structures, values and interests that characterize states in the diplomatic system towards a homogenization of structures and identities of states, so that the national side of the Janus-faced character of each foreign ministry would be diminished in importance.

Fragmentation, on the other hand, would involve development of different standards of diplomatic appropriateness in various states or various groupings of states, i.e. a multitude of logic of appropriateness. Some states would, for instance, consider it appropriate to sign treaties with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or give private enterprises a seat in the United Nations. Furthermore, there would be differences in terms of structures, procedures and norms, so that some foreign ministries would operate as flexible networks involving non-diplomatic envoys and representatives, while others would keep strict hierarchies and diplomatic ranks, which would distort the established norms of reciprocity and would make the status and privileges of diplomatic envoys ambiguous. In a similar fashion, some states would apply stricter rules of secrecy in dealing with sensitive issues, while others would be more open and inclusive in handling diplomatic agendas, which again would fragment the shared assumption of mutual adherence to common secrecy standards. Hence, the enterprise of diplomacy would in case of fragmentation involve not only negotiation between states, and between states and other actors, but necessarily also some form of meta-mediation to establish temporary *modi vivendi* between various diplomatic logics of appropriateness.

Metamorphosis is a metaphor for a situation, when foreign ministries around the globe would have an entirely new role with an entirely new logic of appropriateness informing the worldviews and identities of diplomats. As an example, diplomacy would gradually become commercialized and would no longer serve as a system of norms and rules regulating relations between states, but as a system of norms and rules regulating trade promotion and information about foreign markets (suggestions of this kind have been made, for instance, by Schmitz 1997). Organizational structures, secrecy norms, communication with the public and socialization procedures at foreign ministries would reflect the collective move towards a new kind of role. This would no longer be diplomacy as we know it, yet it would remain a set of rules distributed transnationally and accepted by all states.

Finally, *breakdown* would involve a complete disintegration of the shared logic of appropriateness governing diplomatic relations, which could be

caused by the diminishing role of states. There would be no transnationally accepted legal set of diplomatic rules, no shared professional diplomatic values and identity, no transnationally shared diplomatic language, and no commonly shared diplomatic routines, practices and procedures. In other words, it would be a return to a situation, where 'all sorts of principals sent diplomatic agents to all sorts of recipients' (Queller 1967: 11). An alternative reason for a breakdown of the diplomatic logic of appropriateness would be the rise of a world state. Obviously, in such a case, the whole rationale behind having diplomacy and foreign ministries would disappear.

Following this exposition, it is now time to turn the analytical focus on the nature of change that diplomacy undergoes in the context of the EU.

DIPLOMACY AND THE INSTITUTIONAL DYNAMICS OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

Today's EU is a polity where relations between member states are no longer organized solely by the transnationally distributed set of norms and rules embodied in diplomacy, but are increasingly anchored in a thickening network of 'domestic' relations in an increasing number of policy fields co-ordinated at the central level in Brussels. With neither a clearly established centre of authority nor a clear source of sovereignty, the EU is currently the most radical peaceful challenge to the established Westphalian system of states (Fossum 2002: 9). One should expect implications of such a situation for the institution of diplomacy. Indeed, but where exactly is diplomacy as an institution embedded within the EU? Where should one explore its change? Is it in the member states and their bilateral relations? Is it in the multilateral diplomatic setting of the Council at the central level in Brussels? Or is it in the emerging capacity of the EU as a whole to conduct diplomatic relations with third states? These questions indicate at least three levels at which change of diplomacy in the process of European integration could be explored, and that is what I am going to do in the following pages. Before I proceed, though, a caveat is necessary. Given that the following discussion is based primarily on secondary literature, and given the present dynamism in the institutional development of the European polity, this article will only point at possible tendencies of change and indicate ways in which we could start re-examining the assumptions about diplomacy in the EU. A more thorough set of analyses based on primary data will be necessary to test the propositions presented below.

Bilateral diplomacy within the EU

The process of European integration is marked by a growing interconnectedness of domestic administrative systems of member states where sector-specific policies are co-ordinated across national borders without involving the diplomats (Egeberg 2001; Trondal and Veggeland 2003). Sovereignty of member states has been eroded severely by arrangements such as mutual recognition allowing

entities operating in one state to be regulated by laws of another state, so that the EU essentially can be described as 'a system in which authority structures over different issue areas are not geographically coterminous' (Krasner 1995: 119–20). Nevertheless, despite growing European integration, the structure of bilateral diplomatic relations between EU member states remains intact so far (Hocking and Spence 2002). An indication of this is the fact that embassies of EU member states in other member states have structures, functions and staff on a par with their embassies in third countries. What is more, the structure of bilateral diplomatic representations is not only maintained, but is in fact being renewed in an isomorphic manner in accordance with established traditions and standards within the diplomatic organizational field. This development is brilliantly documented by the level of enthusiasm, pride and glamour with which EU member states' governments have been establishing and inaugurating their embassies of great architectural value in Germany's new capital – Berlin. Moreover, although most foreign ministries in member states had created organizational units dealing specifically with the EU agenda, most of them also maintain bilateral sections managing relations with specific geographical regions of the world, where EU member countries usually fall within the category of 'Europe' with no regard to EU membership (Cascone 2000; Hocking and Spence 2002; Batora 2003).⁷ The retention of structures indicates institutional robustness, where changes in the environment (European integration) are mediated or interpreted through established institutional frameworks at foreign ministries in ways that support marginal and path-dependent change of the established structures (for these terms, see March and Olsen 1989, 1995).

However, in spite of the structural path-dependence, the process of European integration does open the possibility for a *metamorphosis*, i.e. a change of the standards of appropriateness, at the level of bilateral diplomatic relations *within* the EU. The very fact of membership in the Union precludes the possibility of war between member states. Hence, one of the primary motivations of diplomacy, i.e. ensuring national security from threats by other states in the anarchic interstate environment, is of diminishing importance in intra-European diplomatic relations and is in the process of being substituted by increased attention to other parts of the diplomatic agenda, such as trade, cultural issues, image promotion and human rights (Neuhold 2002: 50–1; Paschke 2003). In general, the metamorphosis at the bilateral level involves the development of what could be called an *intra-European mode of diplomacy* (stripped of traditional national security concerns and focusing on facilitating the sectoral and functional co-operation between national administrations), which in turn implies different standards of appropriateness in member states' relations to fellow member states in the Union, on the one hand, and to third states, on the other hand. The reason for the change of the standards of diplomatic appropriateness *within* Europe as opposed to *outside* Europe is apparent – while Westphalian diplomacy is a system of norms and rules enabling states to survive and

interact in an anarchical environment, intra-European diplomacy is an emerging set of norms and rules regulating interaction of states in a rule-based legal environment.

This in turn implies that the enterprise of diplomacy within the EU no longer involves just the mediation of relations between states and between states and other actors, but also a form of meta-mediation focused on shaping the European legal-political environment, where the EU member states are operating and interacting. Such a metamorphosis entails in turn also the development of an additional repertoire of roles and identities at member states' foreign ministries for facilitating the intra-European mode of diplomacy, which requires enhancements and changes in socialization procedures. Hence, diplomats engaged in intra-European diplomacy would ideally develop expertise in, for instance, settling trade disputes, in promotion of the so-called national soft power (Nye 1990, 2004; Leonard 2002), or the human rights agenda, and/or in framing European legal norms. With respect to the institutional features of diplomacy suggested in the first part of the article, the metamorphosis towards an intra-European mode of diplomacy would hence involve new notions of what is legitimate conduct, additions to the existing repertoire of diplomatic language, shifts in professional values, norms and principles, which would in turn entail changes in diplomatic socialization in member states' foreign services.

However, although the common legal framework within the EU creates new conditions for intra-European bilateral diplomacy, there is no guarantee that all member states would be changing in the same manner. Such a homogenous uni-directional collective metamorphosis would require the structuration of an intra-European diplomatic organizational field distributing isomorphic pressures. In such a situation, member states' foreign ministries would have to be mutually aware of being involved in a common enterprise of intra-European diplomacy; there would have to be an increased interaction and information flow between them supporting such a diplomatic mode, and clear patterns of coalition-building and domination would have to evolve. However, in the absence of a coherent set of isomorphic pressures and shared normative expectations, the change at member states' foreign ministries could involve the development of multiple and varying standards of diplomatic appropriateness, which would ultimately result in *fragmentation* of intra-European bilateral diplomacy. Such a fragmentation would reflect the existing differences between member states when it comes to the notion of what kind of a political unit the EU is/should be. This could happen, for instance, if each of the member states (or groupings of member states) would adhere to its/their own kind of intra-European diplomacy, and meta-mediation between these various sets of norms would be required. If this is the case, we should expect discussions of what should be the appropriate institutional arrangements in intra-European diplomacy and would enhance the struggle for people's minds (identities and normative beliefs), upon which, as Olsen (2002a: 594) suggests, the future distribution of power in the EU will depend.

Whether homogenous or fragmented, the emerging intra-European mode of diplomacy adds a third dimension to the Janus-faced character that modern diplomacy traditionally had. Member states' foreign ministries then are increasingly 3D (*three-dimensional*), that is with an intra-European side added to the national and the transnational side of diplomacy by which each foreign ministry has traditionally been informed. Robert Cooper (2002; see also Kagan's (2002) discussion of his ideas) touches upon this issue when he suggests that:

[t]he challenge to the postmodern world is to get used to the idea of *double standards*. Among ourselves, we operate on the basis of laws and open cooperative security. But when dealing with more old-fashioned kinds of states outside the postmodern continent of Europe, we need to revert to the rougher methods of an earlier era – force, pre-emptive attack, deception, whatever is necessary to deal with those who still live in the nineteenth century world of every state for itself. Among ourselves, we keep the law but when we are operating in the jungle, we must also use the laws of the jungle. (*italics added*)

Further research is needed to explore whether an organizational field is emerging supporting an intra-European mode of diplomacy and forming the 'double standards' that European foreign ministries eventually acquire. In turn, what is eventually the relation between the emerging intra-European diplomatic logic of appropriateness and the transnationally distributed set of norms and rules informing Westphalian diplomacy? Would they be congruent or competing? And finally, to rephrase Olsen's (2002b: 938) question, what is the attractiveness (or potential for diffusion) of the emerging intra-European mode of diplomacy beyond the EU territory?

Further questions arise as one turns to multilateral diplomacy at the central EU level.

Multilateral diplomacy at the central EU level

The most important multilateral diplomatic forum at the central level in Brussels is the Council of the EU. Being the most 'unashamedly national of the EU institutions', the Council is organized in a fashion ensuring specifically national, as opposed to supranational, inputs into the EU system of governance (Hayes-Renshaw and Wallace 1997: 211). Of particular importance as the primary forum of interstate multilateral diplomacy within the Council is the *Comité des représentants permanents* (COREPER). COREPER (and thereby also each national foreign ministry) has traditionally been a *filtering point* enabling constructive co-ordination of member states' policies at the EU level, while at the same time consulting and instructing national actors as to what is negotiable at the EU level (Hayes-Renshaw and Wallace 1997: 141). The status as mediators of relations between the EU and member states has been further strengthening the traditional gatekeeper role of diplomats as mediators between their home state and external actors. The traditional kind of diplomatic identity is further

strengthened by the professional respect and the sense of cross-national collegial solidarity in the common endeavour (Westlake 1995: 289–90).

Still, contrary to what some of the conservative diplomatic milieux such as, for instance, the Quai d'Orsay would like us to believe,⁸ the multilateral setting of the EU *is different* from traditional multilateral diplomatic fora such as conventions, conferences or international organizations. This is primarily because of the collection of institutions that participate in the negotiation and development of the European legal norms besides member states. COREPER and the Council are anchored in an institutionalized set of relations at the central level in Brussels that are not purely interstate, and hence not purely diplomatic. According to Westlake (1995: 294–6), there are primarily four kinds of negotiator in COREPER: (1) member states; (2) the Presidency of the EU (one of the member states assuming the function for a six-month period); (3) the EU Commission; and (4) the EU Parliament (participating indirectly). In particular, the latter three actors make negotiations within COREPER more than a purely intergovernmental affair. The national interests of member states are accommodated within an institutional framework informed by the supranational inputs of the Commission, the interventions of the Parliament, as well as the co-ordination efforts of the Presidency. The latter, in addition to furthering its own interests, plays the role of a go-between in relations with the Parliament, whose representatives do not participate physically in the COREPER meetings (Westlake 1995: 294–6). It could be argued that there is a clash of cultures and logics of appropriateness between the member state representatives (diplomats) and the representatives of the Commission, because the latter, as Egeberg (2003) points out, are informed by a strongly supranational culture, where explicit furthering of national interests is considered inappropriate. Similarly, the Parliament and to some extent also the Presidency of the EU are informed by different logics of appropriateness than are member states.

It would certainly be far-fetched to propose that furthering of national interests coherent with norms and rules of traditional diplomacy does not happen at COREPER. However, it happens in an institutional setting infused by supranational interests and common European legal norms, which challenge established notions of diplomatic appropriateness – that is, the idea of who member states' diplomats within COREPER are and what roles they fulfil in specific situations. In Jeff Lewis's (2003) interpretation, socialization in COREPER does not lead to the rise of a supranational identity of diplomats but rather to new understandings of national identities as they become nested into a Brussels context. As one of the ambassadors pointed out:

There is a COREPER language with its own code words and code phrases. When used, this language is clearly understood by everyone. For instance, if I have bad instructions that I'm against, I can say, 'but of course the presidency has to take its responsibilities,' which means put it to a vote and I'll lose, I accept this.

(interview quoted in Lewis 2003)⁹

Member states' diplomats negotiate with counterparts also representing the interests of the very same member states (e.g. the Presidency, the Commission), albeit from different standpoints. To use a metaphor, the Council resembles a *Cerberus* with at least three heads engaged in an ongoing negotiation about what direction its common body should move to. In such a situation, the diplomatic process is being infused by non-diplomatic structures, values and norms, which in the interplay with the non-diplomatic supranational setting of the Council ultimately facilitates a gradual democratization of multilateral diplomacy within the Council. Any country holding the EU Presidency is a good example of the multiple roles that need to be accommodated – its diplomats need to represent national interests, the interests of the EU in relation to third states, as well as the interests of the Council in relation to other EU bodies – which necessarily involves continuous interaction and co-ordination with various kinds of non-diplomatic actors.

In addition to the transformative dynamics that multilateral diplomacy is subject to within the Council, further challenges come from the institutional environment – the European polity. As Sverdrup (2002: 131) points out, it is increasingly difficult to pinpoint particular national interests of member states, which often results in tensions between foreign ministries and sectoral ministries on various policy issues. As he furthermore argues, the 1990s have brought about increased demands by the media and the public for openness and transparency which would accord legitimacy to the issues negotiated at intergovernmental conferences of the EU, with a great deal of their agenda being subject to public debates prior to or during negotiations, which challenges the traditionally closed character of the work performed by the Council.¹⁰

The tendency towards openness and democratization was further strengthened by the recent establishment of the Convention on the Future of the EU (or the European Constitutional Convention as it is frequently dubbed). While the development of the legal-political framework of the EU has traditionally been an exclusive realm of the diplomats and national experts meeting in closed negotiations in the Council, the Convention process was transparent, far more open and inclusive featuring inputs from civil society actors (NGOs, interest groups) and academics besides those of national and European parliamentarians (Eriksen and Fossum 2002). While the diplomats certainly were present at the Convention, their role has been reduced from that of exclusive negotiators to that of participants in the deliberative process and of administrative facilitators (the Secretariat of the Convention was led by a senior British diplomat, and the spokesperson as well as a number of the drafters were career diplomats from member states, all with backgrounds in EU sections within their respective foreign ministries¹¹). The Convention experience indicates the possibility of a *metamorphosis* of diplomacy in the multilateral setting at the central EU level pertaining to the traditional diplomatic language, to the shared diplomatic values and professional identity, as well as to the notions of who are legitimate participants in diplomatic negotiations, what is legitimate conduct and what are appropriate working methods.

While the role of diplomats in the mediation of relations between member states at the bilateral and multilateral level within the EU is being redefined, diplomats acquire new responsibilities at the level of the EU's external relations.

External diplomatic relations of the EU

A central factor in the construction of the EU as a diplomatic actor is the development of the Unified External Service of the European Commission (UES), which is in the process of becoming a fully-fledged foreign service of the EU. Opening its first delegation in London in 1955, the UES today mans delegations of the EU Commission in 123 countries and five international organizations. Its original purpose was the management of the EU's trade agenda and development aid in third countries. First, after the introduction of the common foreign and security policy (CFSP) in the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, the UES has been charged with more traditional diplomatic functions such as political analysis and reporting. It can be argued that a nucleus of an EU foreign office is about to be created in the near future by the planned administrative integration of all officials at EU Delegations under the newly integrated Directorate-General of External Relations (DG RELEX). It is a stated goal of the Commission 'to develop a culture of diplomatic service' in the UES, which is being implemented through standardizing the personalized preparation of UES officials prior to departure to a Delegation, as well as training plans reflecting 'the need for multi-skilling' of officials owing to their rotation between assignments in third countries and at headquarters in Brussels.¹² Although, as Bruter (1999: 191) points out, the training of the UES personnel has so far been quite rudimentary compared to the training received by national diplomats, the recent attempts indicate an effort to create EU diplomats—generalists on a par with the professional diplomats—generalists in any of the traditional foreign ministries of the member states. This initiative enhances previous efforts to provide integrated training to member states' diplomats, which have been conducted as part of the European Diplomatic Programme since 1999. As Duke (2002: 861) notes, the goal of this programme was to complement existing diplomatic training available in national contexts and (a) create personal networks among member states' diplomats; (b) raise 'national diplomatic consciousness with regard to the specifically European dimension of diplomacy'; and (c) provide a teaching environment 'where training is focused in a manner unachievable within a strictly national setting'.¹³ Although the effects of such formalized socialization mechanisms are still to be evaluated, informal socialization and integration among European diplomats is well under way. As Spence observes:

[n]ational diplomats involved in EU business are authoritative figures in their national foreign ministries, and their expertise on general European matters is widely recognised. As with the Arabists in the UK Foreign Office in former years, they are thus not just any random group of diplomats or experts.

They are carefully selected, authoritative and credible actors, both in the domestic and the European arena. They are selected precisely because they will be good at creating a CFSP 'leading, in time, to a common defence', and they are thus the lynchpins of this blueprint. The production of CFSP and ESDP [European security and defence policy]... has become their own 'common policy enterprise'. At a rhetorical level, they say they believe that foreign policy remains the preserve of the nation state... But, privately, many admit to the belief that Europe will one day end up with a European diplomatic service, defending not national but European interests, which would then, by definition, amount to the same thing. To a degree, national diplomats dealing with CFSP and ESDP have thus created their own blueprint for diplomatic integration.

(Spence 2002: 32)

Gradual integration of member states' diplomats involved in European affairs goes on parallel to the standardization of functions and structures of the UES. EU delegations in third countries are becoming standardized to be able to execute functions on a par with traditional nation-state embassies and for this purpose a single manual featuring a standardized set of procedures for all Delegations has been available since December 2002.¹⁴ The relationship of EU Delegations and member state embassies in third countries is not to be that of competition but rather that of co-operation, where the EU Delegation should play the role of the central co-ordinator with the purpose of 'projecting the image of a Union which is active, imaginative and truly united'.¹⁵ Anchored in Article 20 of the Maastricht Treaty, co-operation and co-ordination between member states' embassies and the EU Delegations in third countries is legally binding. The UES is keen on making use of the experience of member states' diplomats and other national experts that could strengthen the effectiveness of its operations.¹⁶ A step towards physical integration of diplomatic resources was taken in Abuja/Nigeria, where the construction of a common embassy compound housing EU member states' embassies and the EU Delegation with shared facilities, such as a common Visa Section, with the purpose of reducing operative costs (but with separate 'national' premises) was initiated in November 2001. Further examples of pooling of logistical resources include the common UK/France/Germany embassy premises in Alma Ata and Minsk and the joint Nordic embassies in Dar-es-Salaam and Windhoek (Duke 2002: 856). The primary strategy of the Commission in developing the UES seems to be to tap into the resources and experience of member states' foreign services while gradually developing its own human resources in the UES so as to be gradually able to exercise a unified foreign policy of the Union. This ambition was also endorsed in the *Final Report of Working Group VII on External Action* of the European Convention,¹⁷ which proposed:

the creation of an EU diplomatic academy and an EU diplomatic service, alongside those of Member States. The Commission's delegations would

become EU delegations/embassies, and would be staffed by officials of the Commission, the Council Secretariat and seconded members of national diplomatic services.

(pp. 6–7)

Although the suggestion to create a European diplomatic academy was not featured in the draft Constitution after all, the growing volume of diplomatic agendas administered by RELEX officials creates a definite need for some form of European diplomatic training to be developed at some point in the future (Duke 2003: 16).

Returning to the theoretical concepts developed in the first part of the article, one could argue that in an attempt to become a legitimate member of the transnational diplomatic organizational field, the EU attempts to create diplomatic structures in an isomorphic manner. It copies prevailing structures and socialization procedures established in national diplomatic services, which would reduce the existing uncertainty as to what kind of an actor in the diplomatic system the EU actually is. The fact that the EU is developing its own diplomatic structures in an isomorphic manner is in line with the overall pattern of new states establishing their presence in the diplomatic system. What is novel and challenging, though, is the fact that the EU is not a state, and still it is developing a legal personality. Its participation in the diplomatic system based on a particular logic of appropriateness creates expectations of the EU fulfilling particular roles on a par with the roles fulfilled by the states. Yet given that the EU is not a state, it is far from evident that it would be in a position to do so. To provide a concrete example, there is ambiguity in relation to the diplomatic status of the heads of EU delegations, who 'are ambassadors by rank and title, . . . [but] are basically asked to conceal this fact' (Bruter 1999: 190). The conditions under which the EU delegations perform diplomatic activities are therefore fundamentally atypical (Bruter 1999: 185). Clearly, this situation challenges the above outlined set of institutional features upon which diplomacy rests – it raises the question of who are legitimate participants in the diplomatic exchange, what is legitimate conduct and legitimate principles regulating diplomatic actions, what are the professional values and norms that steer the work of diplomatic agents, and not least what language is appropriate? It is as yet unclear how these challenges will be resolved, but one could anticipate two alternatives: (a) the EU becomes a state; and (b) the global diplomatic system will be transformed owing to the adoption of new standards allowing non-state entities (such as the EU) to act as standard diplomatic actors on a par with states. Each of these represents radically different potential trajectories of change and is evidence of the fact that the EU at this point in its development indeed is a challenge to the established Westphalian interstate order, while it is at the same time also evidence of the fact that the EU could be in the process of becoming a fully-fledged state, which would undermine the ambition of the EU to become an innovative way of organizing governance beyond the state.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In an interstate environment with no overarching authority, diplomacy is a shared set of rules, norms and principles regulating relations between states. It forms the elementary structure of the interstate system, in which states fulfil roles as a consequence of their identity as states. Diplomacy then emerges as the embodiment of a set of logics of appropriateness associated with the nation-state in world politics. It simplifies the complexities of events enabling classification of situations, determining legitimate actors and legitimate options for action. The collection of foreign ministries forms an organizational field through which standards and notions of appropriateness are being distributed in an isomorphic manner to states around the world. This means that diplomats form a global professional community with a shared set of values, practices, behavioural patterns, professional language and identity, perpetuated by similar recruitment methods and socialization.

The process of European integration challenges these established notions of appropriateness within the diplomatic organizational field in at least three ways. The first challenge is most obvious at the level of bilateral relations between member states of the Union, which are conducted in the common European legal environment. There may be a metamorphosis of diplomacy towards an intra-European mode of bilateral relations marked by the absence of the threat of intra-European war. This in turn moves the attention of member states' intra-European diplomatic efforts from the traditional preoccupation with mutual threats to national security towards shared strategies of ensuring common security, and towards other agendas such as trade, human rights, cultural issues and regional co-operation. It is so far uncertain whether common standards for the intra-European mode of diplomacy are evolving or whether the member states' involvement in intra-European diplomacy has a fragmented character in terms of structures, procedures and norms applied by the respective foreign ministries. Nevertheless, it seems plausible to expect the member states' foreign services to gradually develop additional set/s of norms, structures, procedures and language regulating their participation in the mode of relations with fellow member states of the Union.

The second challenge that European integration poses to diplomacy can be recorded in particular at the central level of the EU administration in Brussels in the multilateral setting of the Council. As permanent representatives of member states to the EU, diplomats have traditionally had the key role in forging treaties constituting the legal-political framework of the Union in negotiations behind closed doors, which at first glance appears to be congruent with the diplomats' traditional role as exclusive managers of foreign policies of their respective states. The negotiations within COREPER, however, feature a set of institutionalized interactions with the Commission, the Presidency and the Parliament, which creates a series of ambiguities about the diplomats' role and brings about democratization of diplomatic processes. Moreover, the recent explorative processes of treaty development through the Convention

method have introduced new standards of openness and inclusiveness representing a metamorphosis of the role of diplomats from gatekeepers to process facilitators and participants.

Finally, the development of the EU's capacity to conduct external diplomatic relations challenges the role of states as the only legitimate participants in the transnational diplomatic system. The fact that the EU mimics the transnationally distributed standards for organizing diplomacy and tries to implement socialization procedures normal at national foreign ministries to enable its representatives to have a more diplomat-like behaviour indicates that the EU attempts to gain more legitimacy as a member of the global organizational field of diplomacy. Yet, owing to its non-state nature and supranational character, the EU as a legitimate member of the global diplomatic field could imply the introduction of completely new standards. This raises the question whether such a development would transform the field in its entirety.

Although the challenges vary in character at the three levels, they all have in common the following: they undermine established institutional features of diplomacy pertaining to rules and norms designating legitimate diplomatic conduct, participants and situations; professional values and norms perpetuated in European foreign services; the diplomatic language used by European diplomats; and not least legitimate working procedures and methods at European foreign ministries and other venues where diplomacy is conducted in Europe and by Europeans.

The Westphalian state order and modern diplomacy have co-evolved as mutually reinforcing institutions, and through them European ideas in the realm of statecraft and interstate relations have been disseminated around the world. The now global diplomatic system based exclusively on European political traditions, experience and ideational structures is an excellent example of early Europeanization understood as diffusion or export of forms of political organization and governance distinct for Europe beyond the European territory.¹⁸ If indeed, as Joschka Fischer points out, '[t]he core of the concept of Europe after 1945 was and still is a rejection of the European balance-of-power principle and the hegemonic ambitions of individual states that had emerged following the Peace of Westphalia in 1648', and if, as Romano Prodi suggests, Europe's role in global governance is that of replicating the European experience on a global scale (both quoted in Kagan 2002), the question arises whether the new logic of diplomatic appropriateness emerging in Europe may be carried by the pressures within the global diplomatic organizational field also beyond the EU territory. Could diplomacy be Europeanized once again, and if so, what would then be left of diplomacy as we know it?

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NOTES

- 1 Earlier versions of the article were published as Working Paper 06/2003 at ARENA, University of Oslo, and as Discussion Paper in Diplomacy No. 87 at the Netherlands Institute of International Relations, 'Clingendael', and were presented at various venues at the University of Oslo and at Stanford University throughout 2003. I would like to thank John E. Fossum for the enlightening conversations from which I benefited while developing the article. I am also grateful for constructive comments and suggestions made by Harald Baldersheim, Nils Brunsson, Jeffrey T. Checkel, Tom Christensen, Morten Egeberg, Per Læg Reid, James G. March, Iver B. Neumann, Johan P. Olsen, Walter W. Powell, Francisco O. Ramirez, Paul Roness, W. Richard Scott, Helene Sjørnsen, Ulf I. Sverdrup, Jarle Trondal, Marc Ventresca and two anonymous reviewers.
- 2 New institutional approaches have found their way into most disciplines of social sciences. Comprehensive overviews can be found in March and Olsen (1989); DiMaggio and Powell (1991); Peters (1999); Scott (2001). This paper is anchored in the new institutionalist approach in political science associated primarily with March and Olsen (1989, 1995); but is inspired also by the sociological new institutionalist approach developed by DiMaggio and Powell ([1983] 1991).
- 3 See, for instance, Satow (1922); Nicolson ([1939] 1988); Numelin (1950); Der Derian (1987); Anderson (1993); Berridge (1995); Kissinger (1994); Hamilton and Langhorne (1995); Berridge *et al.* (2001). For an account of the approaches to diplomacy presented by the so-called English school including the work of Hedley Bull, Martin Wight and Adam Watson, see Neumann (2002a).
- 4 The Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle following the Congress of Vienna in 1815 defined four categories of diplomatic representatives: (1) ambassadors, papal legates and papal nuncios; (2) Envoys extraordinary and Ministers plenipotentiary; (3) Ministers resident; and (4) Chargé d'Affaires. The precedence rules according to priority of appointment (including the function of *doyen*) were also formalized.
- 5 Diplomats informing the public about foreign policy decisions and actions *ex post*, but not involving the public in deliberations *ex ante*, which expresses the primacy and exclusivity of diplomats as the co-ordinators of foreign policy.
- 6 The Ottawa process leading to the signing of the International Convention to Ban Landmines is an example of new standards and procedures being introduced by the Canadian diplomats, who invited several NGOs to directly participate in the negotiation with diplomatic representatives of states in a multilateral setting, which led Dolan and Hunt (1998) to discuss a new type of diplomacy arising. For similar arguments, see also Price (1998) and Axworthy (2003).
- 7 Foreign ministries of Austria, Greece, Ireland and Luxembourg represent exceptions here with functional structures instead of geographical ones (Cascone 2000: 5).
- 8 See the description of multilateral diplomacy in the EU as being merely a continuation of traditional multilateral diplomacy at conferences and in international organizations presented at the website of the French foreign ministry: <http://www.france.diplomatie.fr/mae/missions/fr/ambassades/multilateral.html>.
- 9 This ambiguity of roles fulfilled in various situations has led the former German ambassador Dietrich von Kyaw to claim that in Bonn/Berlin he was entitled the *Ständiger Verräter* (permanent traitor) instead of the *Ständiger Vertreter* (permanent representative) (quoted in Lewis 2003).
- 10 Since May 2001, the rule applies that in principle all documents produced and received by the organs of the EU are accessible to the public (for exceptions and general rules on information access, see *Regulation (EC) No. 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of May 30, 2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents*).

- 11 See the website of the Convention Secretariat for more details: <http://european-convention.eu.int/secretariat.asp?lang=EN>.
- 12 See http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/delegations/reform/ip02_987.htm. Furthermore, the *Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament: The Development of the External Service* COM (2001) 381, Brussels, 3 July 2001, pt. 1.4 states that the training of UES officials 'covers the acquisition of new knowledge (community policies, relations with certain parts of the world) and of new skills (project cycle management, negotiation techniques, management of a team, media skills)'.
- 13 In 2001, 127 diplomats from member states had passed this training programme (Duke 2002: 861).
- 14 See *Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament: The Development of the External Service* COM (2001) 381, Brussels, 3 July 2001.
- 15 See http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/delegations/intro/ms.htm. See also *Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament: The Development of the External Service* COM (2001) 381, Brussels, 3 July 2001. (http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/reform/document/com01_381_en.pdf).
- 16 See http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/delegations/intro/ms.htm.
- 17 For a full text version of the Report, see <http://register.consilium.eu.int/pdf/en/02/cv00/00459en2.pdf>.
- 18 As Olsen (2002b: 923–4) suggests, this understanding of Europeanization is one of five complementary modes of the process. The other four include Europeanization as: (a) changes in external territorial boundaries; (b) development of institutions of governance at the European level; (c) central penetration of national and sub-national systems of governance; and (d) a political project aiming at a unified and politically stronger Europe.

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